

Trina Carroll
Portland
LD 1626

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Harnett, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Trina Carroll, 134 Caleb Street, Portland, Maine 04102

Re: Support for LD 1626, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

Sen. Carney, Rep. Harnett and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Trina Carroll and I live in the great city of Portland. I am here to testify in support of LD 1626.

I read a passage from the 63 Maine House Legislature dated March 9, 1887. Louis Mitchell, a Passamaquoddy member, addressed this very same House pleading for fair treatment of the tribe and recognition.

As we sit here today, in the year 2022, 135 years after Louis' speech, we are still pleading for the same fair treatment and recognition from the state of Maine and its lawmakers.

Louis dates back 100 years in his speech stating "In 1775-1776... your people came to us for assistance... You authorized Col John Allen to speak to us. After many kind words and promises, Francis Joseph who was chief of the tribe at that time accepted his offer. He promised to go and help his people gain their independence.

Immediately he [Col John Allen] sent his captains to different points of country to prepare for war... in a few days [Chief] Francis Joseph gathered an army of six hundred men. At that time, and many years before that, the Passamaquoddy Tribe was the headquarters for the Abenaki Nations. "

It is fair to assume that if it were not for these alliances this government would not exist today. The Wabanaki people have stood in support and have sacrificed their people and resources. Time and time again we have been handed broken promises, and stolen from. Our people have gone without basic needs since the beginning, and we are still here asking you for fairness of your law- which you've promised long ago. It's time we get that fairness, and more.

The Passamaquoddy and Wabanaki history is rich. Our culture, language, practices, and beliefs are still intact today despite acts of genocide, continual oppression, segregation, discrimination and kidnapping of our young women and children, or as you call it "assimilation". We watch our neighbors in Canada digging up thousands of children's bodies only to wonder what horrors lie beneath us.

Maine tribes continue to be a target. For instance, we are all aware of the recent opioid settlement. I'm case you've missed the headlines "Native American tribes devastated disproportionately in the opioid epidemic, tentatively settle with the three major drug distributors and Johnson & Johnson for 665 million".

More than opioids have devastated our communities. And to note, the monies divided by almost 500 tribes, is a drop in the bucket compared to what we've lost. But it doesn't stop at opioids harming our communities in Maine. Diabetes, unemployment, and mental illness are also plaguing our reservations. The generational trauma has taken its toll on our people. It's time to do better for our children. We need to start here.

Despite our mistreatment and being taken advantage of for the last 400 years, our people are still standing strong. We are still demanding sovereignty. We are still protectors of this land and will continue to be, regardless of the outcome of LD 1626.

The Native peoples of Maine deserve full rights executed by or equal to federal law to operate their sovereign communities and businesses. Anything less is oppressive. Maine is behind the rest of the country in providing these rights. Many other tribes across the country are thriving due to successful relationships between state and tribal relations. In fact, there are over 500 native run casinos around the country today, and

29/50 states who recognize full tribal sovereignty. Maine IS NOT ONE.

These tribal casinos have provided millions of dollars towards state revenue, improved unemployment rates, increased small businesses in surrounding casino areas by increasing tourism, and significantly strengthened tribal- state relations. Let's start here, for Maine.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1626. Do what's right for our Native people and for all of Maine people including the children who are sitting back and watching today. As Governor Mills would say, it's morally imperative and the right thing to do.

Trina Carroll,
Of the Passamaquoddy Tribe

Harris, Martin. Tribal Casinos in the US. Dec. 2, 2021. Retrieved on February 12th, 2022 at:
<https://www.playusa.com/us/tribal-casinos/>

Kornfield, Meryl. Native American Tribes Reach Landmark Opioid Deal with Johnson & Johnson, Drug Distributors for up to 665 Million. February 1, 2022. Retrieved on February 12, 2022 at:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/02/01/opioid-settlement-native-american-tribes/>

Maine State Legislature. Legislative History Collection. 63 Maine State House Legislature. House doc ns. 251 pp 1-8
[http://www.wabanaki.com/wabanaki_new/documents/Mitchell%20Speech%201887%20\(official%20reduced\).pdf](http://www.wabanaki.com/wabanaki_new/documents/Mitchell%20Speech%201887%20(official%20reduced).pdf)

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014-18, 5-year average. Generated by Trina Carroll using My Tribal February 12, 2022 at:
<https://www.census.gov/tribal/>