

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Jennifer Becker, 97 Stillwater Avenue, Old Town, ME 04468, grade 2 educator at Brewer Community School

Date: 4/18/25

RE: Testimony in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools"

---

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Jennifer Becker, and I am a Maine Educator. I live in Old Town and teach in Brewer.

I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because I believe all students need to understand the importance of and history of living in the Dawnland. What is now known as Maine has been Wabanaki land for more than 12,000 years.

LD291 has been law since 2001. Unfortunately, schools were not given funding at the time to implement teaching Wabanaki Studies. Without funding, teacher training and resources, many Maine schools have not been able to implement Wabanaki Studies successfully. LD1474 will support teaching Wabanaki Studies by ensuring that schools are provided the long needed funding. LD1474 also ensures that the Department of Education will continue to have a Wabanaki Studies specialist on staff to support teaching and professional development of this important content. I have been fortunate enough to work alongside Brianne Lolar, Wabanaki advisors and educators across that state for the past three years. In our work with the DOE, we have collaborated together to create lessons, resources and educator guides. Having the expertise of the Wabanaki advisors has been an integral part of this work. LD1474 will ensure that Wabanaki advisors are paid for their time and honored for sharing their knowledge as we make sure Wabanaki voices are heard from around the state.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage you to support L.D. 1474. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Becker

