

Leslie Runser
South Portland
LD 2007

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on
Judiciary

My name is Leslie Runser. I am a resident of South Portland, and I am testifying in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self Determination for Wabanaki Nations. I am a member of First Parish Unitarian Universalist church of Portland. I submit my remarks as a member of the UU faith tradition which affirms and promotes justice, equity, and compassion in all human relations and the inherent worth and dignity of all people. I am also one of the 500 members of the Maine UU State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) which links Maine's 26 UU congregations in working for legislation that promotes our shared values. (MUUSAN is testifying separately in support of this bill)

The 1980 settlement implementing act has put the Wabanaki tribes in a category separate from all other federally recognized tribes in the United States. It has stifled the Tribes' right to self-determination resulting in both cultural and economic hardship.

In these troubling times, where our fundamental principles and systems of democracy are at stake, taking a stand for fairness and equanimity is essential. Time and again, Maine shows itself to be a leader among our 50 states standing for principles of truth, inclusion, and justice. LD 2007, like the tribal sovereignty bill from 2 years ago, is based on consensus recommendations made by a legislative task force four years ago.

I believe the state of Maine has a moral imperative to help restore the Wabanaki people's sovereignty and their right to self determination. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2007.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony,
Leslie Runser