



**Maine Unitarian Universalist
State Advocacy Network**
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Maine 130th Legislature – Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Testimony in Favor of LD 1626 – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task
Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act

February 15, 2022

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LD 1626,
An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims
Settlement Implementing Act.

My name is Meret Bainbridge and I live in Saco.

I am here to speak on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network.
MUUSAN links Maine's 26 Unitarian Universalist congregations in active legislative ministry.
Our faith tradition is dedicated to justice, equity, and compassion in all human relations.

Justice and equity have been denied to the Wabanaki tribes since the "Settlement Acts" of 1980 have
favored the State of Maine, making the tribes subject to State laws and regulations, denying them self-
governance on their own lands, treating them as municipalities rather than the Sovereign Nations they
are and have always been.

Maine likes to consider itself an exemplary leader among states – but when it comes to tribal sovereignty,
the subordinate status of Maine's tribes makes a shameful example of the State of Maine.

We believe that churches and faith-based organizations have a responsibility to be allies to the tribes.
Colonial "conquest" of "newfound" lands owned by non-Christian, brown-skinned people was justified
with the Doctrine of Discovery that considered white, Christian colonizers superior to them.
It justified the atrocities that followed: land theft, genocide, hunting, killing and scalping of native people,
child theft and forced assimilation. There was never a formal apology issued by the State of Maine.

We owe a huge moral debt to the tribes, and we are just beginning to face a reckoning with this history.
The Task Force took steps to listen to the experiences of tribal people and made recommendations to
right those wrongs. We should heed their guidance.

We owe a huge debt to the tribes.
LD 1626 would begin to restore self-governance to the Wabanaki tribes.
It does not cover the debt owed – but it would be an acceptable down-payment.

In the name of justice and equality, I urge you to vote in favor of passing LD 1626 in its full language.

Thank you for allowing me to speak and for listening.