

**Testimony of John Dieffenbacher-Krall, Executive Director,
Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission,
Regarding LD 45,
An Act To Include a Representative of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs
in the House of Representatives
February 19, 2013**

Senator Valentino, Representative Priest, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary: my name is John Dieffenbacher-Krall. I live in Old Town, Maine and I appear before you today in my capacity as Executive Director of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission. The Commission supports LD 45, An Act To Include a Representative of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs in the House of Representatives, and we hope the Judiciary Committee will act favorably on it.

The practice of the Tribes sending Tribal Representatives to represent them in their relationship with settler governments predates the State of Maine originating with colonial Massachusetts. Historically, this practice has only included the Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Indian Nation. Yet the first Tribes with whom the fledgling United States signed a treaty with are the St. John's Indians, the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy Peoples, and the Mi'kmaq. LD 45 corrects this historical omission of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs and gives them the same formal relationship with the Maine Legislature currently enjoyed by the Houlton Band of Maliseets, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and Penobscot Indian Nation.

MITSC has long viewed as desirable providing for full representation of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs in all formal governmental positions with the State of Maine. We cannot identify any reason to deny the Aroostook Band of Micmacs a Tribal Representative position while that position is extended to the other three Tribes. We believe the State of Maine will benefit from this position by having the opportunity to communicate with an official representative of the Micmac Tribal Government present in Augusta.

For all the reasons delineated above, I urge the Committee to vote unanimously ought to pass to strengthen the relationship between the Aroostook Band of Micmacs and State of Maine.