

Alex Abbott  
Freeport  
LD 2007

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Please accept my testimony strongly in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations.

I am perpetually surprised, confused, frustrated, and even at times, angry, that we have come to this point in our history without resolving more quickly and amicably the fundamental issue of unfairness for Wabanaki people in Maine represented by the Settlement Acts. We in Maine, and we as United States citizens, pride ourselves on our sense of fairness, of justice for all. For many of us, and for me in particular, this is perhaps the most fundamental guiding principle of our people, our culture and our governments.

I believe that for hundreds of years we and our forbears have been absolutely unjust and unreasonable in our treatment of the Wabanaki people from whom we took this land. More than anything, LD 2007 can help address this fundamentally unfair past with a path to a more just and happy future for us all.

Yet, clearly it is not just an overall lack of fairness that the remaining Wabanaki people of Maine suffer, but also many distinct disadvantages stemming from the unique arrangements of the Settlement Acts which limit their sovereignty in ways that other indigenous people living within the borders of the United States do not.

Let's just focus on one of these many--the difficulties presented to the Wabanaki people under the Settlement Acts to simply obtain the lands supposedly available to them, yet through all manner of legal, practical and bureaucratic barriers, they have not been able to obtain over these many years. How can a people live without land? We do not. You do not. How can we expect the Wabanaki people of Maine to live with dignity, health and happiness without lands to truly call their own as we essentially promised in the Settlement Acts? (And let us remember that these lands only amount to a tiny portion of their previous territories!)

Regards,  
Alex Abbott  
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