

January 8, 2024

To: Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Diane Oltarzewski, Belfast ME, member of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy

Re: LD 1834 - Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish an Officer on Tribal Relations - Ought to Pass

I speak on behalf of the Committee on Tribal-State Relations of the Friends (Quaker) Committee on Maine Public Policy, a statewide advocacy group. For over thirty years, one of our primary goals has been to support a right and just relationship between the State of Maine and the federally-recognized Tribes and Nations, their people, and Indigenous leadership within our state.

This bill, if approved by the legislature and affirmed by the people, would create a formal and permanent role within state government for an official to serve as a conduit of information between the State and the Tribes - in effect, facilitating the long-sought goal of respectful Nation-to-Nation communication, for which our Committee and Tribes both local and national have persistently advocated.

Friends Committee strongly urges "Ought to Pass" and sees this as the next step in bringing our Constitution into the 21st century, making it a document that is truly of, by, and for the people it governs.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support.