

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

My name is Michael Schaab and I live in Monroe. I have taught for 43 years and am currently teaching at Maine Maritime Academy. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007. While my teaching career has been primarily in chemistry and physics, I have always tried to build a sense of responsibility and honesty in my students by giving them the opportunity to make the right choices. I feel that having them come to realize that choosing a moral path adds to your character and the person you become. And that is so much more important than Newton's Laws of gravity (which are important) or quantum mechanics.

The history of how the indigenous peoples of Maine have been treated is not something to be proud of. The Wabanaki tribes have been cheated and lied to by our government. However, there is now a chance to help mitigate the treatment they have received. Federally recognized tribes have the ability to govern themselves according to their culture and customs in all states but Maine. Here they are treated as municipalities, giving no real power to tribal leadership. The majority of Maine people want to change this by granting them the same rights as all other federally recognized tribes. The bill proposing this change, LD 2007, would give them the opportunity to determine their moral path forward. It would give them rights to govern according to their worldview and cultural heritage. This would be a path I am convinced would benefit all the peoples of Maine, especially those communities who live side by side with these nations.

I thank you for the work you do, the hard decisions you make, and for your dedication to the people of Maine. You, like my students, have been given the opportunity to make right choices, especially in light of poor choices that were made before you. I urge you to vote "Ought to pass".

Sincerely,  
Michael