



Committee on Judiciary

LD 2007 - An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

February 26, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Respected Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Gia Drew, and my pronouns are she/her. I am the Executive Director of EqualityMaine, which has been representing and advocating for Maine's LGBTQ+ community since 1984, and I am testifying today on behalf of EqualityMaine, Mabel Wadsworth Center, and OUT Maine in support of **LD 2007 - An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations**.

Tribal sovereignty for the Wabanaki Nations is a matter of fairness. For more than 40 years, the State of Maine has used the Settlement Acts to deny the Wabanaki Nations the same rights, powers, and privileges as the other 570 federally-recognized tribes in the United States. According to the 2019 Research Findings of the Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples Clinic at Suffolk University Law School, there have been more than 150 federal laws passed since 1980¹ from which the Wabanaki Nations and the State of Maine were not able to benefit due to the restrictions of the Settlement Acts. Consequently, the Wabanaki nations as well as their surrounding communities have not had the access to the economic development, health care, housing, environmental protections, and disaster response opportunities as all other federally recognized tribes. In addition to being an affront to the inherent rights of the Wabanaki to

¹ legislature.maine.gov/doc/3616.

self-govern, this injustice has meant that the tribes suffer unnecessarily from significantly stifled economic development.

We urge you to support this bill, and to vote Ought To Pass on LD 2007. It is well past time to restore Wabanaki sovereignty.

Thank you,

Gia Drew she/her
EqualityMaine

Aspen Ruhlin they/them
Mabel Wadsworth Center

Susan Campbell she/they
OUT Maine