

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
From: Amber Stokes, 240 Swan Rd, Hermon, Maine 04401  
Date: April 19th, 2025

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

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

My name is Amber Stokes, and I am an undergraduate university student who lives in Hermon, Maine.

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 Maine students deserve to have an accurate and inclusive education that reflects the full history and presence of the Wabanaki Nations in our state.

Even though Wabanaki Studies has been legally required in Maine classrooms since 2001, there has been inconsistent implementation at best. So many students graduate without ever learning about the origins of the state we now call Maine. I can personally attest to this; I knew almost nothing about Wabanaki Nation before becoming close friends in high school with someone who is Wabanaki herself. L.D. 1474 addresses these gaps by ensuring that educators have the resources, training, and accountability they need in order to teach Wabanaki history and culture in collaboration with the tribal communities themselves.

As a lifelong Mainer, I want to be confident that I live in a state with an education system teaching the complete truth. And not just for the benefit of the Native students, but for all students who deserve to know whose homeland they are growing up on. This bill is an opportunity to show that Maine is serious about equity, honesty, and honoring relationships we claim to value with Wabanaki Nations.

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

Sincerely,

Amber Stokes