

February 24, 2024

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

We're writing to express YWCA MDI's support for passage of LD 2007.

The YWCA of Mount Desert Island has served MDI and the surrounding area for 120 years. Our mission is to eliminate racism; empower women; and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

As we sit writing this testimony in offices built on the ancestral land of the Wabanaki tribes, we feel a compelling responsibility to speak up in support of Wabanaki sovereignty and LD 2007.

Passing LD 2007 is about equity, and equity is at the heart of the YWCA's mission. The Wabanaki Nations deserve the same rights to self-determination - and the same access to economic growth - that already reside within 570 tribes across the country. Since self-determination can improve health and educational outcomes for Native communities, we see an obvious ethical imperative for supporting Wabanaki sovereignty.

But there's also a strong economic case for passing LD 2007. Wabanaki citizens in Maine are being left behind because of restrictions imposed by MICSA more than 40 years ago. Easing those restrictions will allow the Wabanaki Nations to access the programs and funding that have driven economic growth for hundreds of federally recognized tribes outside Maine.

Passing LD 2007 will also help create thousands of jobs in Maine, add hundreds of millions of dollars to Maine's Gross Domestic Product, and generate millions in state and local tax revenue. These economic gains will help all Mainers, not just Wabanaki citizens. Equity serves everyone: when the Wabanaki benefit, all of rural Maine will benefit.

YWCA MDI urges Maine lawmakers to pass LD 2007 to empower the Wabanaki Nations, ensure justice and equity for our Native citizens, and support our rural economy. Thank you for the chance to join thousands of Maine organizations and individuals in speaking up for Wabanaki sovereignty.

Sincerely,



Jackie Davidson
Executive Director



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LD 2007

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