

Lucy Birkett
Freeport
LD 1474

Dear Members of the Committee for Education and Cultural Affairs,

I am writing to urge you to vote yes on LD 1474. Although schools have been legally required to teach Wabanaki studies since 2001, few Maine schools have even begun to meet this requirement. Without support from the State, teachers and schools eager to bring in this curriculum have struggled to find resources and time to learn how to teach and integrate an effective Wabanaki Studies program.

LD 1474 supports a permanent position at DOE to develop Wabanaki Studies curriculum and resources for all Maine schools. This bill makes Wabanaki voices integral to curricular and professional development—a crucial component for learning and teaching Wabanaki history, economic systems, political systems, and culture.

Importantly, LD 1474 also directs the state Board of Education to require completion of a Wabanaki studies component within teacher certification requirements and ensures funding is available to hire Wabanaki advisors and educators who would help the Wabanaki studies specialist create short-term courses that would be available to all Maine teachers.

Thank you for considering my testimony, and for the work that you do for our State.