

Sarah Sprogell  
Freeport  
LD 2007

February 23, 2024

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

From: Sarah Sprogell, 31 South Street, Freeport, ME 04032  
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Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

Respected Committee Members,

I offer testimony in support of LD 2007 as a Quaker and as an individual concerned about the long-standing inequities and lack of recognition of the sovereignty of the Wabanaki people living in the State of Maine.

As a Quaker and a person of faith, I believe in the intrinsic value and equality of all people, and that the larger community and government bear some responsibility to support and ensure the fair and just treatment of all its people.

In the case of the Wabanaki Nations, I believe these values must expand to include the recognition of tribal sovereignty on a par with other federally recognized tribes. Much of this sovereignty was compromised by the limitations of the Settlement Act of 1980.

In recent years I have learned about the dire impacts influenced by the limitations of the Settlement Act. One of the most significant has been that of income growth. Over the past 30 years the average income for Wabanaki people has been only 9%, compared to 25% overall in Maine. During the same period the average income for tribal citizens not living in Maine has risen by 60%. We also know from numerous studies that when local tribes thrive, the surrounding towns and people thrive, too.

LD 2007 allows access to federal programs that assist in economic development and allow for more effective self-governance, by removing restrictions that are currently in place through the Settlement Act. The recent Harvard Report predicts that self-government for the tribes would most likely lead an additional \$300 million a year in Maine's Gross Domestic Product, nearly 3,000 new jobs and almost \$40 million in tax revenue. Their research further confirms that more than half of new jobs created will be filled by neighbors of the tribes.

Please, let us move forward to support the Wabanaki Tribes and all Maine people by fully supporting LD 2007.

Submitted with respect,  
Sarah Sprogell  
Freeport, ME