

Ann Dodd-Collins  
Portland  
LD 2004

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

My name is Ann Dodd-Collins, and I live in Portland. Today I urge your Committee to vote unanimously OUGHT TO PASS on 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. Of approximately 151 federal beneficial Indian laws passed by Congress since the Settlement Act was implemented in 1980, this has happened only once.

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. The Settlement Act has intentionally and systematically placed obstacles in the paths of our Wabanaki neighbors. Their self-determination and economic vitality have been stunted and so has the growth of their neighboring communities.

This legislation changes a provision in the 1980 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. It does not circumvent the Act.

I urge you to support LD 2004. It is long past time to start putting the tribes and rural Maine on a path to prosperity.