

Patricia Sprague  
Portland  
LD 2007

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: Patricia Sprague, 66 Delaware Court, Portland ME 04103  
Educator at Portland Public Schools

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

My name is Patricia Sprague and I live and work in Portland, Maine. I am the IB Coordinator and an instructional coach at Ocean Avenue Elementary School, and have been involved in developing the Wabanaki Studies curriculum for the Portland Public Schools as a member of the Social Studies Vertical Team. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

The 1980 Indian Land Settlements Act took the Wabanaki tribal nations out of the mainstream of native tribal communities across the US, and tied their rights and future to state control in many areas. One heartbreaking result is the continued poverty of the children in the Wabanaki communities that is significantly higher and more damaging than that experienced by non-Wabanaki children in Maine. How is this acceptable to the Maine leaders who profess to govern for the good of all the people in Maine?

As the teachers in Portland work to build the power of truth and trust in our teachings about the continued intersection of Wabanaki communities and settler-colonial-decedents, we hear from our students, "How is this fair? How can the people who have lived with and cared for this land for so many centuries be told that they don't have the rights to continue that care?"

Let go of the fear of change, of "losing" the power and control of the dominant systems that have in fact caused great harm to the land, the waterways, the health of the living things that depend on sustainable caring practices.

Our children understand what is right. It is time for our leaders to enact that right which will HELP Mainers of all backgrounds and tribes face a very uncertain future together

Thank you, Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee for supporting the legislation allowing sovereign rights of the Wabanaki communities to align with the federal self-determinations of other native nations across the country.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Sprague