



MAINE CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of
The Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act**
February 7, 2022

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your faithful service. I am the Rev. Jonna Jensen. I serve as the Transitional Conference Minister of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ, which includes approximately 13,500 members of autonomous and self-governing congregations with historical roots in Congregationalism. The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ is a member denomination of the Maine Council of Churches. I offer testimony **in support of LD 1626**.

In national, state, and local settings, members of the United Church of Christ have persistently engaged in advocacy for the sovereignty of indigenous peoples. We do so as one expression of our shared commitments to choosing away from white privilege toward anti-racism. We do so as one expression of a shared commitment to choose toward a just world for all. The United Church of Christ Council for American Indian Ministries supports the work of 21 congregations throughout the United States. Gathered nationally as a United Church of Christ General Synod in 2013, delegates voted to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

It is time for the State of Maine to join with every other state in the United States where tribal nations are located. It is time for the State of Maine to become one last such state, where the application of federal Indian law is recognized and adopted with regard to rights, privileges, powers, duties, and immunities of indigenous peoples. It is time for the State of Maine to commit to the same path as our nation's federal government by engaging with indigenous tribes as sovereign governments. The provisions of **LD 1626** are significant steps toward these just intentions.

Jonna Jensen
Maine Conference United Church of Christ
LD 1626