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LD 1474

As an educator and a parent in the Lewiston school district, I am writing in support of LD 1474. There is a great need for stronger Wabanaki studies, schools are hungry for it but struggle to find the resources to succeed.

Although LD 291 has been a legal requirement since 2001, few Maine schools succeed in offering curriculum that meets the mark and teachers struggle to find resources and time to learn how and what they should be teaching in Wabanaki Studies.

LD 1474 makes Wabanaki voices integral to curricular and professional development. It also supports enrichment of Maine school resources and activities. The bill provides funds for which school administrative districts can apply to support Wabanaki Studies activities and resources.

Maine is behind the curve in teaching Indigenous studies, compared with other states. Montana, Oregon, and Minnesota, and many other states have funded teams of employees to support statewide instruction on Indigenous studies. A meaningful first step for Maine will be to create the permanent Wabanaki Studies Specialist position and to ensure proper compensation for Wabanaki advisors working on curriculum and teacher development.

This is the kind of support that should have been in place for past generations of Maine students, but we now have the chance to do better. I urge to to vote in favor of LD 1474.