

Passover--freedom; Easter--salvation; Spring--renewal. As Mainers experience this special time of year, we rejoice in beginning anew. We enjoy many freedoms, voice our opinions, and are both seen and heard. Yet, a group remains largely invisible and silent here in Maine – the Wabanaki.

As I learn of the Native children who were taken from their homes, first to be placed in US Residential Schools, then misguided adoption programs, and most recently in State of Maine foster care, I am saddened by the effects that still encumber those adults today. Because of US and Maine law, Indigenous People are deprived of this sense of rejoicing for new beginnings.

Because of the dominant society's policies, some Natives still cannot speak of their "taking" which placed them in physical, psychological, and spiritual abuse. Silent and traumatized, some Natives still tremble when driving the same road that led to their captivity-- ripped from their culture--to "Save the child and kill the Indian."

Due to our historical amnesia, the Wabanaki ask our state to awaken and uncover the truth of how the foster care system has affected the Maliseets, Micmacs, Passamaquoddies, and Penobscots. . The Tribes deserve a Truth and Reconciliation Commission including oral histories of suffering survivors to move forward and prevent the taking from ever happening again. As we celebrate our freedoms--personal, community, country--let us not forget the Indigenous Peoples who like the Jewish slaves of Pharaoh's Day are asking, "Let My People Go."