

Testimony of Emily Albee

LD 1474-Ought to Pass  
**An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools**  
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
**April 22, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Emily Albee and I am a resident of Orono. I teach high school Social Studies in RSU22, I am a National Board Certified Teacher, and the 2022 Penobscot County Teacher of the Year. I am testifying in support of LD 1474 and I urge you to strengthen the teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine schools.

I grew up in Maryland and moved to Maine 23 years ago to attend the University of Maine. I obtained multiple degrees in the fields of education, history, and technology. I have taught social studies for 15 years in Maine but only became aware of LD 291 (requiring all Maine schools teach Wabanaki Studies) 7 years ago. This 24 year old state law was not discussed in my educator training courses. I received no professional development or support on the best practices for implementation of Wabanaki Studies in the classroom. Once I became aware of LD 291, I independently pursued professional development opportunities and started to do my own research into the history, geography, and culture of the Wabanaki Confederacy and started to implement various lessons in my classroom.

In January 2024, I was selected to pilot Wabanaki MOOSE Modules in my classroom with accurate, appropriate, and enriching materials for my students to learn about Wabanaki history, geography, and culture. These modules are fantastic resources and were created in collaboration with educators and Wabanaki advisors. Students were able to connect to place based education concepts, build an understanding of the changing landscape of Maine, and understand the rich history and culture of the Wabanaki Homelands. My learning journey continued as I was invited to work collaboratively with educators and Wabanaki advisors to create Wabanaki Studies Educator Guides. The perspective and input from the advisors were crucial to ensure the accuracy, respect, and authenticity of these lessons. These Educator Guides created a framework for educators across Maine to access a variety of inter-disciplinary material that could easily be incorporated into classrooms. These guides allowed Wabanaki Studies to be integrated into Maine classrooms consistently throughout a school year instead of limiting the teaching to one lesson or one unit per school year. I have led professional development trainings for educators in my district helping to connect them with these curriculum resources to expand the teaching of Wabanaki Studies in multiple grade levels and classrooms. Most importantly, teaching Wabanaki Studies lessons allowed my 17 year old Penobscot and Passamaquoddy students to feel seen and represented for the first time in a Maine classroom.

I routinely utilize the Wabanaki MOOSE Modules, Educator Guides, and host guest speakers from the Penobscot Nation in my classroom. These resources along with the support of the Wabanaki Studies Specialist from the Maine DOE provide me with the confidence and structure to implement Wabanaki Studies effectively. LD 1474 would support the strengthening, continuation, and expansion of these curricular efforts for Wabanaki Studies with funding and sustainable supports. I urge the Committee to unanimously vote ought to pass on LD 1474. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Emily Albee  
Orono  
LD 1474

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