

Gretchen Crawford  
Rockland , Maine  
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: Gretchen Crawford , a homeowner in Rockland , Maine

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary  
Committee, my name is Gretchen Crawford and I live in Rockland, Maine . I am  
writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

For much of my life I did not really know about the settler-colonial history of my  
nation . Blessed with parents who recognized the importance of experiences in nature  
for our healthy growth , they both became special education teachers in part to have  
summers with us . They bought a cabin on Moosehead Lake and took us camping ,  
and it seems we fished nearly every day . We ate lake trout and sometimes landlocked  
salmon regularly . Decades passed , I married and had two children of my own , both  
born here in Maine , which I know now to also be named Wabanakik , the Dawnland  
for Wabanaki tribes , the People of the Dawn . It was through the Wabanaki people's  
own hard Truth and Reconciliation work that I finally learned about the history of  
settler-colonialism right here , as they shared their findings with brave transparency  
and vulnerability . There wasn't a dry eye as we listened and learned of the conditions  
that amount to ongoing colonizing , such as the still recent history of so-called  
boarding schools that tore at the fabric of Wabanaki families and community life .  
Once seen , it cannot be unseen , and I do not wish to unsee . I wish to be a friend and  
good neighbor to the very people who had cared so well for the great Lake my own  
parents had gifted us with knowing .

The intricacies of legislation that have adversely affected the Wabanaki have been  
carefully studied , including the Wabanaki themselves . It has been found that the  
Maine Settlement Acts , although intended to address the injustice of Wabanaki tribes  
being excluded from Federal protections that included indigenous people everywhere  
else , actually has created structural inequities that “ have resulted in conditions that  
have risen to the level of human rights violations.” That is not justice , it's ongoing  
and grave injustice .

With great patience and much heartache , the Wabanaki have utilized democratic  
methods to strive to simply have their rights , long denied , respected .

The passage of LD 2007 is the least we can do to help remedy these wrongs .  
Furthermore, the Wabanaki people would be able to access Federal grants that will  
allow them to develop economically and bring their children out of the inequalities  
that have led to their children experiencing much more poverty than non-indigenous  
peoples here . I read about the Harvard study that shows this will help all people in  
poor , rural areas as new jobs will be created . This in itself would be beneficial in  
many ways , as Wabanaki and non-indigenous citizens would be working together  
and knowing each other better . The work of righting wrongs is the work of healing  
and justice .

Thank you for your attention to this important legislation . Please pass LD 2007 !