

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Re: Support for LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

My Name is Jessica Goldfin and I am writing to testify in support of LD 2007.

I am so grateful to live in this place we call Maine, and to have the opportunity to make a life, living, and home here. However, I find it deeply disturbing and completely unacceptable that the original people of this land, the nearly 8,700 members of the four Wabanaki tribes, do not have the same opportunity because their rights to self determination, governance, and sovereignty have been blocked and restricted by the 1980 federal Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act (MICSA) and the state law (the Maine Implementing Act) that accompanied it.

As a direct result of these acts, collectively known as the Settlement Acts, I have learned that the Wabanaki Nations AND the State of Maine have been unable to benefit from more than 150 federal laws passed since 1980 across areas including economic development, health care, housing, environmental protections, disaster response, and development of tribal government services. Compounding this is the fact that many members of the four Wabanaki tribes reside in Aroostook and Washington counties, two of the most economically challenged counties in the entire country.

The time is now to right this decades-long injustice – one that is part of a centuries-long legacy of historical trauma that includes – among countless other atrocities – cultural and economic suppression. It is time to remove the barriers that have kept the Wabanaki from achieving the dramatic and sustained economic growth achieved over the past 40 years by 570 federal tribes across Indian Country. Considering there are only 574 federally recognized tribes...I'm unclear how we are even here.

Please restore back to the four Wabanaki tribes their rights, privileges, powers, duties and immunities as stated in LD 2007. Rewrite and modernize the Maine Implementing Act. Recognize the Wabanaki Nations' inherent right to self-govern within their respective territories in accordance with the same federal laws that generally govern tribal lands elsewhere in the United States. Take real and meaningful steps towards truth and healing. Do the right thing.

To our lawmakers who support the sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nation – thank you and please keep using your power to fight in solidarity for restoration, reconciliation, and reparations.