

Kristin Peet
Winterport
LD 2182

Dear Senator Rafferty, Rep. Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Kristin Peet and I live in Winterport, Maine with my family. I currently have two school aged children, and one in college. My younger children are in grades 2 and 5 in the RSU 22 school system.

From 2005 to 2018 I was employed by Penobscot Nation and worked on Indian Island most days. I learned an enormous amount about the culture and made lasting connections with community members. In my current work, about 30% of my time is spent working with the Wabanaki communities on land return and access projects.

In recent years I spent time serving on a subcommittee of RSU 22's school board - the Equity in Education Committee. I was and continue to be a strong advocate of teaching culturally appropriate and historically relevant Wabanaki history in our schools in Maine. When my children first entered school I was taken aback by the work that came home under the "Native American" section in Social Studies. It was a very bland and watered down version of a generalized Native American "society" and not at all specific to the Wabanaki. I also received zero course work about Wabanaki history during my middle school years spent in Maine.

It is imperative that we not only honor the requirement to teach Wabanaki Studies (passed under LD291 in 2001), but do it in a way that amplifies Wabanaki voices and comes from Wabanaki sources. The task force and newly created MOOSE modules are a great step in the right direction. Based on my relationships and connections with Tribal members, I have been able to bring knowledge keepers into our schools to directly interact with the children in RSU 22. This should happen regardless of personal connections and the schools should have the support and funding to PAY these people for their time and knowledge.

We all benefit when we learn our accurate history and get to know our neighbors who are still here and very present. I urge the committee to vote ought to pass.

Thank you,
Kristin Peet