



New England Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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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 15, 2022

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and Members of the Committee:

My name is James E. Hazelwood and I am the bishop of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). New England Synod is the judicatory office of 16 Lutheran houses of worship in Maine and others among 6 additional New England states. I am testifying on behalf of the New England Synod **in support of LD 1626.**

There is a clear and extended teaching and policy basis in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for support of Native American tribal sovereignty and the references to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. Since 1991 the ELCA was on record regarding tribal sovereignty. In 2016, this denomination approved a Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

From social policy resolution: 1992: Year of Remembrance, Repentance, and Renewal - *In Solidarity and Advocacy with Native Americans*

To affirm the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support the sovereignty of Native American tribes, to speak out for just treatment of Native Americans, and to promote harmony, reconciliation and mutual understanding within and among our communities;" (CA91.5.28)

From a social policy resolution on The Sponsorship of Legal Gaming by American Indian Tribes

"This church also explicitly affirms the sovereignty of American Indian tribes and supports the aspirations of American Indians and Alaska Natives for self-determination, self-sufficiency, and cultural identity." (CC07.11.77)

From Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery

"To repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived doctrine of discovery as an example of the "improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword" (Augsburg Confession Article XXVIII) and to acknowledge and repent from this church's complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members;"

The law under consideration (CDL 1626) would simply establish tribal sovereignty as it exists elsewhere in the United States. To support laws of this kind follows from the ELCA's declaration of benefiting from the taking of land and exemplifies the exercise of amends to which the ELCA has committed.

I encourage you to adopt CDL 1626.

Sincerely,

James Hazelwood

Rev. James Hazelwood
Bishop
New England Synod ELCA