

**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: Margaret O'Hare; 7 Mountain Ave, Apt 3, Lewiston ME 04240*

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

My name is Margaret O'Hare and I live in Lewiston, Maine. I work at a local university, and I strongly believe in the power of education to transform our world. My own education opened my eyes to the importance of sovereignty, and I hope to honor that with this testimony. I see it as vitally important that the Wabanaki Nations should have the right of sovereignty and self-determination that many other indigenous nations have. Because of this, I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

I whole-heartedly support the Wabanaki in their quest to finally be equal to the 570 other federally-recognized nations, and I wish to add my voice to the popular call to pass LD 2007 in order to make this a reality. While I studied political science in school, I learned about what it means to have "sovereignty" and why it is especially important to indigenous nations, and what it means to be denied sovereignty and the right to self-determination. A nation of people ought to be able to make decisions and take action for their people—to decide upon how they will live, to preserve their culture, languages, & traditions, and to raise the next generations on the land that previous generations tended to & were born from. The Wabanaki have been here in the Dawnland for millennia, and will remain on & of this land; they ought to be empowered to do what they decide is best for their people.

I had the privilege and honor of hearing Maulian Bryant, the Penobscot Nation Tribal Ambassador, speak at my university, and I was deeply moved by how she spoke about what sovereignty means to the Wabanaki Nations. The Wabanaki are inherently sovereign nations & peoples and have always been so, and should therefore have the federally-recognized sovereignty (that other nations already have) that will further empower them to make the decisions necessary for the benefit of their people & the land. Furthermore, when LD 2007 is passed, it will allow the Wabanaki to experience an economic boom and benefits that other federally-recognized tribes have already seen which will have a significant & positive impact on the wellbeing of their people. It is important to me and many other Mainers that the Wabanaki get to stand on equal footing and that they get to fully exercise their sovereignty, which will be beneficial to all.

I want to sincerely thank the committee members for their consideration in this matter, and for taking the time to read these testimonies. The right to sovereignty & self-determination are things that we must endeavor to uphold and honor for all people, and we can do so now by passing LD 2007 to make sure we are including the Wabanaki Nations in this shared goal.