

Dear Senator/Representative _____

My name is _____ and I am a member of _____ church in _____. I am writing/emailing you today to ask you to support passage of Wabanaki sovereignty legislation currently under consideration by the Judiciary Committee. These include:

- LD 1626 “And Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act”
- LD 1568 “An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act” and
- LD 585, “ An Act To Restore to the Penobscot Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribe the Authority To Exercise Jurisdiction under the Federal Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010”

all of which amend the 1980 “Act to Implement the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act” to allow the tribes in the land we call Maine (Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and Aroostook Band of Micmacs) rights similar to all other 570 federally recognized tribes in the U.S.

In the last half century, tribal nations across the country have made significant gains in reclaiming their sovereignty and exercising their right to self-government on their own lands. Since the 1960s, the federal government has increasingly recognized and promoted tribal sovereignty and engaged in a government-to-government relationship with tribes. However, the Maine settlement act explicitly exempted Maine tribes from any laws passed by Congress for the benefit of Indian tribes after 1980. This means that while the more than 500 other federally recognized tribes can take advantage of the policies and services conferred through more than 100 federal laws passed since 1980, such as the Federal Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010, Maine tribes have been left out or forced to access them through the state. The 1980 Settlement Implementing Act put the Wabanaki tribes in a category separate from all other federally-recognized tribes in the U.S. and has stifled the Tribes’ right to self determination, causing both cultural and economic hardship.

I am writing to you today as a Unitarian Universalist motivated by the dedication of my faith tradition to justice, equity, and compassion in all human relations and to the inherent worth and dignity of all people. I hold that LD 1626, LD 1568 and LD 565 are the just and equitable things to do. The Wabanaki tribes deserve the rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities ascribed to all other federally recognized Indian tribes.

I believe passage of the Wabanaki sovereignty legislation is a moral imperative to begin to restore the Wabanaki peoples' sovereignty and right to self determination, as well as for the State of Maine to provide equity amongst the tribes. I urge you to vote to pass these bills into law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
