

Leslie Manning  
Bath  
LD 247

LD 247

An Act Regarding Recommendations for Changing Place Names in the State

Leslie Manning  
Bath, ME

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee,

I am Leslie Manning of Bath, a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and an interfaith chaplain, and I write on behalf of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy.

I am a former president of the Maine Council of Churches and a former Clerk, or chair, of the Governance Committee of Quakers in New England.

Our faith recognizes "that of God" in every person, and that we all are worthy of dignity and respect. Our testimony, or spiritual value, of Equality requires us to treat everyone, regardless of status, race, ethnic identity or cultural heritage as they would wish to be treated.

It is in that spirit that I urge you to support LD 247, so that our place names are reflective of our state's increasingly welcoming character and an indication that once, in the words of Dr. Maya Angelou, "when we know better, we do better.\*"

It is not ours to determine what is offensive to others; if we are told by another that it is offensive and disrespectful, that is reason enough to work to correct it. Slurs and racial epithets have no place in our hearts, on our maps or in our gazeteers; that is not who we are or intend to be.

Words matter; names matter. When we refuse to acknowledge that our words intentionally inflict harm on others, we perpetuate that harm. We must commit to change that, here and now; such work is necessary and long overdue. LD 247 works to address that.

Friends or Quakers, in Maine have long supported the efforts of Indigenous People to self determination and full enfranchisement, including support for the Maine constitutional amendment in 1954 that allowed Native citizens the right to vote in our state;

support for the teaching of Wabanaki history in our schools  
and at my home

Quaker Meeting of Durham , we are currently providing social justice enrichment resources to local elementary and early education volunteer teachers in a pilot program to promote an anti-bias classroom.

“Anti-bias curriculum is an approach to early childhood education that sets forth values-based principles and methodology in support of respecting and embracing differences and acting against bias and unfairness.”

From Teaching for Change

Please note that we not only introduce injustice but we let children know they can do something about it.

If we have that expectation of our children, can we not commit to modeling it ourselves?

Thank you for your time and your service to all the people of Maine. I regret being unable to be with you today, and hold you all in the Light of Love and Service, as we Friends say.

\*"Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better, do better."