

Two more states are dumping Christopher Columbus to celebrate indigenous people instead

By Christina Maxouris, CNN

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(CNN)More states are ditching Christopher Columbus.

Vermont and Maine are the latest to join the growing number of cities, states and municipalities that have renamed the October holiday for the people who lived in America long before the explorer arrived.

The legislatures of both states passed bills last week that would change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day. The bills are awaiting the governors' signatures. ACLU of Maine Advocacy Director applauded the state's efforts.

"It's time to stop celebrating a man whose arrival brought death, disease and slavery to hundreds of thousands, and start honoring the people who lived here long before," Oami Amarasingham told the [Bangor Daily News](#) after the bill passed.

In the past years, there has been heavy pushback on the existing holiday by activists who say honoring Columbus ignores the atrocities that he and other explorers committed upon arriving in the US. Others also point to the conclusion that many historians have reached: Columbus was neither the first person nor European to discover the Americas.

Rep. Debbie Ingram, who introduced the bill in Vermont said it is a "step to right, or at least acknowledge, the many wrongs perpetrated on our Native American brothers & sisters." "Vermont was founded and built upon lands whose original inhabitants were the Abenaki people and honors them and their ancestors," Vermont's bill says. "The establishment of this holiday will aid in the cultural development of Vermont's recognized tribes, while enabling all indigenous peoples in Vermont and elsewhere to

But the bill is just a formality for the state. Vermont has already been celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day for nearly three years, after Gov. Peter Sumlin signed a proclamation encouraging residents to "recognize the sacrifice and contributions of the First Peoples of this land."

Across the US, communities have been pushing for the same shift.

If the governors of Vermont and Maine put pen to paper, the two states will join a growing list of cities and states that are celebrating those who were here long before Europeans anchored on American shores. Earlier this month, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed a bill which replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous

People's Day, saying she was "proud" to make the change. "This new holiday will mark a celebration of New Mexico's 23 sovereign indigenous nations and the essential place of honor native citizens hold in the fabric of our great state," she said. "Enacting Indigenous People's Day sends an important message of reconciliation and will serve as a reminder of our state's proud native history."

Alaska, Minnesota and Oregon have already left Columbus behind. South Dakota has been celebrating Native American Day since 1990. And dozens of cities have opted out of Columbus Day as well, including Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver, Phoenix and San Francisco. Earlier this year, the University of Notre Dame announced it would be covering 12 murals depicting Columbus' life. The university president said that to many, the murals were "blind to the consequences of Columbus' voyage for the indigenous peoples who inhabited this 'new' world and at worst demeaning towards