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LD 2007

I learned of the work to bring awareness and justice to the tribes in Maine while helping to organize a series of webinars as a volunteer with the League of Women Voters of Maine. While putting together the 4 part series entitled Understanding Dawnland Today: The Wabanaki and the State of Maine, I learned from tribal citizens and representatives about the many injustices endured by the original inhabitants of the lands that we now call our home. As a result, I believe that the citizens and administration of the State of Maine should honor the wishes of those first inhabitants and restore tribal self-government.

Nothing spoke louder to me of the real-life effects of withholding tribes' ability to self-govern than the socioeconomic ramifications outlined in the Harvard Kennedy School Study titled "Economic and Social Impacts of Restrictions on the Applicability of Federal Indian Policies to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine," that shows how all four tribes in Maine have only seen a 9 percent per capita income growth since the 1980s. This compares to other tribes across the nation that have seen an increase of 60 percent.

As a private citizen of the State of Maine, I submit that the deep and rich culture of our tribal neighbors and friends should be respected to the highest degree by passing LD 2007 — the bill to restore the Wabanaki Nations' inherent rights to self-determination.