

## How the Great Law of Peace shaped the U. S. constitution

Utah State Bar and partners invited the Nebo Title VI Program to collaborate with them for Constitution Day at Matheson Courthouse in Salt Lake City, to share the story about how the United States Constitution was shaped and molded by the Great Law of Peace. We shared the Great Law of Peace story from the Haudenosaunee, commonly known as the Iroquois Confederacy. I really wanted to emphasize the value and impact the Iroquois Confederacy had on the formation of the United States and Democracy. Students performed a play explaining the Peacemaker story with eight actor's and six narrator's describing how the Iroquois Confederacy were practicing democracy when the pilgrims first arrived on the east coast. We explained how each nation has its own identity with many cultural similarities. The six Nations learned how to maintain a democratic society so that peace could prevail in order to govern their people.

Nebo Title VI students explained the importance of the Hiawatha Belt and how it symbolizes the unity of the original five Haudenosaunee nations, the story of the Great Law of Peace. This was acted out by younger students for judges, lawyers and staff at Matheson CourtHouse, older students explained with posters how the U.S Constitution concepts were copied and are very similar to the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace. The Poster boards explained the process of selection for office in the U.S government and the idea of federalism, separation of powers, accountability of elected officials, freedom of assembly, speech, religion. The Tribal Nations grasp of democracy impressed the founding fathers such as Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. They used these ideas to write the constitution for the United States of America.

After we explained the history behind the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's contribution, we brought up all the student's in front of all the judges, court staff and dignitaries and performed a round dance song called "Be Proud". Earlier that day we had toured Utah State capitol, visiting the House of Representatives and Senate Chambers, so that students could see where laws were made. Thank you to Shoshana Begay, Eileen Quintana, Natalie Billie, and Analysa Allison for working on the play and allowing me to be a part of this special event in teaching our community.









