

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) ("UN Declaration" or "UNDRIP") passed on September 13, 2007, by an overwhelming majority of the United Nations General Assembly. One hundred and forty-four member States voted in favor of the UNDRIP, only eleven abstained, and only four (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) voted against it. Since 2007, all four countries, including the [United States](#), have reversed their positions and now officially endorse it.

Each of the UNDRIP's rights and duties are relevant to Native American tribes, communities and individuals located and living in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The UN Declaration ensures that indigenous peoples' rights to cultural integrity, education, health, and political participation are protected. The UNDRIP also provides for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to their lands and natural resources, and the observation of their treaty rights. The UN Declaration also requires countries to consult with indigenous peoples with the goal of obtaining their consent on matters which concern them.

At its core, is the UN Declaration's recognition of indigenous peoples' right to self-determination to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." As explained by former [U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), James Anaya, the right of self-determination is "to be full and equal participants in the creation of the institutions of government under which they live and, further, to live within a governing institutional order in which they are perpetually in control of their own destinies."

For information on the Declaration, check out [UNICEF's guide](#) on the UN Declaration.