

Kerry Read  
South Paris  
LD 785

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Kerry Read and I live in South Paris. I am here to testify in support of LD 785 . I speak as a member of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, which is just one of the many faith-based organizations in Maine that are members of the Wabanaki Alliance. My faith fully supports and strives for a world in which justice, equity and the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized and promoted. LD 785 is a step toward repairing the harms of the 1980 Settlement Act and insuring that The Wabanaki Nations will have access to the same benefits and resources as the other 570 federally recognized tribes in the country.

I am sure that the economic and health benefits of this bill will be made abundantly clear to this committee. I won't pretend to be an expert, but I have read the Harvard Report. The restrictions interruptions, and denials of the Wabanaki Nations rights to exercise self-determination have cost them, their neighbors, and, indeed, all of Maine hundreds of millions of dollars. Jobs, health and education have all suffered under this broken and outdated Settlement Act.

Please support LD 785 to start putting the tribes and rural Maine on a path to prosperity. It is a moral, ethical and economic imperative.