

Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
My name is Claire Millikin Raymond. I live in Owls Head and teach for the University of Maine system. I write to you here in support of LD 395, a bill that will allow federal statutes and regulations that are applicable to the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Houlton Band of Maliseet to supersede state laws that prohibit the tribes from benefitting from new federal regulations. This bill will also make applicable to the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Houlton Band of Maliseet federal rights conferred on federally recognized tribes ever since the signing of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act forty-six years ago. The bill will allow tribal leaders to notify Maine's Attorney General if they perceive that they are being excluded from these federal laws. In agreement with a bipartisan committee, gaming will still be regulated by the state. This bill also rightfully creates a chapter of the Mi'kmaq Nation in Maine.

The benefits of the bill are multifarious. The bill will promote the prospering and thriving of the Indigenous people whose homeland is this place now called Maine. By passing LD 395, we can ensure that after almost half a century of being denied some one-hundred-fifty federal rights the Wabanaki will at long last benefit from status equal to other Native nations within the United States. The state as a whole will benefit, for studies highlighted by the Economic Policy Institute show that when Native nations living within a given state are granted federal rights the entire state economy improves. This makes good sense because laws suppressing economic activity in one group of people in a given region will ultimately work to the economic detriment of all people in that region. We can recall that the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act was signed in a situation of stress, as the United States was on the brink of changing hands from President Carter to President Reagan, who was considered to be less liable to comprehend the complexity of Indian Law and its history. Almost half a century has passed since MICSA and, as with all well-meaning human endeavors, we should recognize the need to improve. Passing LD 395 is a substantive, careful, well-reasoned, and well-researched step in the right direction for our state. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Claire Millikin Raymond
Owls Head
LD 395

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