

Regina Grabrovac
East Machias
LD 2007

Testimony in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for
Wabanaki Nations

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on
Judiciary

From: Regina Grabrovac, resident of East Machias, Maine

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary
Committee,

My name is Regina Grabrovac and I have lived and worked in East Machias, in
Washington County, Maine for over 25 years which is home to two of the
Passamaquoddy communities. For over 13 years, I have worked for a community
health non-profit supporting food security efforts throughout the county. I am writing
to testify in support of LD 2007.

The Passamaquoddy people are my neighbors. Their well being - economically and
socially - impacts all of us in this region. Under the US Constitution, we all have
equal rights yet the sovereign rights of the Wabanaki people are severely restricted. I
find it embarrassing that as a Maine citizen, our Maine government has not yet taken
action on restoring the sovereign rights of the Wabanaki people.

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%.

By modernizing the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA), Harvard
researchers say the Wabanaki Nations could become the economic engines of their
regions, creating new opportunities for jobs and income growth for themselves and
rural Maine. According to the recent Harvard Report, self-government for the tribes
would likely mean an additional \$330 million a year in Maine's Gross Domestic
Product, more than 2,700 jobs, and \$39 million a year in state and local tax revenue.
Based on the experience of other tribes, better than half the new jobs created are
likely to be filled by neighbors of Wabanaki tribes in rural Maine.

LD 2007 would make substantial changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement
Implementing Act (also known as the Maine Implementing Act) to address problems
with the law that prevent the Wabanaki Nations in Maine from exercising their
inherent right to self govern, as all other federally recognized tribes in the United
States are able to do under Federal Indian Law. The changes would bring the rights
and authority of all four Wabanaki Nations (Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation,
Mi'kmaq Nation, and Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians) in line with the other 570
federally recognized tribes in the United States.

Thank you for your consideration in support of LD 2007 for the economic and social
health of all of Maine's rural regions.

Sincerely,
Regina Grabrovac