

Ellen Gibson  
West Paris  
LD 2007

Honored Representatives:

I farm in West Paris, Maine, on the ancestral land of the Wabanaki people. As a student of American history, I know that in the 203 years that Maine has been a state, and prior, when Maine was a part of Massachusetts, the land of the Wabanaki was seized, treaties were broken, waters were polluted. They were exposed to illnesses for which they had no immunity. Their children were taken away to boarding schools or seized to be raised by foster families. The Wabanaki people have carried these traumas through the generations and they live them today. They continue to be marginalized by the dominant white culture.

I live on stolen land. My family has benefitted from this legacy of trauma that continues to resonate in the lives of the Wabanaki. I have benefitted through an entrenched system that perpetuates inequality, bias, and an uneven power dynamic.

I am not responsible for the actions of my ancestors. My responsibility lies in the present. It lies in making amends.

To this end, I urge you to support LD 2007: a bill to restore the inherent tribal sovereignty to the Wabanaki Nations.

The Wabanaki are a sovereign people. It's time for the state of Maine to acknowledge this. In so doing, the state gives the Wabanaki Nations access to federal programs and funding to address needs for health, education, economic self-determination, and equity in opportunity.

The time is now! Thank you for voting to pass LD 2007.

Sincerely,  
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