

GREATER BANGOR AREA BRANCH NAACP

P. O. BOX 245 BANGOR, ME 04402

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

From: Athena Bryce, President, Greater Bangor Area Branch NAACP, PO Box 245, Bangor, Maine 04402

Re: Support for LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations

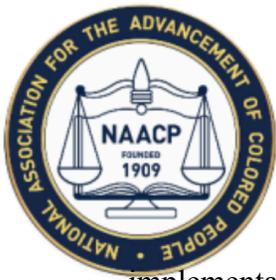
Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Athena Bryce and I live in Bangor. I am testifying on behalf of Greater Bangor Area Branch NAACP. I am here to testify in support of LD 395.

The NAACP is writing this testimony in support of LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to the Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations. Great appreciation and thanks to Senator Talbot Ross and all co-sponsors for sponsoring this bill. Your efforts and support are deeply acknowledged.

This bill addresses underlying gaps in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act, thereby allowing the Wabanaki tribes to benefit from current and future federal laws that other 570 federally recognized tribes already enjoy.

LD 395 seeks to modernize the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, which, during its implementation was described as an act subject to change by it being described as a living document. As we may all know, the Wabanaki Nations are the only tribes that are yet to be written into each federal law to benefit from it. Modernizing the 1980 Indian Claims Settlement Act puts the Wabanaki Nations on equal footing with all other federally recognized tribes. The Wabanaki Nations currently miss out on 151 federal laws that other tribes have benefited from, including emergency funds for natural disasters and public health crises, and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, just to name a few. The Violence Against Women Act was finally approved in Maine, but it required an extra seven years.

This is about equity, fairness, and giving the Wabanaki Nations the access that is due to them. We implore you, Senators and House representatives, to please correct this wrong, vote this bill into



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implementation so the Wabanaki Nations in the State of Maine can be written into each federal law, allowing them to benefit from federal laws which has been withheld from them for the past 45 years.

Thank you very much for your time. Please vote Ought To Pass on LD 395.

Sincerely,

Athena Bryce

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President, Greater Bangor Area Branch NAACP

The NAACP is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization