

My name is Beth Clifford, and live in Perry. I'm writing in support of LD 2004.

The Wabanaki tribes in Maine are treated differently than the other 570 federally recognized tribes across the Country. Because of the 1980 Settlement Act, when Congress passes federal legislation for tribes nationwide, the tribes in Maine must be explicitly written into the legislation, unlike the other federally recognized tribes. This is an excessive burden to the tribes. They do not have the resources to track all federal legislation and lobby Congress to have them included in each piece of legislation.

When I think of this burden, I contemplate a hypothetical situation if my town had to be written into every piece of legislation passed at the Maine legislature. I live in Perry, and my State Senator and State Representative are Marianne Moore and Anne Perry. If my home town had to be specifically added to each piece of state legislation passed, it would be impossible for my state legislators to include my town. There are nearly 3,000 pieces of legislation being considered in just this legislative session! My representatives would be running around frantically to each committee or would try to amend each bill before it reached the floor. But this is just what we're asking the tribes in Maine to do with Congress.

Suffolk University published a report in 2019 highlighting the federal beneficial Indian laws passed by Congress since the Settlement Act was implemented in 1980. They found approximately 151 federal laws have been passed that the tribes in Maine do not have access to. Many of the laws which have passed that the tribes do not have access to would not only benefit the tribes but the surrounding rural areas. With the tribes not being able to access various federal funding, their self-determination and economic vitality have been stunted. Allowing access to federal beneficial laws will not only benefit the tribes but all of citizens of Maine.

Some argue that we should take each piece of legislation passed on a case by case basis. This would take decades. For example, in 2013 the Violence Against Woman's Act was finally amended to include Native American women. However, the tribes in Maine were not included. Maine finally passed legislation mirroring the federal law to include the tribes in Maine in 2020. It should not take seven years for the tribes in Maine to protect their tribal members from domestic violence.

This legislation doesn't circumvent the 1980's Settlement Act. This legislation changes a provision in the Settlement Act that would at least begin the process of placing the tribes in Maine on the same footing as the other 570 federally recognized tribes. Please support LD 2004, *An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations* to start putting the tribes and rural Maine on a path to prosperity.

Thank you.

Beth Clifford
Perry, ME 04667