

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Susan E. Young
355 Clay Hill Road
Cape Neddick, Maine 03902
5th grade social studies teacher in York, Maine 03909
Date: 4/21/2025

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 Susan E. Young, and I am a seasoned fifth-grade social studies teacher and a parent of an adopted nineteen-year-old, autistic person.

I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, “An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools,” because it is the law I am to teach about Maine Native Americans. For years, I have been looking for resources to help me teach about a culture I know so little about. I have attended a week-long workshop at the National American Indian Museum in Washington, D.C. I wrote a grant to take 130 fifth graders to Merrill Auditorium to see the production of *Wabanaki Stories*. I have had John Bear Mitchell, Ed Bullock, and his friend Ken as Maine Native American presenters to York Middle School. I have participated in many webinars and workshops to gain knowledge about the Wabanki culture. I am currently working with the Maine DOE, piloting the Maine Wabanaki Studies with my students.

Brianne Lolar’s commitment to teaching adults and students is unwavering! She not only has put excellent resources into the hands of teachers and students around the state of Maine, but has also traveled around the state to meet people in person. She has made it possible for teachers to meet other educators to share teaching strategies and pedagogy. Ms. Lolar’s daughter, Kaya Lolar, is a talented educator herself. She accompanies her mom on webinars and when traveling.

I felt that I hit the jackpot when it came to meeting Brianne and her daughter. She deserves to be paid for all of her hard work. Students and teachers of Maine deserve to have the opportunity to work with talented Maine Indigenous people. The Mic’Maq, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki, and Maliseet Nations deserve to have their voices heard and be recognized in the best ways possible, and that is through education. Haven’t the “white” people done enough damage

to people who didn't deserve being kicked off their lands, sent their children off to boarding schools, and endangered Maine's waterways?

I simply want to teach Maine Wabanaki Studies honestly and openly. Without the help of a Wabanaki person at the DOE and the law, I feel I would be doing an injustice to my colleagues' and students' education.

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

Sincerely,

Susan E. Young