



TO: The Honorable Anne Carney
The Honorable Matt Moonen, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

DATE: May 31st, 2023

RE: LD 1970, An Act to Enact the Maine Indian Child Welfare Act

Good morning Senator Carney and Representative Moonen.

My name is Lane Sturtevant. I'm a resident of Warren. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine in support of LD 1970, An Act to Enact the Maine Indian Child Welfare Act.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization that has been working for over 100 years to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a member of the Wabanaki Alliance's tribal legislation coalition because we support the efforts of the Wabanaki nations to achieve full recognition of their right to self-determination. We support legislation that empowers the Wabanaki nations and ensures the well-being of their communities. The Maine Indian Child Welfare Act is one such piece of legislation.

The Maine Indian Child Welfare Act would safeguard protections for Wabanaki children and families in Maine, even if the U.S. Supreme Court weakens or destroys the Indian Child Welfare Act at the federal level. The intentional removal of indigenous children from their families and communities – which occurred in Maine as well as elsewhere across North America – threatened the future of tribal nations and their right to self-determination by separating younger generations of indigenous citizens from their families, community, and culture. The Indian Child Welfare Act protects against this threat to indigenous self-determination; ensuring that such a protection does not disappear for Wabanaki nations in Maine if the federal law is undermined is critical.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We hope you will support LD 1970.