

Ann Dodd-Collins  
Portland  
LD 1474

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Ann Dodd-Collins and I live in Portland.

I urge you to unanimously support LD 1474, “An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools”.

This bill creates the position of Wabanaki Studies Specialist within the Maine Department of Education to oversee compliance with the 2001 Wabanaki Studies Law, which requires the inclusion of Wabanaki history, economic and political systems, and culture in the curricula of all public K-12 schools. It is about time. As a school librarian in 2001 when LD 291 was passed, I attended all the workshops I could find that would help me share this important part of our history with my students. I struggled to find a teacher who would work with me. They were all “too busy” meeting other requirements and there was no incentive to add this one to their list. And there weren’t many resources available for students in grades K-5.

The resources available to teachers of all grades have improved immeasurably, but the mandate remains unfunded and too often ignored. It is time to correct that error – to establish a Wabanaki Studies Specialist within the Department of Education and to provide compensation for Wabanaki advisors.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1474.

Thank you.