

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: Joanne Sterling, 107 Pleasant Ave., Peaks Island, Maine 04108

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Joanne Sterling and I live on Peaks Island (Portland). I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

Testimony:

I feel strongly that LD 2007 should be passed by this Maine Legislature for the following reasons:

- Due to 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 other 570 federal tribes.
- 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.
- According to the U.S. Census data in 2019, childhood poverty rates within Wabanaki communities range from a low of 40% at 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 is 15%.

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.

Thank you Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary the committee members.
