

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE MAINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE UNITED
STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS REPORT ON
FEDERAL AND STATE SERVICES AND THE MAINE INDIAN**

WHEREAS, in December 1974, the Maine Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights published a report entitled "Federal and State Services and the Maine Indian"; and

WHEREAS, in the report, the committee found that Maine Indians were being denied services provided to other Indians by various federal agencies, that Indians in the State were entitled to these services and that their continued denial constituted invidious discrimination against Indians in the State; and

WHEREAS, the committee also found that 1/2 of the Indians in the State were not receiving state services because they lived off-reservation and recommended that the State develop an integrated program of services for members of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, Mi'kmaq Nation and Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians regardless of their residency on-reservation or off-reservation; and

WHEREAS, the committee found that both state and federal services had been withheld from a people whose need for assistance was tragically evident, and that withholding was the result of long-standing assumptions, policies and practices of discrimination against the Indian population of the State; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its investigation of the denial of specific Indian services, the committee reviewed the various state and federal programs for which Maine Indians were generally eligible as citizens and found that Indians had seldom been included in the planning or decision-making processes that affected their lives; and

WHEREAS, the committee expressed the overriding concern that every state and federal entity that may possibly have an impact on Indian people in the State should have Indian representation and structural input in the development and provision of services and that there should be expansion of social services from both state and federal levels to allow Maine Indians to enjoy full and equal citizenship under the Constitution of Maine and the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, among many policy recommendations, the committee recommended that, as a matter of basic principle, both State and Federal Governments reexamine their policies toward Indians in the State and elsewhere and affirm the inherent right of Indian self-determination and tribal sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, the committee pledged to work diligently at the federal, state and local levels to further the recommendations of the report and called upon all citizens of the State to join them; and

WHEREAS, then-Governor of Maine Kenneth Curtis wrote as a foreword to the report that it was the intention of his administration to "continue to work to guarantee that the Indians of Maine have equal access to the quality of life to which all Maine people aspire, but until that access is fully opened and free of obstructions, there is no question that the 'trail of tears' will go on and its specter will haunt us, and Maine and the nation will have failed to fulfill their just obligations to the Indians of this state"; and

WHEREAS, this report joins a legacy of advancement of the sovereignty and self-determination of Wabanaki Indian nations, tribes and bands in the State, who have endured systemic discrimination and racism by this State and other governmental entities, by recognizing present inequities in light of their historical roots and by issuing recommendations to repair these inequities in future policy and legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize the accomplishment of the Maine Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights report entitled "Federal and State Services and the Maine Indian," honor the commission's commitment to long-standing principles of equity and justice in the State and recognize that there is still much work to do to accomplish the committee's recommendations and create a fair and just partnership with the Wabanaki Indian nations, tribes and bands who live in the State and have existed in the State since time immemorial.