

Kharma Amos  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick  
LD 2007

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Rev. Dr. Kharma Amos. I am a resident of Lisbon, and I work as the Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick. I am testifying in support of LD 2007. My testimony is motivated by the values of my UU faith tradition, which includes belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people and the promotion of justice, equity, and compassion in human relationships. These foundational values also lie at the heart of the movement to restore sovereignty for the Wabanaki. In solidarity and shared hopes for collective liberation, our congregation has joined with countless other individuals, businesses, non-profits, and faith communities as part of the Wabanaki Alliance.

I hope my testimony will amplify the firsthand testimony of those most directly affected, and urge you to listen most closely to Wabanaki voices.

I believe LD 2007 should become law because the 1980 settlement implementing act, which it would amend, has put the Wabanaki tribes in a category separate from all other federally recognized tribes in the United States. The concrete, tangible benefits that other tribes have received have been denied to the Wabanaki. This is clearly inequitable, and for that reason alone, LD 2007 should pass.

Yet, there is more. The rights of the Wabanaki tribes to self-determination has created cultural deficits (it has kept the Wabanaki from flourishing as a community with deep cultural roots and spiritual traditions), as well as economic hardships that have exacerbated problems of poverty, isolation, and lack of access to sufficient resources. Maine can do better to honor the original stewards of this land.

I believe the State of Maine has a moral obligation to help restore the Wabanaki peoples' sovereignty and right to self-determination. This will help the Wabanaki first of all, but will directly benefit all people of Maine. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2007. Thank you.