

Wendy Cherubini
Portland
LD 785

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

From: Wendy Cherubini, 99 Federal Street, #302, Portland, Maine, 04101

Re: Support for LD 785, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki
Nations

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee, I write today in support of LD 785, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations. LD 785 would implement many of the bipartisan Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act's recommendations in 2020. These recommendations were approved by consensus. They would align the rights and authority of all four Wabanaki Nations in Maine with the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the United States. By doing so, they would begin to correct the misguided approach Maine took in 1980 regarding tribal sovereignty.

Maine's tribes should be equal to all other federally recognized tribes. They should enjoy the same benefits and advantages and be able to develop in ways that will benefit much of rural Maine. When the Wabanaki can thrive, rural Maine will thrive. The Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act (MICSA) was never meant to be etched in granite. It should have been treated as a living document; amended and improved as needed. Sadly, it was not and we see the result when Maine's tribal incomes are compared with other tribes in the country. Now is the time.

The 2022 Harvard Study definitively showed how MICSA has hurt the Wabanaki Nations. When I saw the authors present their data and findings I was dismayed at what MICSA has done over the past 40+ years. Other tribes across the country have been able to develop economically, building social and economic capital by and for their members. The Wabanaki Nations have been left behind with tragic results.

We can and must do better.

I urge you to support LD 785 and place Maine's tribes on a level playing field with the other federally recognized tribes.

Thank you.