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I am writing to urge passage of LD 1626, which would restore sovereignty to Maine's Indian tribes.

As a Unitarian Universalist, my faith calls me to speak up about what is morally and politically wrong – to call out inequity. And inequity is certainly the status of Maine's Indians compared to the other 570 federally recognized tribes in this country. Because of that inequity, Maine's Indian tribes have missed out on more than 150 new Federal laws that have benefitted all of the other tribes in this country.

The U.S. Constitution identifies three sovereign bodies – the Federal government, State governments and Indian tribes. By continuing to exert control over its Indian tribes, the state of Maine is out of compliance with the Constitution. This unconstitutional control by the State government must end.

The 1980 Settlement Act is deeply flawed, has settled nothing, and has only produced costly and unnecessary litigation. Moreover, as noted in the 2012 Tribal-State Commission it has "created structural inequities that have resulted in conditions that have *risen to the level of human rights violations.*"

I'm proud to live in Maine, but I am deeply alarmed by the State's inhumane and unjust exertion of authority over its tribes. I feel that as a people we can do better. I hope the legislature and the Governor see it that way too.