



**Executive Order
2020-10
June 19, 2020**

Removal of the term “plantations” from City of Providence documents and ceremonies

WHEREAS, the City of Providence is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive city for all residents, including Black and Indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, the City of Providence is committed to continually addressing bias and racism in our governing systems, policies, and structures that violate the safety of, justice for, and value of every community member; and

WHEREAS, the term “plantations” today, regardless of its historic meaning in Rhode Island, has an irreversible and offensive connotation of the enslavement, bondage, rape, torture, separation, and oppression of Black and Indigenous people by white people in this state and throughout America; and

WHEREAS, it is hurtful and disrespectful to many members of the Black and Indigenous communities of the City of Providence to use the term “plantations” in the name defining their home; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island’s history must not be denied or erased, but must be taught to our communities in culturally competent curricula rather than proudly presented in the name of our home; and

WHEREAS, Black and Indigenous people in Rhode Island are leading us, black, brown, white, or otherwise, to fight together to move beyond a stained and painful past into a hopeful and brighter future; and

WHEREAS, removing the term “plantations” in reference to the name for the State of Rhode Island and Providence in City of Providence documents will not reverse or rectify centuries of white violence and racism against Black and Indigenous communities, but serve as a symbolic step to continue acting for justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, this Executive Order must not distract from the urgent need for government action to meaningfully address racism, racial inequity, and oppression and violence globally toward Black and Indigenous people that manifests globally in disparities in poverty, health, education, economic opportunity, police brutality, political power, and many other facets of this community; and

WHEREAS, a State referendum in 2010 to change the name of the “State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations” to the “State of Rhode Island” failed to pass, and Providence had the highest proportion of yes votes in the State; and

WHEREAS, the City of Providence will encourage the State of Rhode Island to officially change the state name by state referendum to ensure this change is comprehensive.

NOW THEREFORE, do I, Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor of the City of Providence, order the following, effective immediately:

1. The word “plantations” shall hereby no longer be printed in any City of Providence documents, or used in any official ceremonies in reference to the name of the State of Rhode Island or City of Providence.
2. The purpose of removing the term “plantations” is to:
 - a. Reprove the usage of the term in the name of a governing body, sworn to serve all residents, which has irreversible and offensive connotations of slavery and white violence to Black and Indigenous people; and
 - b. To ensure all residents, especially the Black and Indigenous people in our community, feel safe, respected, and proud to call Providence home.


Jorge O. Elorza

Mayor