

Testimony of Pax Christi Maine

In Support of LD 785

An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

Submitted for the Public Hearing Before the Maine Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, February 19, 2026

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Mary Beth DiMarco, a resident of Houlton, representing Pax Christi Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

Pax Christi Maine is part of a national and international movement working for peace, justice & environmental sustainability. Pax Christi, meaning "Peace of Christ", is rooted in Gospel nonviolence and Catholic Social Teaching, which includes principles of human dignity, care for God's creation, and solidarity. Support of right relationship with our Wabanaki neighbors exemplifies these principles.

It is now clearly understood that the 1980 Land Claims Settlement Act agreement has levied a negative impact on Maine's tribes. The negative economic impact not only affects the tribes but our entire State as well.

The Maine legislature has the power to amend the Settlement Act, as it was written to be a living document that changes with the needs of the times. LD 785 would enact the recommendations of the bipartisan task force created by the Maine legislature in 2019. These changes would restore tribal self-governance over a range of issues, including the prosecution of crimes on tribal lands; the regulation of fishing, hunting, and other uses of natural resources on tribal lands; gaming; taxation; and land acquisition. Members of the task force studied the issue for six months before coming out with these recommendations. Their work and the good faith of our Wabanaki neighbors should be honored with enactment.

Studies have shown that tribal self-government is good not only for the tribes, but for surrounding communities and the economy of the entire state. Recognition of Wabanaki sovereignty is a matter of justice and improvement to our overall life in Maine.

We urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Beth DiMarco