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LD 2007

I am writing in support of LD 2007 because it is fair and equitable to do so. Since the Indian Land Claims Settlement, Maine tribes have not benefited from those Federal laws enhancing self determination for Native tribes throughout the US. Maine tribes are significantly behind in economic development and suffer high levels of child poverty, among other concerns.

As a retired adjunct faculty in social work, I recall a conversation in class when students challenged the lone Penobscot student in the group, suggesting she was unfairly advantaged because of tuition forgiveness. Her reply was: Look around you. Where are the other Native students? Very few tribal youth believe they are able to accomplish a college education. This is a result of social disadvantages, lack of self determination, and a general sense that Native people are in some sense unworthy. The act to afford tribes the respect that goes with self determination would be a significant and substantial step toward raising self respect and ambition among tribal youth.