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LD 2007

This bill is a critical step towards righting over a century's worth of erasure and inequality, a legacy that persists today. U.S. Census data in 2019 showed that 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%. This disparity is an unacceptable consequence of the Wabanaki Nations current inability to take full advantage of federal self-determination policies that are very clearly benefiting 570 other tribes and nearby communities across the country. 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%. It's clear that the Wabanaki people require the same legal rights and self-determination in order to begin closing these gaps.