

Nancy Nickerson
Portland
LD 2007

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Nancy Nickerson, and I am a nurse practitioner by profession and a resident of Portland. I write today to strongly urge passage of LD 2007, an Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations. For too long Maine's four Wabanaki tribes have been denied the benefits that the other 570 federally recognized tribes are able to access. Without the access to policies, programs, and funding that build and support self-governance, economic growth in the Wabanaki Nations and their surrounding rural communities is severely stunted. Compared to tribes outside of Maine, all four Wabanaki Nations lag severely in economic development.

Passing this bill will help the Wabanaki tribes access federal opportunities to expand environmental protections, increase access to health care, respond to natural disasters, foster job creation and economic development, protect safe drinking water, and much more.

While the Maine Indian Claims Act was intended to address many of the issues and problems facing Maine's tribes, it did not in fact end up doing so.

Please pass LD 2007, in recognition of the tribes' history, significance, and contributions to the state of Maine, and their right to be sovereign. Please give the Wabanaki tribes this long overdue opportunity to thrive within the State of Maine.