

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: Caron Chess, New Brackett Church, Peaks Island, 04108 Home address 7 veteran st.

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

My name is Caron Chess. I am the chair of the Social Justice Task Force at New Brackett Church Peaks Island and am testifying on behalf of the church, which has voted twice to support Wabanaki sovereignty and is one of the more than 250 organizations that make up the Wabanaki Coalition.

As an individual, my Jewish identity also compels me to support the Wabanaki. The genocide of the Jews took place during the course of 12 years and the world acknowledges this as a crime against humanity.

The crimes against the Wabanaki occurred over the course of hundreds of years. Most deaths also took place many years ago so most Maine residents have little understanding of what Maine has done and how lack of sovereignty affects tribes. I feel a personal responsibility to speak up.

We owe the Wabanaki at least self-governance.

New Brackett Church believes LD 2007 is a step towards Maine treating Wabanaki the same as the more than 570 tribes in the country. Also, as demonstrated in other states, there are possibilities for effective collaboration and economic improvement of tribes and surrounding communities when we deal with the tribes as equals. As we know from the Harvard Report, the Wabanaki are economically disadvantaged compared to the other federal tribes because of Maine denying them full self-determination and blocking access to federal programs that would bring more money to the Wabanaki

For all these reasons, New Brackett Church believes the State of Maine has both moral and economic imperatives to restore the Wabanaki sovereignty and right to self-determination, and urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2007.

Thank you.

Caron Chess

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New Brackett Church
LD 2007