

Eliza Stuart
University of Southern Maine Student Action Group.
LD 1626

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Harnett, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
From: Eliza Stuart, 37 College Ave PH-127, Gorham ME, 01887, University of Southern Maine Student Action Group.

Re: Support for LD 1626, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementation Act
Sen. Carney, Rep. Harnett and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Eliza Stuart and I attend college in Gorham ME. I am Testifying with the University of Southern Maine Student Action Group. I am here to testify in support of LD 1626.

This is such an important cause that not only I support but many of the people around the community of the University of Southern Maine. As a campus community, we are a diverse group of students that value equality and growing knowledge of stolen land from the Tribes of Maine. As a community we are immensely focused on understanding our own privileges especially those (including myself) who are Caucasian. As individuals who are privileged, it is extremely important that we provide ample space for people in the tribes of Maine to explain their own perspectives and experiences. Above all, the need for recognition and equality should have been guaranteed to the tribes of Maine many years ago. These needs, specifically for equality under law, are guaranteed in our Constitution. The same Constitution recognizes Indian Tribes as a sovereign entity along with the Federal Government and its own states.

It is immensely important to grant equal recognition to the tribes of Maine as all five hundred and seventy other tribes across the United States of America are guaranteed the right of recognition. Not guaranteeing these individual rights of recognition to the tribes of Maine is not only inherently racist, it also denies land that belonged to the tribes of Maine thousands of years ago. By passing this law, it will allow the tribes of Maine the right to self-government within their own territories with the rules and regulations that are federally governed in other areas across the United States. In conclusion, the tribes of Maine need to be guaranteed the right of recognition that they have been promised since the writings of our forefathers in the United States Constitution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.