

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

My name is Jake Kulaw I am a resident of South Portland and I am testifying in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self Determination for the Wabanaki Confederacy.

I am a member of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist church located in Portland. The UU faith tradition affirms and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I am also one of the 500 members of the Maine UU State Advocacy Network, which links Maine's 26 UU congregations in working for legislation that embodies these values as well.

Due to the restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA), the Wabanaki Nations have been kept from achieving the significant economic growth experienced by the 570 federal tribes over the last 40 years who have had full access to federal policies of self determination. By modernizing MICSA, Harvard researchers say the Wabanaki Nations could become the economic engines of their regions, creating new opportunities for jobs and income growth for themselves and rural Maine.

The Wabanaki have been protecting the environment and maintaining sustainable ecological practices for millennia, long before European settlement of Maine. They will continue to do so; it's their heritage and birthright as Wabanaki peoples. It's time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki, along with their neighbors in rural Maine, from achieving the dramatic and sustained economic growth achieved over the past 40 years by 570 federal tribes across Indian Country.

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

Sincerely,

Jake Kulaw