

2/24/24

RE: 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: Sarah Johnson, Sanford Maine

Honorable Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Sarah Johnson and I live in Sanford. I am an advocate for a pledge I have taken many times in my life, “and justice for all”. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

For me, justice means fairness and equity, which requires removing restrictions imposed by the *1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA)*. This Act limits opportunities for self-determination, economic growth, health care and educational advancement for the Wabanaki Nations. All other federally recognized tribes in the United States have rights of self-government under Federal Indian Law. It is unjust to deny these rights to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine.

According to the 12/22 report from the Harvard Kennedy School (“The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development”), these restrictions negatively affect Maine’s overall economy as well. Children, the future of our state, are most impacted, as the Wabanaki childhood poverty rates are shamefully high due to these restrictions.

Mainers clearly support this legislation, as demonstrated by the overwhelming supportive testimony for passing a tribal sovereignty bill 4 years ago based on the recommendations of the *Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act*.

I hope you will support this bill and promote justice with fairness and equity for all Mainers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson

Sanford Maine

Sarah Johnson  
Sanford  
LD 2007