

Claudine Weatherford
Portland
LD 2004

My name is Claudine Weatherford. I live in Portland, Maine. I write to express my strongest support for LD 2004. Although I “come from away,” I love and respect Maine and our people. I am greatly disappointed that—even disgusted that—we are failing our Wabanaki tribes.

There’s no doubt in my mind that the Wabanaki tribes in Maine have been left behind and are treated differently—unfairly—compared to the other 570 federally recognized tribes across the United States. 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.

According to an academic report published in 2019, since the 1980 Settlement Act, Congress has passed approximately 151 federal laws beneficial to Indian laws. The tribes in Maine do not have access to these laws. 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 rural Maine.

LD 2004 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 to start putting the tribes and rural Maine on a path to prosperity.

Please vote for LD 2004, and override Governor Mills’ veto if needed.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of Maine’s citizens.

Sincerely,

Claudine Weatherford
Portland, Maine