

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Javier Alicea-Santiago, 4 Lexington Road, Orono, 04473, Member of Penobscot Nation

Date: 4/19/2025

RE: Testimony in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools"

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Javier Alicea-Santiago, and I am a student at Dartmouth College, as well as an enrolled member of the Penobscot Nation, from Orono, Maine.

I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because I believe that as someone with two sisters and many cousins that go through the Maine public school system, it is essential that our future generations of citizens are well-informed of our past. L.D. 1474 reemphasizes the importance of knowing the history of Wabanaki people, as their presence and influence is still present in our communities today. This Act will create a broader perspective of the land on which we live for students all over the state. Attending Dartmouth College after graduating from Orono High School, I wish I would have learned more about the Wabanaki people, because I would have been more prepared to engage and succeed in the courses that Dartmouth offers. It is vital that our state's students are aware of current and past Indigenous issues, and it is equally as important that our Wabanki students and their people are not erased from this region's rich history.

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

Sincerely,

Javier Alicea-Santiago