

Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy
James Matlack, Clerk
5 Duck Pond Road
Camden, Maine 04843

LD 78 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to Article X of the Constitution of Maine Regarding the Publication of Maine Indian Treaty Obligations and LD 578 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Concerning the Publication of Maine Indian Treaty Obligations

March 7, 2023

To the Honorable Senator Anne Carney (chair), Honorable Representative Matt Moonen (chair) and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Anne D. Burt. I live in Edgecomb. Today **I am testifying in support of LD 78 and LD 578 on behalf of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy**. The Friends Committee is a statewide network of Quakers who are focused on public policy issues in Augusta. For several decades we have addressed issues of concern to the Wabanaki peoples in Maine and worked to improve and strengthen tribal-state relations.

- Friends believe that **passing the resolutions to amend the Constitution** to require that Article X Section 5 be printed whenever the Constitution is published is timely and would represent **another step forward in repairing the centuries-long frayed relationship between the state and Wabanaki nations. People hunger to know the truth in history and look to resources, such as the Constitution, for that information**. Maine's treaty obligations with the tribes, while always legally in force since 1820, have not been published in the state Constitution since 1875, when the Maine legislature passed and Maine people then ratified a constitutional amendment to omit Section 5 whenever the Constitution was printed. Recent attempts by Maliseet legislative representative Henry Bear to amend the Constitution and require that Section 5 be printed were unsuccessful.
- Of note, legislators and all Maine government officials take an oath of office to uphold the state Constitution. Also Maine schoolchildren study the state Constitution in social studies and history classes. It seems important for you, your colleagues and our schoolchildren to know all of the obligations set forth in the Constitution, including honoring treaties with the Wabanaki nations in Article X Section 5, currently not printed in the published Constitution. LD 78 or LD 578 would amend that.

Friends are grateful to House Speaker Rachel Talbot-Ross and Senator Rick Bennett for introducing two nearly identical resolutions (LD 78 and LD 578), reflecting growing bi-partisan support for legislation and other efforts to improve state-tribal relations.

We strongly urge your committee to unanimously pass LD 78 and/or LD 578 and to encourage your legislative colleagues to do likewise.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne D. Burt

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