



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Rep. Amubreen Rana in support of

**LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations and
LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes
to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, good afternoon. My name is Ambureen Rana, and I represent House District 21, which includes part of Bangor. I am honored to testify in support of **LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations** and **LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act**.

Maine is an outlier in tribal-state relations.

It is long past time to lift the restrictions imposed by the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. Maine was one of the first states to generate a treaty of this kind with the federal government and the tribe. This treaty was meant to be a living document, yet since the 1980s, no changes have been made. So of course, it only makes sense to look back and see where there is room for updates.

Because of the way that the treaty was originally written, Wabanaki Nations have largely found themselves unable to benefit from federal funding the way other tribes in the country have.

As is always the case with sovereignty, we want to create parity. The Wabanaki Nations should benefit from federal laws and funds, just as any other federally recognized tribe across this land does. We talk in this building often about how we can close gaps and reduce disparities. These bills are another step towards combating the existing inequalities that we have allowed for far too long in this state.

These bills are decades in the making, and it is time for us, as the Legislature, to take the lead in righting the wrongs of the past.

These bills are steps toward healing our state government's relationship with the tribes. Ultimately, we are guests on this land. It is our responsibility as lawmakers to continue to honor the original stewards of this beautiful land, the Wabanaki Nations, by passing laws that help create parity.

From first contact on this land, people indigenous to the Americas have endured unconscionable devastation at the hands of colonization. It is our responsibility to have a hand in putting an end to this harm. Any delay on our part brings us closer to the completion of the erasure of these people.

Wabanaki Nations are Sovereign Nations, and they must be treated as such. I urge the committee to vote "ought to pass" on both of these measures.