

Troy Jordan  
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LD 2004

My name is Troy Jordan and I live in South Portland.

From my earliest days, the stories of Maine's Wabanaki tribes have been woven into my understanding of this great state. Yet, it's always struck me how differently they are treated compared to other federally recognized tribes across the country. As a result of the 1980 Settlement Act, Maine's tribes must continually lobby to be explicitly written into each piece of federal legislation intended for tribal nations. This is not just an unfair burden, but a constraint that stifles the growth and development of Wabanaki communities.

A 2019 report from Suffolk University highlighted that approximately 151 federal beneficial Indian laws have been passed since the Settlement Act, from which Maine's tribes have been excluded. Think about it - 151 opportunities for growth, empowerment, and prosperity have been missed. And isn't just about the tribes, either. It's about the rural areas surrounding them, places that could have been positively impacted had these laws been accessible to the Wabanaki tribes.

Thankfully, we now have a chance to correct this injustice. The legislation we're discussing doesn't aim to circumvent the Settlement Act; rather, it seeks to amend a provision, enabling a more equitable footing for our Wabanaki tribes in comparison to the 570 other federally recognized tribes. This legislation, LD 2004, is a step towards prosperity not only for the Wabanaki tribes but also of rural Maine.

As a proud Mainer, it's deeply important to me that we do right by our Wabanaki tribes. Let's ensure they can access the same benefits and resources as their counterparts nationwide. I whole heartedly support the passage LD 2004.