

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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HOUSE BILL 600

Short Title: Recognition of the Tuscarora. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Goodwin, Stevens, Cunningham, and Penny (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 1, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO RESTORE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION TO THE TUSCARORA AND TO
PROVIDE THEM REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

Whereas, the passage of Senate Bill 642 by the 1971 General Assembly created the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, recognizing the existence within the State of certain named Indian tribes and also acknowledged the fact that members of other Indian tribes reside within the State; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora were recognized through treaties with the North Carolina government, but were not among those tribes recognized in 1971; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora were a powerful tribe at the time of the English settlement of the land that became North Carolina and Virginia and their prominent role in the early history of both states is well documented; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora and the Cherokee are the only tribes to hold treaties with the North Carolina government; and

Whereas, the King of the Tuscarora was the signatory of the 1712 General Articles of Peace and the 1714 Sun and Moon Peace Treaty and these treaties helped establish a lasting and prosperous peace between The Tuscarora and the government and citizens of North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora signed a stand-alone Treaty in 1717 with Governor Eden that reserved 56,000 acres of historic Tuscarora territory in Bertie County exclusively for the Tuscarora known as Indian Woods and in 1748 legislation reestablished the official boundaries and drew a map of its proximities; and

Whereas, for two centuries, parcels of Indian Woods were allotted to descendants of the Tuscarora Tribe and they have persisted as communities of Tuscarora People since that time and have reorganized and incorporated into The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories and appointed a tribal council to represent all North Carolina Tuscarora; and

Whereas, a review of historical documents and testimony confirmed the current Tribal Council of The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories consists of descendants of the historical Tuscarora Tribe; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora and its descendants contributed and continue to contribute to the settlement and growth of the State of North Carolina, have maintained their ethnic background, original language and culture and number among themselves families with names well-known throughout the area and the State; Now, therefore
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:



1 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 71A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
2 section to read:

3 **"§ 71A-7.3. The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories; rights, privileges,**
4 **immunities, obligations, and duties.**

5 The Indians who comprise The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, whose ancestors
6 signed treaties with the government of North Carolina and were granted the Indian Woods
7 Reservation on the Roanoke River in Bertie County, shall, from and after July 1, 2025, be
8 designated and officially recognized as The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, and
9 they shall continue to enjoy all their rights, privileges, and immunities as an American Indian
10 Tribe with a recognized tribal governing body carrying out and exercising substantial
11 governmental duties and powers similar to the State. The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka shall
12 be recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to
13 Indians because of their status as Indians. The Tuscarora shall maintain individual enrollment
14 criteria, providing an opportunity for all North Carolina Tuscarora descendants to enroll and shall
15 govern themselves in a manner that will benefit and unify all Tuscarora that come under their
16 governance."

17 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 143B-407 reads as rewritten:

18 **"§ 143B-407. North Carolina State Commission of Indian Affairs – membership; term of**
19 **office; chairman; compensation.**

20 (a) The State Commission of Indian Affairs shall consist of two persons appointed by the
21 General Assembly, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Assistant Secretary of
22 Commerce in charge of the Division of Employment Security, the Secretary of Administration,
23 the Secretary of Environmental Quality, the Commissioner of Labor or their designees and ~~24~~23
24 representatives of the Indian community. These Indian members shall be selected by tribal or
25 community consent from the Indian groups that are recognized by the State of North Carolina
26 and are principally geographically located as follows: the Coharie of Sampson and Harnett
27 Counties; the Eastern Band of Cherokees; the Haliwa Saponi of Halifax, Warren, and adjoining
28 counties; the Lumbees of Robeson, Hoke and Scotland Counties; the Meherrin of Hertford
29 County; the Waccamaw-Siouan from Columbus and Bladen Counties; the Sappony; the
30 Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation of Alamance and Orange Counties, The Tuscarora Indians
31 of Kahtenuaka Territories, and the Native Americans located in Cumberland, Guilford, Johnston,
32 Mecklenburg, Orange, and Wake Counties. The Coharie shall have two members; the Eastern
33 Band of Cherokees, two; the Haliwa Saponi, two; the Lumbees, three; the Meherrin, one; the
34 Waccamaw-Siouan, two; the Sappony, one; the Cumberland County Association for Indian
35 People, two; the Guilford Native Americans, two; the Metrolina Native Americans, two; the
36 Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, ~~one, one;~~ the Triangle Native American Society, ~~one,~~
37 ~~one;~~ The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, two. Of the two appointments made by
38 the General Assembly, one shall be made upon the recommendation of the Speaker, and one shall
39 be made upon recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Appointments by
40 the General Assembly shall be made in accordance with G.S. 120-121 and vacancies shall be
41 filled in accordance with G.S. 120-122.

42 "

43 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 143B-135.5 reads as rewritten:

44 "Part 30A. American Indian Heritage Commission.

45 **"§ 143B-135.5. American Indian Heritage Commission established.**

46 ...

47 (b) Members. – The Commission shall consist of ~~12~~13 members. The initial board shall
48 be selected on or before February 1, 2022, as follows:

- 49 (1) One representative recommended by each of the following tribes: Coharie,
50 Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin,

Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenauaka Territories, and Waccamaw-Siouan.

(2) One representative recommended by each of the following organizations: Cumberland County Association for Indian People, Guilford Native American Association, Metrolina Native American Association, and the Triangle Native American Society.

(c) Terms. – The members recommended by the Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa-Saponi, and Lumbee Tribes and the members recommended by the Cumberland County Association for Indian People and the Guilford Native American Association shall serve initial terms of two years expiring on June 30, 2023. The members recommended by the Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribes and the members recommended by the Metrolina Native American Association and the Triangle Native American Society shall serve initial terms of three years expiring on June 30, 2024. The member recommended by The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenauaka Territories shall serve an initial term of two years expiring on June 30, 2027. Upon the expiration of the terms of the initial members of the Commission, each member shall be appointed to terms for three years and shall serve until a successor is appointed.

...."

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.