

WRITTEN 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: Paul Drinan, POB 17834, Portland, ME. 04112

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Paul Drinan and I live in Westbrook. I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

Maine is falling behind: Outside of Maine, there’s a 30-year economic boom going on in Indian Country.

Easing the Settlement Act’s restrictions will enable the Wabanaki Nations to take full advantage of federal self-determination policies that are very clearly benefiting 570 other tribes and nearby communities across the country. The average income growth since 1989 has been 61% for tribal citizens not located in Maine, but only 9% for Wabanaki citizens in Maine; Maine’s overall income growth for the same period was 25%. Likewise, because of the Settlement Act, the Wabanaki tribes’ health, educational and economic outcomes have lagged far behind those of other population groups in Maine and other tribes throughout the country. For more information on the economic limitations of MICSA, visit our Top Takeaways from the recent Harvard Report.

When the Wabanaki thrive, rural Maine thrives.

By modernizing MICSA, Harvard researchers say the Wabanaki Nations could become the economic engines of their regions, creating new opportunities for jobs and income growth for themselves and rural Maine. According to the recent Harvard Report, self-government for the tribes would likely mean an additional \$330 million a year in Maine’s Gross Domestic Product, more than 2,700 jobs, and \$39 million a year in state and local tax revenue. Based on the experience of other tribes, better than half the new jobs created are likely to be filled by neighbors of Wabanaki tribes in rural Maine.

Thousands of Mainers stand with the Wabanaki in support of their self-determination.

More than 1,600 Mainers from all corners of the state testified in record numbers in favor of passing a tribal sovereignty bill based on consensus recommendations made by a legislative task force four years ago. Environmental organizations, social justice organizations, organized labor, and faith-based groups continue to voice strong support on behalf of tens of thousands of their members. Over 250 businesses and organizations have joined the Wabanaki Alliance Tribal Coalition — including the newly formed “Businesses for Wabanaki Sovereignty,” a forum for businesses around the state supporting the inherent sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nations.

With your support, Maine’s Wabanaki people will make Maine a more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable place for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Paul Drinan
Westbrook, Maine