

Judiciary Committee,  
Cross Building, Room 214  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
c/o Susan Pinette, Legislative Information Office

Re: LD 1626: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and other members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

We Represent the National Association of Social workers, Maine chapter (NASW ME) in support of LD 1626: *An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act*. Social workers are committed to challenging social injustice, particularly those against vulnerable or oppressed individuals.

The right to self-govern is a cornerstone of any sovereign nation and is held by all federally recognized tribes. However, the Settlement Acts prevent the tribes in Maine from exercising this right as the vast majority of tribes elsewhere in the United States do. Among the rights denied to the tribes in Maine are:

- The right to exercise criminal jurisdiction over all categories of crimes committed by Native Americans on tribal lands.
- The right to legislate and adjudicate civil regulatory issues arising on tribal lands, such as the right to enact and enforce environmental quality controls or to regulate on-reservation businesses.
- The right to levy and collect taxes.
- The right to conduct gaming in collaboration with state and local governments.
- The right to be immune from lawsuits by private individuals and state governments.
- The right to acquire reservation and trust lands without the consent of local and state governments.

Tribes in Maine have not benefited from more than 150 federal laws passed since 1980. LD 1626 can fix this issue. This legislation implements 22 consensus recommendations released in January 2020 by the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

The time is now to stand by our tribal neighbors. When they prosper, Maine prospers. We urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1626.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Reference: <https://wabanakialliance.com/take-action/>