

Deborah Crump
West Paris
LD 2007

February 25, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Deborah Crump. I am a resident of West Paris and am testifying in support of LD 2007.

As a member of the First Universalist Church of Norway, Unitarian Universalist (UU), I strongly support the first UU principle, which is in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Our faith tradition affirms and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations. 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.

I believe LD 2007 should become law because the 1980 settlement implementing act, which it would amend, has put the Wabanaki tribes in a category separate from all other federally recognized tribes in the U.S. and has stifled the Tribes' right to self-determination, causing both cultural and economic hardship. The average income growth since 1989 has been 61% for tribal citizens not located in Maine, but only 9% for Wabanaki citizens in Maine; Maine's overall income growth for the same period was 25%. These economic hardships have led to poorer health and educational outcomes for Wabanaki peoples. The statistics for childhood poverty rates, according to the U.S. Census data, within Wabanaki communities range from a low of 40% for the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk community to a high of 77% for the Mi'kmaq Nation in Aroostook County. By comparison, Maine's childhood poverty rate for the same period was 15%. These statistics are unacceptable and make me very sad. This is not the way to treat the original inhabitants of this land we call Maine.

For these reasons, I believe the State of Maine has a moral imperative to help restore the Wabanaki peoples' sovereignty and right to self-determination. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2007.

Sincerely,
Deborah Crump