

TO: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

DATE: April 21, 2025

FROM: Marianne Hill, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: **In support of LD 1474**

An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools

**Summary:** “This bill establishes the position of Wabanaki studies specialist in the Department of Education to ensure the inclusion of Wabanaki studies in the parameters for essential instruction and graduation requirements and requires the department to provide ongoing funding for the work of the specialist as well as contracted Wabanaki advisors to advance the implementation of the instruction of Wabanaki studies across the State, including funding that school administrative units can apply for to fund Wabanaki studies resources.

The bill also directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to require the completion of a Wabanaki studies component in the qualifications for certifying teachers and requires the department to provide funding for contracted Wabanaki advisors and educators to work with the Wabanaki studies specialist to create and implement short-term courses that must be made available to all teachers throughout the State.”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Committee, If we are to move towards a society that values and uplifts its people, one in which all thrive, we must recognize past injustices and understand the circumstances that lead to such injustices. It is always the case that gravely mistaken ideas are used to rationalize injustices; and past attitudes towards oppressed groups continue to impact thinking today. Education can help teachers and students understand not only the inhumanity that prevailed in the past but also how it continues to impact us today. Education can also provide tools for preventing future injustices.

The resources and programs that the Department of Education has been working on show great promise. The need for a specialist in Wabanaki studies who can oversee and coordinate efforts to provide the needed support to teachers and students is clear. This bill is a basic necessity if Wabanaki studies are to achieve their promise.

Please vote “ought to pass”.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Hill, Ph.D.  
South Portland, Maine

Marianne Hill  
South Portland  
LD 1474

This bill is a basic step needed to ensure that Wabanaki Studies programs achieve their promise.