

Testimony of Connor Ransom
In support of LD 2007
"An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations"
Before the Committee on Judiciary
February 23, 2024

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

As a young Mainer who cares deeply about the importance of upholding justice and protecting human rights, I write today in support of LD 2007, "An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations."

The Wabanaki Nations have been denied basic rights for centuries. The Wabanaki people, who have lived on this land for millenia, are still denied the right to govern themselves. For decades since the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, tribes in Maine have been denied basic rights afforded to every other federally recognized tribe in the country. It is time for this to change. There is never a time to wait on protecting human rights; it is an issue of urgent, ethical importance. I urge you to support this bill to start making amends with our Indigenous neighbors and restore their basic rights.

In addition to upholding justice, advancing Wabanaki rights to self-determination will benefit everyone in Maine. Wabanaki people will have the power to manage their communities as they see fit for the first time in centuries. This will allow issues faced by many Indigenous communities such as poverty to be addressed in more meaningful, targeted ways than they are now. Communities directly neighboring Wabanaki lands will also benefit significantly as their neighbors advance economically and socially.

Restoring Wabanaki self-governance will also help protect the environment and the critical ecosystems we all depend on. Wabanaki people have cared for the land for thousands of years, nurturing healthy ecosystems. Everyone will benefit from Wabanaki people regaining more direct control over managing and protecting their surrounding environment.

Self-determination for the Wabanaki Nations will bring justice, uplift Wabanaki people, protect the environment, and support all Mainers. I strongly urge you to pass LD 2007 to begin correcting decades of injustice and restore the essential right of self-determination for the Wabanaki Nations in Maine.

Sincerely,
Connor Ransom
Waterville

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LD 2007

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