

Sarah Cushman
Portland
LD 2007

To the Honorable Senator Anne Carney (Chair), Honorable Representative Matt Moonen (Chair) and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Sarah Cushman. I live in Portland and was born and raised in Woolwich. Today I urge your Committee to vote unanimously OUGHT TO PASS on LD 2007.

The Wabanaki Nations in Maine are treated differently than the other 570 federally recognized Indigenous Nations across the United States. Because of the 1980 Settlement Act, when Congress passes federal legislation for indigenous nations, the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac and Maliseet Nations in Maine must be explicitly written into the legislation, unlike the other Indigenous Nations in other parts of the US.

With the Wabanaki Nations not being able to access various federal funding sources and other resources, their self-determination and economic vitality have been stunted. Allowing access to beneficial federal laws will not only benefit Wabanaki peoples but also non-Native citizens across Maine - including in our rural communities. This legislation doesn't circumvent the 1980's Settlement Act. This legislation changes a provision in the Settlement Act that would at least begin the process of placing the Wabanaki Nations in Maine on the same footing as the other 570 federally recognized indigenous nations.

PLEASE SUPPORT LD 2007 and help us start putting our Wabanaki Nations and all of Maine on a stronger path to prosperity. Thank you for your service!