

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: (Sophia Anderson, 27 Meadow Drive, Bar Harbor, ME)

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Sophia Anderson and I'm from Bar Harbor. I am a young person and student, with a background in climate justice work. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007 because it's important to the future of Maine youth.

In many ways, Maine is falling behind and young people no longer want to live in a state that is so un-progressive. Wabanaki rights is one of the biggest ways Maine has fallen behind. The Wabanaki Nation deserves equal rights compared to nations across the United States, and deserves much more in the long run. LD 2007 is a crucial first step in transforming Maine into a more equitable, justice-based, and desirable place. Additionally, within the Wabankai nations themselves, young people are especially impacted by the lack of fairness. According to the Wabanaki Alliance, "according to the U.S. Census data in 2019, childhood poverty rates within Wabanaki communities range from a low of 40% at the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk community to a high of 77% for the Mi'kmaq Nation in Aroostook County. By comparison, Maine's childhood poverty rate for the same period is 15%." This shows just how crucial LD 2007 is to the lives of native and non-native youth alike.

Thank you to all the committee members, and I hope you seriously consider my points and the points of others supporting LD 2007. LD 2007 is a crucial first step in forming Maine into an equitable place where all Mainers thrive and truly love to live.