



Massachusetts – Portuguese Heritage Day

10 de junho de 2021

Senator *pro tempore* of the Massachusetts Senate,
Senator Marc Pacheco,

Representative Tony Cabral,

Dear Members of the Portuguese-American
Legislative Caucus,

Senators, Representatives, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Massachusetts was where the Mayflower pilgrims first landed. In the following centuries, many Portuguese arrived on the same shores in search of a land of opportunity in which to develop their life projects.

In fact, the Portuguese presence in New England precedes the very independence of the United States. It



then expanded and reinvented itself throughout the centuries, accompanying the economic and scientific development of the United States.

The Portuguese Community in Massachusetts is estimated at around three hundred thousand Portuguese and Portuguese descendants. It is one of the oldest and most dynamic Portuguese communities in the United States. Today, the Portuguese and Portuguese-Americans play an increasing role in the private sector, in universities, in scientific institutions and in politics.

They are the living bridge between Portugal and Massachusetts. Just like the Azorean islands, from where many in the Community have their roots, connect the European and the American continents.

I congratulate the Portuguese Diaspora for all it has achieved in Massachusetts. The Portuguese never shy away from a challenge and I welcome the Community's active role in all areas of Massachusetts society.

The very Portuguese-American Caucus here represents just that. The Portuguese Community has become an intrinsic part of Massachusetts' fabric at all



levels, including in its political life. It has chosen to take an active role in shaping the State and the nation's democracy, and you all are the embodiment of just that.

I take this opportunity to thank you all for choosing to celebrate the Portuguese Heritage. In particular, I thank Senator *pro tempore* Marc Pacheco and Representative Tony Cabral for putting together this event.

I am immensely proud of your achievements, as you represent the very best the Portuguese Diaspora has to offer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Massachusetts is leading the way in many areas crucial for the future of our societies. It is a global reference in biotechnology, engineering, finance, maritime trade, and higher education.

Massachusetts and innovation go hand in hand, and I am proud to say that many Portuguese companies and

investors, including those of the Diaspora, are contributing to its success.

The MIT Portugal Program 2030 is a good example of our transatlantic partnership. This is a ground-breaking partnership between Portuguese universities and higher education institutions, the MIT, the Portuguese government, industry partners and other non-academic institutions. It further shows Portugal and Massachusetts' joint commitment towards a blue and green agenda.

Through this program, we are fostering Portugal's brightest minds and giving them the tools to create the solutions needed to reach a better and more sustainable future.

Bright minds are also fostered at a different level, here in Massachusetts, through the teaching of Portuguese to both students of Portuguese descent, as well as to American students. I thank the Commonwealth for including Portuguese in the school curriculum and, by doing so, for further affirming the values of diversity



and inclusion that are the hallmark of this great American State.

I am pleased that numerous joint initiatives are being developed, notably the several Memoranda of Understanding signed with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Language is, as I see it, a fundamental component of one's identity and a powerful bridgebuilding tool. This is the case of Portuguese, a language spoken by millions of people, spread throughout five continents, and the cultural heritage to hundreds of thousands of New Englanders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Most nations celebrate their national days by evoking the history of their independence or war feats. Instead, we choose to celebrate what we see as our biggest assets: our language and our people.



Indeed, Portugal's National Day is not just a celebration of the country, but of the language that connects us all and of the art bestowed upon us by past poets and artists. Most importantly, it is a celebration of the people who contribute to making the country what it is today, regardless of where they are in the world – our Portuguese Communities.

We had the opportunity to celebrate together the Portuguese national day here in 2018 and is now a great honour to celebrate this day with you.

Portuguese is the spark that each of us carry, no matter how far we may be from the land of our ancestors. The Portuguese Communities continue to be the bridge that connects the countries where they live and Portugal and allow us to work on creating a most prosperous future. May we continue to carry and celebrate this legacy! May we continue to build bridges for years to come! *Muito obrigado*. Thank you.