

Jonathan Falk  
Carmel  
LD 785

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

From: Jonathan Falk, Carmel, ME 04419

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

I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 785, “An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations.” If enacted, this bill has many important benefits, both to the Wabanaki Nations, and to the entire state of Maine. These include very significant economic benefits. Provisions of the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) have blocked the Wabanaki Nations from federal self-determination policies which hundreds of tribes have used to create thousands of jobs and generate hundreds of millions of dollars of economic activity. While tribal income outside of Maine grew 61% since 1989, Wabanaki income grew only 9% during that time.

A Harvard study, “Economic and Social Impacts of Restrictions on the Applicability of Federal Indian Policies to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine,” found that tribal self-government would add \$330 million annually to Maine’s GDP, create 2,700+ jobs (more than half filled by non-tribal rural Mainers), and generate \$39 million yearly in state and local tax revenue. This would be a tremendous win-win for both tribal members and non-native Mainers.

There are many other reasons to vote for LD 785. I urge you to support it, not just for its economic benefits, but because bringing the rights of Wabanaki Nations in line with the rights enjoyed by the tribes in all 49 other states is the right thing to do.

Thank you for considering this testimony.