

Grace Cain
Sebago
LD 2007

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

From: Grace Cain, 92 Swamp Rd, Sebago, Me 04029

Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki
Nations

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is
Grace Cain and I live in Sebago. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.
I have previously submitted testimony in support of LD 2094, LD 1626 and H. R.
6707 as well.

As I write testimony, again, today, I am sad and hopeful at the same time.

I am saddened that the Consensus Recommendations of the Task Force have not been
enacted yet but I am hopeful that the years of hard work, relationship building,
compromise and due diligence have led you to a place where LD 2007 will easily be
signed into law.

In reviewing LD 2007 and my previous testimony I am still trying to find
understanding why anyone would oppose these amendments to this living document.

Why would anyone want the Wabanaki people excluded from federal policies of self
determination that will not only benefit the Wabanaki people but all of us who call
Maine home as well.

This is emphasized on page 12 of the Harvard Report

<https://wabanakialliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-12-2-Economic-Social-Impacts-Fed-Indian-Policies-to-Wabanaki-Nations-final.pdf> as such,

“The strengthening of tribal economies and concomitant improvement in
economy-dependent social conditions has had spillover effects on the non-tribal
jurisdictions that tribes abut and/or are embedded in. Consistent with the expectation
that one is not made poorer if one’s neighbor pulls him or herself out of poverty,
surrounding off-reservation economies and communities have quite consistently, if
not absolutely always, experienced net benefits as tribes have taken the reins of
self-government and conditions have improved on reservations under
Self-Determination.”

Why would anyone stand in the way of preventing child poverty?

The Harvard Report on page 13 states,

“When we examine poverty rates in the Wabanaki Nations relative to those for Maine
as a whole, the implications of lower incomes in the former are particularly stark.
Focusing, for example, on child poverty (children under 18 in households with
incomes below the poverty level) the US Census data indicate five-year average
poverty rates for 2019 ranging from a low of 40.2% at Passamaquoddy’s Indian
Township to a high of 76.9% at Mi’kmaq. By comparison, Maine’s child poverty rate
for the same period is reported as 15.1%.”

No amount of child poverty is acceptable but the disparity in these numbers is
shameful.

Who are we as a community that finds it acceptable to block access to federal funding
and policies that will help support families and their children?

Please show me that we are not that community. Please show me that we are a
community that wants to see our friends and neighbors thrive. Please show me that
we are a community that honors, uplifts and respects the self determination and self
governance of the Wabanaki people whose homeland we reside in.