

Jason Grundstrom-Whitney
Monmouth
LD 785

LD 785 - An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Change to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

Dear Friends,

LD 785 will allow the Wabanaki Nations equal access to Federal Bills and Policies that have been denied to the Wabanaki Nations of Maine but enjoyed by the 570 federally recognized tribes in the U.S.

LD 785 would bring in 330 million dollars to the Maine GDP, create 2,700 jobs and generate 39 million dollars in State and Local taxes. This would clearly be significant not only to the Wabanaki Nations but also for the State of Maine.

In the last 40 years, not having the same access to Federal Bills have hurt the Wabanaki with unemployment, child poverty rates, and infrastructure needs. Poverty for Wabanaki children ranges from 40-77% compared to Maines's overall poverty rate of 15%.

When a legal structure like the 1980 Indian Land Claims Act uniquely restricts Indigenous government and correlates with entrenched child poverty, we have a moral responsibility to revisit and alter this legislation.

Parity strengthens Maine.

Parity honors Sovereignty.

Parity gives Wabanaki children the same opportunity that other children in the country have.

We pride ourselves in the U.S. for our collective sovereignty. To restrict sovereignty to the Wabanaki Nations due to the constraints of the 1980 Indian Land Claims Act is antithetical to the fundamental nature of what we pride in ourselves philosophically, morally and spiritually as a collective nation. It impedes our relationships with the Federally recognized Nations within Maine's borders. Making necessary changes to the Act restores parity with other federally recognized tribes nationwide.

Sovereignty delayed is opportunity denied.

I am writing to support LD 785

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