

Faith Woodman
Bath
LD 2007

Honorable Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, and other honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Faith Woodman. I am a resident of Bath.

As a Unitarian-Universalist, I am compelled to speak in support of LD 2700 by my faith's principles, which confirm and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I do not believe that the tribes in Maine have been treated justly, equitably, or compassionately. Nor has their inherent worth and dignity been respected in dealings with the State of Maine related to the 1980 Settlement Act. Passage of LD 2007 would help reverse that, and allow the tribes to move forward economically and to benefit from federal legislation that all other US federally-recognized tribes have had access to since 1980.

The 1980 Settlement Implementing Act place the Wabanaki tribes in a separate category from all the other federally-recognized tribes in the United States. This has greatly hampered the tribes' rights to self-determination, and has caused great economic hardship, and cultural harm. Child poverty rate from 40 percent at the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk community to a high of 77 percent at Mi'Kmaq Nation. This compares to the rest of Maine's 15 percent child poverty rate over the same time period. This is shameful and one outcome of the Settlement Act's restrictions on the tribes. Passage of LD 2700 would allow the Wabanaki nations to thrive, and at the same time, financially benefit all the surrounding communities and beyond.

I believe the state's denial of Wabanaki Sovereignty and their inherent right to self-determination is morally wrong. I looked at you as legislatures and state leaders to make this right. We will all benefit from the adoption of this act and so will the State of Maine's reputation for treating all at citizens with justice, fairness, and equity.

I urge you to pass LD 2700.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,