

Carol Wishcamper  
Freeport  
LD 785

o Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

Re: Support for LD 785 An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations

My name is Carol Wishcamper. I live in Freeport, ME. I am here to testify in support of LD 785.

I co-chaired the Maine Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission from 2012-15. In our final report, issued in June 2015, our number one recommendation was to recognize tribal sovereignty, ensuring that Wabanaki Nations benefit from rights of self-determination.

For 40 years, restrictions in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act have blocked the Wabanaki from accessing all of the federal self-determination policies that helped 570 other tribes create jobs and generate economic activity. Modernizing the Settlement Act would add substantially to the Maine economy.

The Settlement Act was designed to evolve as a 'living document' meant to be updated. Mainers overwhelmingly support Wabanaki self-determination testifying in record numbers in support of tribal sovereignty based on recommendations of a bipartisan legislative task force..

Recognizing Wabanaki inherent sovereignty is a moral issue addressing fundamental human rights, equity, and fairness providing economic opportunities that have long been withheld.

I urge your support for passing LD 785. It is time to redress past harms and provide for a prospering future for all Mainers. When Wabanaki nations thrive, all Maine thrives. I thank you for your consideration.