

Good Afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is name is Grant Provost, I am the Business Agent for Ironworkers Local 7 in the State of Maine, I am the Vice President of the Maine State AFL-CIO and I sit on three State Workforce Boards. The Maine State Workforce Board, The Central and Western Maine Workforce Board and the Maine State Construction Wage Board. I rise in favor of LD 2007 An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations. The bill is about fairness, the right to be treated as all the other federally recognized tribes in the United States are treated and the chance for the people of the Wabanaki Alliance to make their own governing decisions. Local towns in Maine have the ability to generate tax revenue or make rules regulating their own natural resources, it is time the tribes of Maine were able to do so as well. I am proud to be part of the growing movement to respect our brothers and sisters of the Tribes and their sovereign rights by standing beside them in their fight for equitable justice. Especially since they are asking for the same deal all the other federally recognized tribes in the United States enjoy, not more.

In my time with Ironworkers Local 7 I have worked beside many First Nations and Indigenous Peoples. I have Brothers and Sisters who are members of the Mohawk, Wabanaki, Micmac, Wampanoag, and Nauset Tribes as well as many others. I am so fortunate to be able to refer to these strong people as Brothers and Sisters. When I learned that some had been excluded from benefitting from federal laws and decisions leading to the denial of the very freedoms that most enjoy in this country, I knew I would be speaking today. These very Brothers and Sisters put their faith in me when they elected me to secure work and to fight for them in the State of Maine. Tribal Self- Determination is about being treated as equals, respecting the Tribes right to govern

themselves, enforce laws on their land, to protect what is rightfully theirs and to pass on a future of not only equality but equity to their children as we all do to ours.

The Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act was intended to provide funds and outline the process for Maine Tribes to repurchase more than 1 million acres that was unlawfully taken from them. To this date the Tribes have not been able to purchase nearly that amount back. What does that sound like to you? The committee here today can move this piece of legislation forward with an “ought to pass” recommendation and start a process that will bring fairness and equity to the Wabanaki Alliance.

Grant Provost

Ironworkers Local 7

gprovost@iwlocal7.org

207-314-3530

Grant A Provost
Brunswick
LD 2007

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