

Wendy Weiger
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LD 785

I am writing in support of LD 785.

LD 785 levels the playing field for the Wabanaki Nations. Restrictions in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) block the Wabanaki Nations from accessing all of the federal self-determination policies that have 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). It's time to remove these barriers.

Modernizing the Settlement Act is an economic win-win. Harvard researchers project that tribal self-government would add \$330 million annually to Maine's GDP, create 2,700+ jobs (more than half filled by non-tribal rural Mainers), and generate \$39 million yearly in state and local tax revenue.

LD 785 will right longstanding wrongs against the Wabanaki, and its economic benefits will extend beyond the Wabanaki to all Maine people.