To: Committee on Judiciary
From: Roz O'Reilly
Date: 19 February 2026
Re: 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

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Committee on Judiciary. My name is Roz O'Reilly. I am a resident of South Portland and the Advocacy Coordinator at JustME for JustUS (JMJU), an organization focused on amplifying youth voices in rural Maine. I am writing 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.

Wabanaki self-determination is inextricably woven into the work of our youth organizers. Among the hundreds of conversations our organizers have shared with young people in their communities - from Machias to Norway, Limestone to Leeds - local control surfaces time and time again as a core value. Self-determination is fundamental to living a fulfilled life for the young Mainers in our rural communities - Native and non-Native alike.

For too long, the State of Maine has denied the Wabanaki their right to self-determination. The young rural Mainers of JustMe for JustUS are standing up for the Wabanaki Nations. The Wabanaki Nations - the original caretakers of the land we play on, harvest from, and call home - must have full autonomy over their peoples and their lands. Childhood poverty in Wabanaki communities ranges from 40% to 77%, compared to Maine's overall rate of 15%. Our work is for young people. This bill is for young people.

Our organizers have found the health of our economy as a top priority for the young people in our communities, and Harvard researchers have proven that the economy of rural communities on Wabanaki lands will grow when the Wabanaki are granted their right to self-determination.

JustME for JustUS urges you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 785.

Sincerely,
Roz O'Reilly
Advocacy Coordinator | JustME for JustUS