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President of the Senate

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
130th Legislature

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**Testimony in Support of LD 1626**  
***An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act***

**Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary**  
Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Troy Jackson. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and have the great honor of representing the good people of northern Aroostook County in the Maine Legislature.

I'm grateful to appear before you today to pick up where the Maine Legislature left off last year by lending my full support to LD 1626, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

To say this bill is a long time coming would be an understatement. LD 1626 is the result of years of hard work by tribal leaders and members, the Task Force on Changes to Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act, state lawmakers, and tireless advocates. It seeks to restore Tribal sovereignty and self-determination while working to repair the relationship between the State of Maine and Tribal governments. Unfortunately, after hours of public hearings and work sessions, this committee's good work was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

A lot of due diligence went into carefully crafting this legislation to ensure our Tribal nations are treated with the dignity and the respect they deserve. Last session's Task Force gathered a diverse group of stakeholders around a table and then spent more than a year reviewing the Maine Indians Claims Settlement Act of 1980 and working to reach a series of consensus recommendations.<sup>2</sup> Now, it is incumbent upon this Legislature to finish what we started so we can open a new chapter on our State-Tribal relations.

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<sup>1</sup>[www.newscentermaine.com/article/life/maine-tribes-hope-for-state-to-restore-sovereignty/97-823a6ce4-6b81-4164-83a3-8c18451943c9](http://www.newscentermaine.com/article/life/maine-tribes-hope-for-state-to-restore-sovereignty/97-823a6ce4-6b81-4164-83a3-8c18451943c9)

<sup>2</sup> <http://legislature.maine.gov/maine-indian-claims-tf>

To me it's simple: we have a real opportunity to right past wrongs, establish a strong working relationship between the State and the Tribes based on trust and a shared understanding, and avoid future conflict.

For years, Maine has not done right by the Tribes. Talk of addressing inequality only goes so far; it's time to act. We owe it to our indigenous neighbors to work together in good faith to pass this legislation.

Thank you for your time. I hope you all will join me in supporting this proposal.