

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Victoria Scott and, while currently a resident of Windham, I was born and have lived in the state of Maine my entire life.

I write to you today in support of LD 2007 as a political imperative, not only for our state, but for our entire nation, which owes justice to indigenous peoples who were wronged in the settlement of this country. Throughout our checkered history, the egregious mistreatment of Native Americans has been but a hushed footnote in the conversations of racial conflict and justice.

It is unthinkable to imagine ourselves a civilized system if we continue to perpetuate harmful acts of oppressive conquest against those who were colonized without hope of meaningful restoration. The deprivation of Wabanaki self-determination is a form of bondage that reinforces historical crimes that initially silenced and displaced the original inhabitants of the land, culture, dignity that was taken away by force.

Maine's most respected institutions offer Native Land Dedications and Acknowledgements on occasions of pride and celebration, but these words are not enough and ring empty without the power of the state acknowledging the Wabanaki as well. I implore you to pass this bill in reparation for the generations of trauma and disadvantage that resulted from the loss of agency imposed on the native people of Maine. If we are to believe in law, law must be just, and if we are to believe in justice, we must make amends for injustices. To deny the Wabanaki people their right to self-determination would be to willfully prevent the federal government's recognition of the tribe, interfere with their ability to recover their losses and access necessary resources for their recovery, and perhaps worst of all, add insult to injury.

Respectfully,

Victoria Scott