

On Halftown's 60% Claim

What's wrong with Halftown's claim that his Council's leadership was approved by 60% of Cayuga Nation citizens?

(See HalftownMustGo.org for documents referenced)

First off, Clint Halftown was removed from his position on Cayuga Nation Council by his late Clan Mother, Bernadette Hill.

In 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognized Halftown's removal as a fact, with the Eastern Regional Director saying, "I would be remiss if I failed to recognize the results of this exercise of ancient traditional authority by the Clan Mothers."
(Keel page 3)

The Department of Interior (DOI) later "vacated" that decision, based on a technicality within the Department's procedures.

Halftown has refused to accept his removal, in defiance of his Clan Mother, who he once referred to as his "Clan Monster."
(MSJ page 14)

By continuing to engage with Halftown as a representative of the Nation, the U.S. is actively marginalizing the authority of Clan Mothers.

In order to establish a secure claim to power, Halftown, like a typical dictator, has attempted to **re-write the rules**.

In 2016, his Council conducted a mail survey called a "Statement of Support" (SOS) campaign. Halftown claims the results of this 2016 survey show that 60% of Cayuga Nation citizens supported his Council.

Between 2005 and 2016, the BIA declined to recognize the results of multiple other SOS campaigns by the Halftown Council. These denials were based on the BIA's understanding of Gayogohó:nq⁷ governance processes as operating through consensus rather than voting.

But the BIA curiously reversed course and decided to recognize the Halftown Council's 2016 SOS campaign.

Worse, not only did the U.S. government affirm the 2016 SOS results, **they even helped Halftown design the campaign**: "The BIA decided to provide technical support to the effort despite the opposition of fully half the Nation's recognized Council of Chiefs and all of the Nation's Clan Mothers."
(MSJ page 32)

In response, in 2018, the Council of Chiefs and Clan Mothers sued the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI).

The only independent expert to assess and offer testimony on the SOS campaign concluded that it was “plagued by problems of biased language, confounding financial influences, insufficient response categories...” and more, suggesting overall “**a deeply flawed method of assessment from which no information may be confidently gathered.**” (MSJ page 25)

And that’s not all: the SOS campaign was designed so that individual citizens' names were associated with their submissions. This means that Halftown - already notorious amongst Nation citizens for acts of workplace intimidation and retaliation - was able to identify those who expressed opposition to his “leadership.”

Most importantly, this SOS process is entirely outside the processes of the Great Law of Peace. Even an election considered ‘free and fair’ by international standards would not live up to the democratic processes of the Cayuga Nation according to the Great Law.

In 2013, the Haudenosaunee Grand Council (which does not recognize the Halftown Council) issued a statement on the historical trend of colonial governments in Canada and the U.S. imposing elected councils. This statement reads, “... the traditional councils are the original governments of the Haudenosaunee communities/nations handling national affairs, while the elected councils are imposed systems... for the administration of colonial policies in each community.” (2013 Grand Council Statement)

Even Halftown himself recognized that Gayogohó:nq⁷ governance is not based on majority rule -- before it served his interests. In a 1997 letter to the BIA, he wrote, “We are concerned... by your statement that the BIA will continue to accord ... recognition to [Chief] Isaac until it is clearly shown that he ‘no longer enjoys the support of a majority of the tribal membership’. ... Cayuga Chiefs and representatives are... accountable to the Cayuga People. **That accountability is enforced according to traditional Cayuga law and the clan system, rather than Anglo concepts of pure majority rule.**” (MSJ page 12).

What does all this mean? It means that Halftown’s claim to have majority support from Gayogohó:nq⁷ citizens is both **misleading** and **irrelevant**. Legitimate leadership of the Gayogohó:nq⁷ Nation falls to the Council of Chiefs and the Clan Mothers, and the US must heed their decisions.

What does all this mean? It means that Halftown's claim to have majority support from Gayogohó:nq⁷ citizens is both **misleading**, in that it lacks critical context, and **irrelevant**, in that Gayogohó:nq⁷ governance processes don't involve majority rule. The Great Law of Peace is clear: governance authority belongs to Clan Mothers and the Council of Chiefs, and the US must heed their decisions.