

Nancy Kurtz  
Topsham  
LD 785

My name is Nancy Kurtz. I am a resident of Topsham, Maine and am testifying in support of LD 785. I submit these remarks as a member of the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition which affirms and promotes justice, Testimony: LD 785 offers the Legislature the opportunity to restore the Wabanaki Nations' historic rights to self-determination, a step that is long overdue and which will benefit both the Wabanaki Nations and the State of Maine.

Enacting LD 785 is the fair and equitable step in addressing and correcting the many mistakes which have been made in the past by colonists and their governments who settled the lands now claimed by the United States, but which historically belonged to the Wabanaki Nation. It is time to establish a new relationship with the Wabanaki which reflects and respects the rights and interests of all people of Maine and which will allow the State of Maine and the Wabanaki Nations to work together to benefit all of us.

This legislation will restore tribal self-government to all federally recognized tribes in Maine. It is based on 22 consensus recommendations from a bipartisan task force convened by the Maine Legislature in 2019 to address longstanding issues with the 1980 Maine Indian Settlement Claims Implementation Act. It repeals provisions which treat Wabanaki Nations as akin to municipalities, rather than as sovereign nations, the status granted to more than 570 federally recognized under federal Indian law.

When the Wabanaki are able to take advantage of federal resources which they have been denied, both they and rural areas of Maine will benefit. This is a positive outcome for the entire state. It is time to move past the difficulties which led to the passage of Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act which was never intended to be the final word, and to resolve the longstanding issues it created. Let's move forward in a positive direction, allowing Wabanaki Nations and the State of Maine to work together with respect and good will to make Maine a better and more thriving place for us all.

I encourage the Committee to vote in favor of LD785 and to support its passage by the Legislature to welcome in a new era where Wabanaki rights are restored and we in the State of Maine can all work with and learn from each other.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 785