



February 19, 2026

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United Way
of Southern Maine



Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Annika Moore, and I am the Advocacy Supervisor at Preble Street.

I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of LD 395, which would ensure that Maine's federally recognized tribes would be afforded the same rights and protections as the 570 other federally recognized tribes across the United States.

This legislation is both urgent and long overdue: the constraints on Maine tribes imposed by the Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 have had a markedly negative impact on the economic stability and well-being of the Wabanaki Nations, denying them benefits from over 151 federal laws over the past 40 years. LD 395 would remedy tribes' unfair exclusion from existing programs, including relief funding to address natural disasters and public health crises, while also ensuring their ability to access future federal legislation that applies to federally recognized tribes.

At Preble Street, our daily work supporting people experiencing poverty and homelessness is, and must be, continually rooted in compassion, mutuality, and equity. We believe that our state's policies should reflect these same values. Currently, Maine is isolated, on a national stage, for its inequitable treatment of federally recognized tribes. Between 1989 and 2020, the average per capita gross domestic product growth for tribal peoples in Maine was 9%, falling below the 11% national average and paling in comparison to the 61% growth for federally recognized tribes in other states. Economic growth in other federally recognized tribes far surpasses that of the Wabanaki Nations during the same time period, leading the Wabanaki Nations to experience higher rates of housing and food insecurity and child poverty, among other difficulties. This legislation represents a first step towards setting Maine tribes on equal footing with those around the country. It would also benefit surrounding communities in rural Maine.

The State of Maine is land that has been stewarded, protected, and cared for by the Wabanaki Nations for thousands of years. Despite ongoing colonial efforts to hinder Wabanaki sovereignty and stewardship efforts, the Wabanaki Nations continue to care for the land and each other.

LD 395 is an opportunity for Maine to right a decades-long wrong. It is a chance to honor the historic presence of the Wabanaki Nations in this state and to reconsider the nature of our relationships to each other and to the land that we all call home. Please vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 395.

Thank you for your time and consideration.