



Dear Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and esteemed members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Izzy Ostrowski, and I'm the Social Change Advocate at Preble Street, a human services anti-poverty agency with over fifteen programs and services provided across the state. I am testifying on behalf of Preble Street in support of 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.

At Preble Street, we know that homelessness, hunger, and poverty are racial justice issues. We also know that the social systems that shape our society — like white supremacy culture — have tangible effects on homelessness and poverty. In Maine, Black and African American individuals are ten times more likely to experience homelessness than their white peers. In fact, 26% of Maine's homeless population are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color despite these groups making up only 1% of our state's general population. These disproportionate effects on Indigenous communities are largely due to oppressive state policies regarding tribal sovereignty.

Sovereignty is not something that is bestowed; it is something that must be respected and affirmed. The Penobscot Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribe should have the authority to hold people accountable for crimes committed on tribal territory.

Maine has a longstanding history of inflicting trauma upon Indigenous communities. This does not have to be the future, and this bill would be a step toward prioritizing a future of equity, sovereignty, and healing for Maine's Indigenous tribes. For this reason, Preble Street urgently asks you to vote in support of LD 585. Thank you for your time.

*Submitted February 17, 2022*