

Tom Rogers
South Portland
LD 2007

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

My name is Tom Rogers. 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 greatly appreciate the renewed collaboration and bipartisan legislative effort in recent years to rectify the injustices imposed on the Wabanaki Nations by the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. The politicians who drafted the 1980 Settlement Act called it a "living document" and expected that it would be amended from time to time for the mutual benefit of the Wabanaki Nations and the state of Maine. Alas, that hasn't happened.

I find it deeply disturbing and indefensible that our State continues to treat the Wabanaki as second class citizens, denying them the rights held by the 570 other federally recognized tribes. While I recognize that there will be challenges for both the State and the Wabanaki to address following passage of the bill and its signature by the Governor, those can be overcome.

It's high time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki, along with their neighbors in rural Maine, from achieving the dramatic and sustained economic growth achieved over the past 40 years by 570 federal tribes across Indian Country.

In closing, I call on the Legislature to pass LD 2007 and for our Governor to sign the bill into law this session.

Thanks for your consideration.