

Senator Anne Carney, Representative Thom Harnett and Honorable Members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Patty Kidder and I live in the village of Springvale located in the city of Sanford. I am writing to you as a person of faith, to ask you to vote in favor of LD 2004: An Act to Enact the Advancing Equality for Wabinaki Nations Act. I am a long-time member of both the Sanford Unitarian Universalist Church and MUUSAN.

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 rural Maine.

As a Unitarian Universalist, or U.U., we believe in “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and in “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations”. There is no justice and equity for our Maine tribes when they are unable to benefit from the more than 150 federal laws passed since 1980. All of the other 570 federally recognized tribes across our country have received opportunities for economic development, to increase access to health care and expand environmental protections to name a few, while the 4 federally recognized tribes in Maine could not.

I am an active member of both the Maine Peoples’ Alliance and the Maine Democratic Party and our shared principle of no one is left behind supports the passage of LD 2004. It is our belief that we need to undo the injustice our 4 federally recognized tribes have endured since the 1980’s Settlement Act was passed.

This bipartisan compromise legislation doesn’t circumvent the 1980’s Settlement Act. It just changes a provision in the Settlement Act that would begin the process of placing the tribes in Maine on the same footing as the other 570 federally recognized tribes. I am asking you to please support LD 2004 to start putting the tribes and rural Maine on a path to prosperity.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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