

Kurt Whited  
South Portland  
LD 2007

Senator Carne, Representative Moonen and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

Thank you for the opportunity to today to support of LD 2007,  
An act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations.

My name is Kurt Whited , I use he/him pronouns and I live in South Portland.

Justice and equity have been denied to the Wabanaki tribes since the settlement acts of 1980 - which deny self governance.

Passing LD 2007 is all about fairness and equity.

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 over the past 40 years who've had full access to federal policies of self-determination. Removing those obstacles would help the Wabanaki Nations take advantage of federal self-determination policies, programs and funding that elsewhere in Indian Country led to the creation of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services produced by Native businesses.

Maine is falling behind: Outside of Maine, there's a 30-year economic boom going on in Indian Country.

Easing the Settlement Act's restrictions will enable the Wabanaki Nations 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%. Likewise, because of the Settlement Act, the Wabanaki tribes' health, educational and economic outcomes have lagged far behind those of other population groups in Maine and other tribes throughout the country.

In the name of equity , justice and equality I urge you to vote in favor of passing LD 2007 in its full language.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kurt