

Marie Camillo
New Gloucester
LD 1474

April 21, 2025
Maine DOE Legislative Team
State House Station #23
Augusta, Maine 04333

To the Standing Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Marie Camillo, and I am a retired early education and outdoor educator. I am writing in support of LD 1474 - An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools. Maine is required to teach Wabanaki Studies. Although the bill was passed in 2001, many of Maine's schools are still implementing little to no Wabanaki Studies instruction into their curriculum.

This bill establishes the position of Wabanaki Studies Specialist in the Department of Education to ensure the inclusion of the mandated Wabanaki Studies in the parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements.

This bill also requires the Department to continue funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors to honor Wabanaki voices across the State, including more specifically the creating and implementing of micro courses for professional development.

Creating a permanent position for one Wabanaki Studies Specialist and ensuring proper compensation for the contracted work of a group of Wabanaki advisors would be a meaningful beginning step towards Maine implementing a program in earnest.

This bill includes funding that school administrative units can apply for to fund Wabanaki studies resources which would help in particular, rural school districts.

It also directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to require the completion of a Wabanaki studies component in the qualifications for certifying the Wabanaki as the first peoples of this land that we care for today, and we see the importance of a strong Wabanaki studies education for all students.

As a former teacher, a Maine resident and grandmother I believe in the power of education to change our world and create and just and sustainable communities.

Thank you for your work supporting and advancing education in Maine and for your time reading public comments.

Sincerely,

Marie Camillo
New Gloucester
mvcamillo@gmail.com