

Jillian Jacobs  
South Gardiner  
LD 2007

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: Jillian Jacobs, 23 Riverview Dr. South Gardiner, ME 04359

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jillian Jacobs and I live in South Gardiner. I am a lifelong Mainer, advocate for rural LGBTQ+ youth, and avid hiker and paddleboarder. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

One of the reasons I have been proud to call Maine my home for the past 29 years (and why I returned to my home state after graduating from college in 2016) is that Maine has always been a leader among other New England states when it comes to protecting its citizens' rights. I am proud to tell my out-of-state friends about how Maine has some of the strongest protections in the country for LGBTQ+ Americans. But when it comes to the rights of our Indigenous friends and neighbors, Maine is sadly lagging behind. Wabanaki tribes' economic, health, and social well-being is currently being limited by the Settlement Act's outdated restrictions compared to other U.S. tribes.

I was born and raised in Oxford Hills, where child poverty and economic insecurity were major issues everyone I knew was dealing with. Scarcity of jobs (especially after the 2008 recession) made my, my classmates', and their families' lives much harder. I know firsthand how rural communities can benefit from job creation, and modernizing MICSA would do exactly that. Harvard estimates that tribal self-government would likely mean an additional 2,700 jobs in rural areas, an additional \$330 million per year to Maine's GDP, and \$39 million a year in state and local tax revenue. Those are numbers that would have a significant impact beyond just the Wabanaki tribes themselves, and would help all of Maine, especially low-income Mainers in rural areas.

Finally, one of the most important reasons why I support Wabanaki self-governance is because I believe tribes have inherent sovereignty that must be respected by our governments. The Wabanaki peoples were in our beautiful state long before us, taking care of the land so that my generation (and hopefully those that follow) could enjoy our favorite parts of Vacationland: the outdoors. It seems only right and fair that we return this incredible favor by allowing the Wabanaki tribes to govern themselves with dignity.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will bring Maine into the future, aid our rural communities, and respect the sovereignty of the Wabanaki peoples by supporting LD 2007 on Monday.

Take care,  
Jillian