

Written Testimony of Kathryn Vezina

To the Judiciary Committee

In Support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am Kathryn Vezina, I am a resident of Portland, and I offer this testimony in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations.

I submit these remarks as a member of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland, which affirms and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I am also one of the 500 members of the Maine UU State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN), which links Maine's 26 UU congregations in working for legislation that embodies those values. MUUSAN is testifying separately as an organization in support of this bill.

Maine (like the rest of the United States) is built on land that was stolen or swindled from the native peoples of this continent. Here, the Wabanaki tribes lived on the land that is now Maine for many generations before the arrival of white settlers and before the United States became a country.

Now, we have an opportunity to take some steps toward rectifying some of the egregious actions of our forebearers and to recognize the tribal rights of sovereignty over their own lands. Maine is a leader in many areas, but in terms of recognizing tribal sovereignty we are the very last of the 50 states to do so. There is NO good reason why Maine's federally recognized tribes should not be allowed to benefit from the various federal laws applicable to all other tribes by the federal government.

I strongly urge a vote of Ought to Pass on LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations. We owe them at least this much.

Thank you.

Kathryn Vezina

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