

Committee on Judiciary, Attn: Susan Pinette
c/o Legislative Information Office
State House, Room 438
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

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

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

I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 2007: *An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations*. I am a mother and wife, a clinical social worker in practice in Bangor, and an educator at the University of Maine School of Social Work.

From all of those vantage points, through my relationships with Wabanaki friends, colleagues, clients, and students, I have witnessed the negative impact that the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act has had on Wabanaki people. However well-intentioned, it has caused economic, environmental, and legal harm by obstructing the Wabanaki Nations' right to self-governance and ability to receive the benefits of federal laws passed that every other federally recognized tribe in the United States enjoys.

To me, it is critical from every aspect of my life that I, as a white settler, work in the direction of actively repairing the genocidal harms that white people have caused and continue to cause. This includes white social workers, white educators, and white people generally in Maine who settled on these lands. If I don't personally work to repair those harms, I am just as guilty because I am perpetuating them.

Also to me, in these times, we rarely have an opportunity to address genocide so directly and in such a bi-partisan way. I feel it is vital that we all work together in deep, meaningful and connected ways, and this bill is a clear path forward that the Wabanaki Nations tell us will demonstrate good will and substantial progress. Many people on both sides of the aisle support it. We need to listen and take action!

Most of all, as a mother, I want my children to live in a place where we are on a path of healing racist harms done to Wabanaki people. My 17 year old daughter was able to come with me to attend the State of the Tribes Address last year at the State House, as well as a rally in Augusta for Yes on 6. Both of those events were profound for her – she saw people naming the historic harms and taking steps together to fix them in bi-partisan and hopeful ways. Seeing her experience has caused me to become even more dedicated to these efforts. This is the Maine in which I want to live, and this is the Maine in which my children can thrive. For all of these reasons, I urge you to vote in favor of LD 2007!

Sincerely,



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and
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