



Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi  
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21 November 2025

### **ADDENDUM / CORRECTION NOTICE**

This addendum is issued to clarify a typographical error in the letter submitted to the House Ethics Committee on 17 November 2025, enclosed.

In the list of individuals referenced in the letter, the name of **Mr. Aaron Walker** was misspelled as “Aron Walker.” This correction pertains solely to the spelling of the name.

All other content, statements, and signatories of the original letter remain accurate and fully in effect. No changes have been made to the intent or substance of the original submission.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chief Brenda Gagne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brenda Gagne  
Chief  
Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi



# ABENAKI NATION OF MISSISQUOI

*St. Francis/Sakaki Band*

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November 17, 2025

To the Vermont House Ethics Committee,

We are writing to formally request an ethics investigation into Representative Troy Headrick (I-Burlington) for his public statements defaming state-recognized Vermont Abenaki leaders and misrepresenting genealogical evidence in ways that undermine Indigenous self-determination and dignity.

Rep. Headrick recently published a letter claiming that improperly sourced and uncited genealogies “unambiguously prove” that there is “no historically or genealogically defensible connection between the First Nation Abenaki and the Vermont Abenaki.” This statement is not only factually incorrect, it is defamatory. It accuses Vermont tribal leaders and citizens of fraud, despite the fact that Vermont’s state recognition process required documented petitions, genealogical evidence, and legislative approval under Act 107 (2010) and Act 8 (2012).

The genealogies referenced by Rep. Headrick were not submitted by the individuals named, nor vetted by any credentialed genealogical body. Publishing genealogies of living people without consent violates the ethical standards of both the Board for Certification of Genealogists and the National Genealogical Society. These standards exist to protect privacy and prevent misuse of family history for political attacks, such as this.

Due to these statements our reputations have been unfairly harmed. His libelous statements have led to loss of agency for members of our tribe. Loss of income, loss of self-determination and demonstrates a clear malice towards the Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi. Rep. Headrick’s statements were made without any regard to the truth or the outcome they would have on the people of his state that he is sworn to serve.

Rep. Headrick also fails to understand the broader implications of his words. By declaring Vermont Abenaki leaders “unambiguously” disconnected from Indigenous ancestry, he disregards the lived experience of families who survived Vermont’s eugenics era by hiding their Native identity. He also ignores the fact that Vermont genealogists have worked within frameworks set by Odanak itself, including lineages that Odanak has historically accepted.

If Rep. Headrick wishes to invoke international standards, he must also acknowledge that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirms the right of

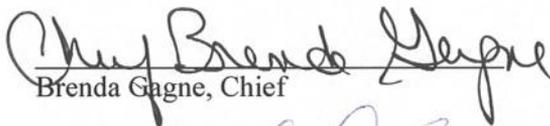
*all* Indigenous peoples to self-determination, including control over membership and representation in matters of identity. This right applies equally to Odanak and to the Vermont Abenaki tribes.

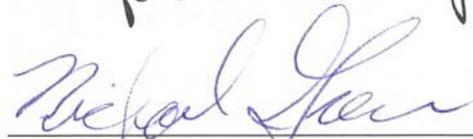
Finally, we wish to correct the historical record. Walter Watso, chief of Odanak, had every opportunity to delegitimize the Vermont Abenaki leadership. Instead, he stood with Homer St. Francis in 1976 when Governor Thomas Salmon signed the executive order recognizing the Missisquoi, due to the groundbreaking research of Jane Stapleton Baker in 1976, known colloquially as the Jane Baker Study. In which Jane Baker set out prove that the Missisquoi Abenaki Nation had fraudulent claims but instead proved the opposite. Even though the order was later rescinded by Governor Snelling, Watso's support remains part of the historical record. That brief state recognition laid the groundwork to where we are today. Rep. Headrick not only seeks to disenfranchise his own constituents, but he defames them in the process.

We urge the Ethics Committee to investigate whether Rep. Headrick's statements constitute a breach of ethical conduct, especially in light of their defamatory nature, misuse of genealogical data, and disregard for Indigenous rights recognized under Vermont law and international standards.

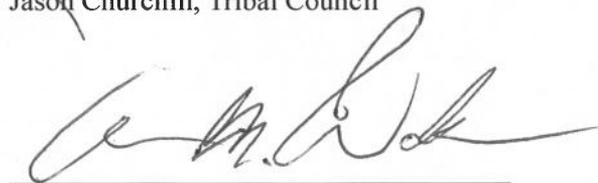
Sincerely,

The Abenaki Nation of the Missisquoi

  
Brenda Gagne, Chief

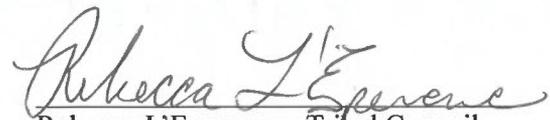
  
Michael Greenia, Tribal Council

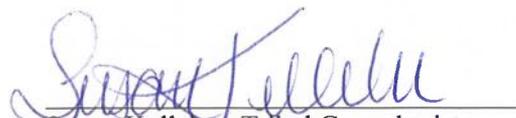
  
Jason Churchill, Tribal Council

  
Aron Walker, Tribal Council

  
John Lavoie, Tribal Council

  
Brian Wiggins, Tribal Council

  
Rebecca L'Esperance, Tribal Council

  
Susan Kelleher, Tribal Genealogist