

Tammy Cloutier
Kennebunk
LD 2007

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dr. Tammy Cloutier, and I live in Kennebunk. I am writing in support of LD 2007.

We can't erase the cruel and unjust actions of our ancestors, but we can work toward reparation, fairness, and equity. Restrictions imposed by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) have prevented the Wabanaki Nations from moving forward for the betterment of their community members, as has been done by over 500 federally recognized tribes. Removing these restrictions would help the Wabanaki Nations take advantage of, and benefit from, federal policies, programs, and funding that other tribes have been privy to, thus supporting job creation, health care systems, and education; vital resources EVERY Maine and US citizen should be able to access. While adults certainly feel the effects of these restrictions, children are hit the hardest. Childhood poverty rates within Wabanaki communities ranged from 40-77% in 2019, while Maine's childhood poverty rate was 15%. This is inexcusable. How are children and families supposed to thrive when the odds are stacked that highly against them?

We don't exist in silos. Supporting the Wabanaki Nations not only benefits their communities, but the State of Maine as well. Job and income growth, improved quality of life, the protection of Maine's precious natural resources, and the continued stewardship of sustainable ecological practices help all of us. It is past time to modernize the 1980 Settlement Act and work in partnership with these Nations. I know I am just one of thousands of Mainers who stand with the Wabanaki Nations and support their sovereignty. Let's not stay stuck in the past, continuing to perpetuate inequality and preventing communities from improving their way of life.

Please stop wasting taxpayer money to fight against restrictions that were never supposed to be permanent and that are detrimental to all. I urge you to support LD 2007. Thank you for your time and attention.