FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention: News Editor, Assignment Editor

Contact: Mahtowin Munro via info@uaine.org

November 16, 2026

PLYMOUTH, MA BREAKS AGREEMENT WITH NATIVE AMERICAN ORGANIZATION DAYS BEFORE THANKSGIVING

The town of Plymouth, MA has voted to breach its 1998 agreement with United American Indians of New England (UAINE) just days before the town's tourism-centered celebration of Thanksgiving and UAINE's annual National Day of Mourning ceremony and gathering.

UAINE's lawyers have today filed an Emergency Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction against Plymouth in Plymouth Superior Court. (PDFs attached).

Mahtowin Munro (Lakota), co-leader of UAINE, explained that "We are not going to put up with Plymouth's attempts to interfere with National Day of Mourning. To be clear, our 1998 Agreement with Plymouth came about as the result of the police brutality that occurred at the 1997 National Day of Mourning. More than 100 local, county and state police kettled our peaceful march, knocking many participants to the ground. Twenty-five of us were arrested that day and multiple people -- including Elders -- were injured. (Footage of the police attack on the 1997 NDOM can be seen here: https://youtu.be/A9UsphjD02o) Participants were dragged by their hair and the police kneeled on the necks of protesters. Pepper spray was used on numerous people, including those who were handcuffed. Images of Plymouth's violent suppression of free speech appeared in media all over the world, and thousands of Native people and organizations and our allies demanded justice and a boycott of Plymouth.

"In 1998, we agreed to drop a civil rights suit against Plymouth. In exchange, Plymouth dropped the trumped-up charges and agreed that UAINE has a right to rally and march every Thanksgiving without impediment or red tape from the town. In addition, Plymouth is obligated to provide a few simple supports such as a stage. We have made every effort during the last 28 years to comply with our end of the Agreement."

Munro continued, "In 2025, Plymouth tried to back out of the agreement, and we successfully took the town to court. Now, one year later, Plymouth has doubled down on its repudiation of the 1998 Settlement Agreement with the Plymouth Select Board voting on November 10, 2026, to cease compliance with the 1998 Settlement Agreement and end its decades-long facilitation of preparatory activities for NDOM's opening speeches on Cole's Hill. Plymouth is refusing to provide us with a stage and are demanding things that are not in the agreement. Under the terms of the 1998 agreement, we have a right

to choose our own march route, yet the Town has repeatedly tried to insist that we should allow ourselves to be pushed into the far corner of a park so that we will be less noticeable. We believe they are throwing up roadblocks because they don't want the tourists to see or hear Native Americans who are speaking about the true history of the Pilgrim invasion and resulting land theft and genocide of Wampanoag and other Native peoples."

Kisha James (Aquinnah Wampanoag), co-leader of UAINE, remarked that "Plymouth clearly cares more about preserving the 'America's Hometown' fantasy it has created for itself than it cares about freedom of speech or meeting its obligations to UAINE under the 1998 agreement."

Jean-Luc Pierite, President of the Board of Directors of the North American Indian Center of Boston, said "We must protect the rights of Indigenous peoples from any abridgment. North American Indian Center of Boston is Massachusetts' oldest urban Indian center and the Commonwealth's designated liaison for residents who are members of the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Mi'kmaq, and Maliseet. The suppression deployed in 1997 directly impacted our membership and constituents. As long as Plymouth invests in the memorialization of settler colonialism, the town should further observe its obligations to Indigenous people."

ACTION ALERT: UAINE is asking supporters to contact the Plymouth Select Board via selectmen@plymouth-ma.gov and let them know that they need to honor their agreement with UAINE.

The National Day of Mourning has been held annually on so-called "Thanksgiving" since 1970. This year, participants plan to gather for the 57th National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on Thursday, November 26, 2026, at 12 noon. The program will be livestreamed as well.

Email: info@uaine.org Website for background: www.uaine.org