



Laura Supica

34 Highland Avenue
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 717-5702

Laura.Supica@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

January 3, 2024

Testimony of Representative Laura Supica introducing

**LD 1777, An Act to Create Economic Opportunity for Wabanaki Nations Through
Internet Gaming**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Good afternoon, Senator Hickman and fellow members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I am Representative Laura Supica and I am honored to represent part of Bangor in the Maine Legislature. Today, I present to you **LD 1777, An Act to Create Economic Opportunity for Wabanaki Nations Through Internet Gaming**.

This bill authorizes each federally recognized Indian nation, tribe or band in Maine to operate Internet gaming pursuant to a license from the Gambling Control Unit within the Department of Public Safety. The licensing structure follows the law governing sports wagering, which the tribes have up and running as of last fall. 10% of the gross internet gaming receipts are distributed as follows:

- 1% to the General Fund for administrative expenses for the Gambling Control Unit
- 1% distributed to Gambling Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund established in Title 5, section 20006-B
- 4% distributed to E911 fund
- 2% distributed to Opioid Use Disorder Prevention and Treatment fund
- 2% distributed to the Emergency Housing Relief fund

As you can see the revenues do not only benefit the tribes but all of Maine.

The tribes in Maine do not need a handout, they need a hand up. The Wabanaki economies have underperformed economically compared to other tribes in the lower forty-eight states.¹ The average age of death among Penobscot, Passamaquoddy and Maliseet tribal members is 54

¹ Joseph Kalt, Amy Besaw Medford, and Jonthan Taylor, Economic and Social Impacts of Restrictions on the Applicability of Federal Indian Policies to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine. (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2022), page i.

years.² The unemployment rates for tribal members in Maine are more than double of other Mainers.³ These are just a few of the issues that the tribal members in Maine face.

This legislation is not just about gaming. This legislation is about allowing the tribes in Maine to have access to unencumbered resources to reinvest in their communities and rural Maine. The revenues will allow the tribes in Maine to invest in businesses, education, health care, infrastructure and a host of other areas that will benefit tribal citizens and their rural Maine neighbors.

Let us lend them this hand so they can self-determine their destiny. Thank you for your consideration.

² Ralph Cammack, *Issues of Sovereignty in Wabanaki Communities, and Impacts of Health Outcomes*. (Portland: University Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Policy, 2015), page 4.

³ Kalt, Besaw Medford and Taylor. Page 10.