

Barbara Kates
Bangor
LD 395

February 18, 2026

To Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to support LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to
Federal Laws Beneficial to Wabanaki Nations.

My name is Barbara Kates and I live in Bangor. I am old enough to well remember when the Settlement Acts originally were passed into law. Like many Mainers, I thought it was all good news - that the tribes were finally getting land back. Little did I understand the harm those Acts would cause. Not only did they provide opportunities for Wabanaki Nations but they also chained them into limitations on the ways they may uplift their communities. This has resulted in continuing deprivation to children, families, and communities.

The state chose to keep the Wabanaki Nations from accessing federal laws. Is there another group of citizens that the state chooses to keep from accessing federal laws that would benefit those citizens?

Let me be clear, the Wabanaki have built strong communities through connecting with their traditions, creatively developing businesses, caring for community members, and pushing back the state's efforts to limit their decision making in their own communities. Even so, when compared to other Indigenous communities we can see the negative impact the Settlement Acts have had.

It is time to revise those acts. It is clear Mainers support this change. We want all Mainers to access the federal laws that benefit Mainers. Please vote in support of the LD395.

Thank you.

Barbara Kates