

My name is Claire Millikin Raymond. I live in Owls Head, and I teach for the University of Maine and Bates College.

I write to urge you to pass LD 2004, an Act to Enact Advancing Equality for Wabanaki Nations. Since 1980, forty-three years ago, when the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act was passed, the United States congress has passed legislation significantly benefitting federally recognized Indigenous American tribal nations. However, alone among federally recognized peoples, the Wabanaki in Maine do not automatically benefit from forty-three years of progressive legislation. This is an injustice to the Wabanaki people and also is deleterious to Maine's overall economy. For the Wabanaki people to have to litigate basic human rights on a case by case basis is an absurd situation and Maine should move quickly to begin to revise this aspect of MICSA. It is not a question of rejecting the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act whole cloth but rather of fine tuning a particularly damaging provision. Studies have shown that when federally recognized tribes benefit from legislation, the entire area and state they inhabit also benefits economically. Maine should take this step of signing into law LD 2004 for reasons both ethical and practical. This law will be beneficial not just for the Wabanaki but for all of rural Maine and therefore for the whole state.

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