

Cyrilla Francis
Sipayik/Perry
LD 2250

Testimony in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for
Wabanaki Nations

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

From: Cyrilla M. Francis, 4 Wapap Road, Sipayik, Maine 04667

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary
Committee, my name is Cyrilla M. Francis and I live in Sipayik, Maine. I am a citizen
of the Passamaquoddy Tribe in Sipayik and I am writing to testify in support of LD
2007.

Throughout the 1970's, I watched my father, Passamaquoddy Sipayik Tribal Chief, at
the time, of Sipayik, Maine work diligently and tirelessly to help our tribe win the
passage of the 1980 Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act. During his fight for
our people, he did so with hopes of improving the quality of life for us all. Nothing
more. I know that he and other leaders he worked closely with would be very sad,
disappointed and appalled to see where their fight has brought us. Part of their sadness
would be for Maine's Indigenous children who live in high poverty rates. Those rates
could be remedied if LD 2007 was passed because the Maine tribes would be in the
position to achieve economic development by having the ability to take advantage of
the federal policies, programs, and funding that 570 other tribes in the United States
benefit from. This is called fairness and equality.

Our leaders envisioned ongoing healthy growth for our people. The 1980 Settlement
Act was not written in stone like some people in this state believe. The Act was meant
to be a living document and it is not. It's been 40+ years since this Act has held us
hostage. I am beyond disbelief that the powers at be have not been willing to remove
the blinders and open their minds to engage in enhancing the quality of life for the
Indigenous Nations in the state of Maine. As you may already know, there are
hundreds of Mainers who are in support of our self-determination. I ask what do these
supporters see that those in power do not? Furthermore, a term you've all heard
before - when the tribes thrive, so do the people of Maine. One example of this is,
each and every time I receive a paycheck, I spend my money in the surrounding
communities of my home. I dare say, most of our people do so as well.

Lastly, it is my hope that the committees, people, and governor of Maine will support
and continue to support the inherent sovereignty of the Wabanaki Nations.

Thank you very much for your time and for giving me the opportunity to have a voice
in this very important matter.

Respectfully,

Cyrilla M. Francis