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LD 958

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee: In recent years like many people, I have become more aware of the disparity of treatment of Native Americans compared to those of us of European origin. Books like *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown, *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness* by Frederick Turner and more recently *Braiding Sweetgrass* and *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer have enlightened many of us about the cultural richness of the Native tribes and our responsibility to right the wrongs of the past. Until a few years ago I was unaware of the Doctrine of Discovery and the harm that one document inflicted on Native peoples.

LD 958 helps address the issue of eminent domain that returns sovereignty to the four Maine Indian tribes that other tribes in the USA already have.

Federal law protects most tribal nations from state-level eminent domain, but the 1980 Settlement Acts have resulted in the Wabanaki Nations in Maine being unfairly excluded from these federal protections.

For example, one hundred years ago Maine Route 190 was built through the Passamaquoddy Reservation, taken by eminent domain by the State of Maine without consultation with the tribe.

This bill encourages consultation and collaboration giving the Maine Native Americans the respect they deserve and have been deprived of over hundreds of years.

The Wabanaki Nations should receive the same access to their sovereign land as other federally recognized tribes. LD 958 restores the fundamental principle that the Wabanaki Nations are sovereign governments and are able to regulate their land. In truth, we need Native American wisdom now more than at any other time in our nation's history.

Please approve LD 958 to help heal the breach between Native Americans and the federal and State of Maine governments. Thank you.