



THE FIGHT FOR SOVEREIGNTY

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE ENCOMPASSES a multitude of racial, political, economic, and environmental issues. We are committed to supporting tribal communities, and following their lead, as they work to uphold their sovereignty, autonomy and dignity. Our nation is founded on colonialism—a powerful method of control and erasure—and the effects of colonialism permeate all of our government structures and institutions. As we center Indigenous voices and honor their experiences, we must further examine and dismantle the discrimination built into our political, economic, and social institutions.

An essential part of Indigenous Justice is restoring tribal sovereignty to Tribal nations. Tribal sovereignty is the inherent right of a tribe to govern their land and sustain traditional practices without outside interference. Current efforts in Maine to recognize tribal sovereignty center around amending the *Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980* (“Settlement Act”). This law dramatically limits the rights of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, and Mi’kmaq

Nation—collectively known as the Wabanaki tribes. As a federally recognized tribe, the right to self-govern is protected under federal law. However, the Settlements Act denies most rights held by other federally recognized tribes across the United States and requires

every transfer of land to be approved by Congress. Tribal sovereignty in Maine requires undoing the harmful effects of this law.

In recent years we have increased our work supporting Indigenous Justice and we are now at the forefront of the work among ACLU affiliates. In 2019, we supported two historic pieces of Maine legislation: LD 944, *An Act to Ban Native American Mascots in All Public Schools* and LD 197, *An Act to Change the Name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day*. With the passage of these

ills, tribal leaders forged a bold path forward to end harmful practices of celebrating colonialism and harmful stereotyping. In 2021, we supported LDs 585, 906, and 1218, each of which would have expanded legal recognition of Wabanaki sovereignty. During the

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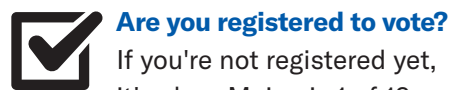
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Maine Midterms 2022!

Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th. It's time to make a plan and prepare for the polls.



Are you registered to vote?

If you're not registered yet, it's okay. Maine is 1 of 19 states (and Washington D.C.) that has Election Day Registration.



Interested in voting absentee?

You can request your absentee ballot up to 3 business days before election day.



Who and what is on the ballot?

- All 186 seats in the Maine Legislature up for election this year!
- Did you know that Maine's Secretary of State and Attorney General are elected by the Maine State Legislature?
 - When you're voting for your state senator and representative, those votes also impact who is chosen to administer our state's elections and be our state's head law enforcement official.
- Find time to learn about your future representatives and what municipal referendums are on the ballot. You can visit Vote411.org to find this information.



If you are voting in person: Where is your polling place? What are the hours? When will you go?

You can find your polling location and its hours on the maine.gov Voter Information Lookup Service.



If you are voting absentee, do you know where your clerk or municipal drop box is located? Do you know the office hours?

- You can learn the location of the drop box and clerk hours by contacting your town or city hall.
- You can track your absentee ballot online using Maine.gov Absentee Ballot Request Status.

Bonus: Make a plan with friends! Empower the people in your life to use their voice in our democracy!

Check out our **Know Your Rights: Voting Guide** on our website to learn more about your rights at the polls!

SOVEREIGNTY CONTINUED

2022 legislative session, we were one of 1,600 voices that testified in support of LD 1626, a bill that would have amended the 1980 Settlements Act and restored tribal self-governance to Maine tribes. Although the bill passed in the House and the Senate, the legislature did not send the bill to the Governor's desk because there were insufficient votes to overcome her promised veto. Next year we will be back in Augusta standing with Indigenous communities and demanding recognition of Wabanaki sovereignty.

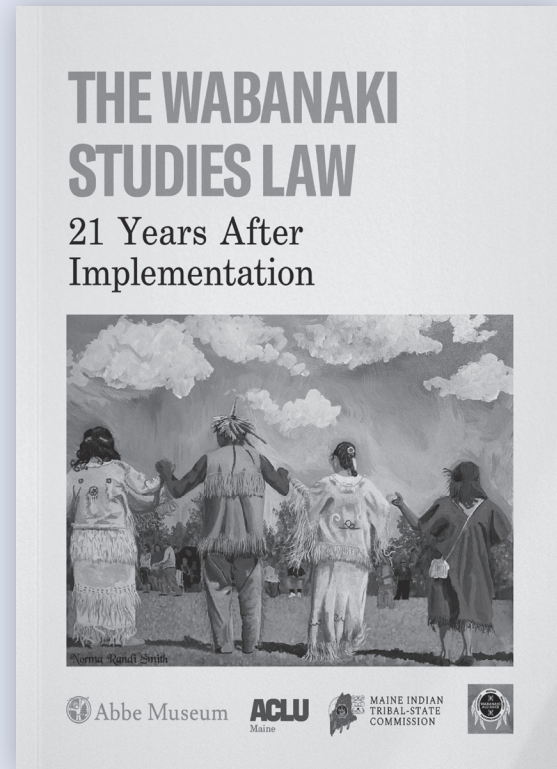
In September, our affiliate joined ACLU national and 13 other affiliates in filing an amicus brief at the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Brackeen v. Haaland*, urging the court to uphold the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). This law establishes basic requirements to protect Indigenous children from forced removal from their families and tribes, and has protected Indigenous families and communities for over 40 years.

On Indigenous Peoples' Day, in collaboration with our partners at the Wabanaki Alliance, the Abbe Museum, and the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission, we released *The Wabanaki Studies Law 21 Years After Implementation*. The report examines the 2001 passage and subsequent implementation of a law requiring every public school in the state to incorporate Maine Native American studies into its curriculum. This report presents legislators, educators, and community members with research and analysis of the current state of the Wabanaki Studies Law and highlights necessary steps to ensure the law is finally properly implemented.

Finally, this month, members of our team will attend and present at the **first** national ACLU Indigenous Justice Convening in New Mexico. Our Chief Counsel Zach Heiden and Engagement Coordinator Grace Hooke are co-organizers of this event, and Policy Counsel Michael Kebede will be presenting on our work supporting Tribal Sovereignty in the legislature. ACLU staff will learn how to

integrate Indigenous Justice into our advocacy, develop strategies for relationship building, and hear from Indigenous staff and allies about the challenges they face and opportunities for change at an organizational level.

Dismantling colonial systems of oppression requires all of us to center Indigenous voices and integrate Indigenous Justice into our advocacy. At the ACLU of Maine, we will continue to support legislation and community action that restores sovereignty to the Wabanaki Nations.



Read our report on the Wabanaki Studies Law: www.aclumaine.org/en/publications/wabanaki-studies-report

Learn more about Indigenous Justice work happening across the country:
www.aclu.org/issues/racial-justice/american-indian-rights

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