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LD 2007

Passing LD2007 would allow for equality and equity amongst our Indigenous peoples here in Maine. Due to restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA), the Wabanaki Nations have been kept from achieving the significant economic growth experienced by the other 570 federal tribes over the past 40 years who've had full access to federal policies of self-determination. Removing those obstacles would help the Wabanaki Nations take advantage of federal self-determination policies, programs and funding that elsewhere in Indian Country led to the creation of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services produced by Native businesses. According to the U.S. Census data in 2019, childhood poverty rates within Wabanaki communities range from a low of 40% at the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk community to a high of 77% for the Mi'kmaq Nation in Aroostook County. By comparison, Maine's childhood poverty rate for the same period is 15%.

The politicians who drafted the 1980 Settlement Act called it a "living document" that should not be set in stone as it has been for more than 40 years to the detriment of the Wabanaki and rural Maine communities and the state of Maine. Bottom line: MICSA provides for the State of Maine, Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation to amend the law within broad areas. It's time to modernize this broken deal and begin a new era of partnership with the Wabanaki Nations for the betterment of everyone in Maine.

We are coming to a time when our Indigenous brothers and sisters, who had long been stewards to these lands and lived in harmony with them, have the knowledge to bring back a more natural way of being in relationship with our earth. The Wabanaki have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for millennia, long before European settlement of Maine. They will continue to do so; it's their heritage and birthright as Wabanaki peoples.

Bottom line, our European ancestors colonized Turtle Island; stole away land and culture from our Indigenous population. Passing LD 2007 won't make up for the harm our ancestors have caused but it would allow for their right to self determination, give land back and create a foundation of healing for the future generations. Honestly, it's the least we can do.