



TO: The Honorable Anne Carney
The Honorable Amy Kuhn, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary

DATE: Thursday, February 19, 2026

RE: LD 785, An Act to Enact the Remaining Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee.

My name is Emilia Toth. I am submitting testimony as the Youth Programs Manager of the League of Women Voters of Maine, and on behalf of our Youth Advocacy Team. I am testifying in strong **support** of LD 785.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization that has been working for over 100 years to encourage informed and active participation in government, increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

For 40 years, restrictions in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) have blocked the Wabanaki Nations from accessing all of the federal self-determination policies that helped 570 other tribes create thousands of jobs and generate hundreds of millions in economic activity. While tribal income outside of Maine grew 61% since 1989, Wabanaki income grew only 9% (compared to Maine's 25% overall). LD 785 would level the playing field and remove these barriers for the Wabanaki Nations.

Additionally, the politicians who drafted the 1980 Settlement Act called it a "living document" meant to be updated. The law itself allows Maine, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Nation to amend it. After more than 40 years of harm, it's time to modernize this broken deal.

LWVME recognizes that tribal sovereignty means respecting the right to self-government for Wabanaki peoples. Many of the best features of American democracy were influenced by principles of equality, freedom, and respect that were common in tribal governments — much more common than in European governments at the time. Our founders were inspired by these examples as they envisioned individual liberty in our new nation. By recognizing tribal sovereignty, we reaffirm our belief in government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," the most foundational principle of our democracy.

The LWVME Youth Advocacy Team believes every citizen should be protected in the right to vote, have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all, and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

For these reasons, we strongly support LD 785 and urge this committee to vote in favor of this bill.