

Richard Thomas  
Waterville  
LD 1474

Honorable members of the Maine Legislative Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

I am Richard Thomas, a resident of Waterville, Maine. I am writing to ask you to please vote in support of LD 1474, which would create the position of Wabanaki Studies Specialist within the Maine Department of Education to oversee compliance with the Maine 2001 law, which requires the inclusion of Wabanaki history, economic and political systems, and culture in the curricula of all public K-12 schools.

At the start of public meetings, we often hear the acknowledgment that we are living on unceded Wabanaki land. But I suspect we rarely recognize the significance of this statement. Europeans took the homeland of the Wabanaki and killed most of them, either intentionally or by unknowingly introducing foreign diseases. We ignore our history at our peril, as ignoring past mistakes makes us more likely to repeat them. In this case, the danger is that we might treat members of other ethnic groups as if they had no rights.

We are better than that. In Maine, we honor the humanity of everyone. Please support LD 1474.

Thank you for your consideration, Richard Thomas