

Anne Farrington

LD 1474

Sen. Rafferty, Rep. Murphy, and other members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

I live near the banks of the beautiful Androscoggin River on unceded Wabanaki Territory in a place that's now called Auburn. As a former teacher, I respect the valuable intent, aspirations and resources generated in 2001 by L.D. 291, the Wabanaki Studies Law. But here we are, 24 years later, failing in our responsibility to adequately implement that landmark legislation and its potential for eliminating widespread ignorance.

Fortunately, L.D. 1474 --- An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools -- provides specific requirements and funding that will help us do that. It makes Wabanaki voices integral to curriculum and professional development, with the crucial requirement for contracted Wabanaki advisors to develop and implement professional development courses for teachers throughout Maine.

L.D. 1474 ensures that Wabanaki Studies will be included in essential instruction and graduation requirements, by establishing a permanent Maine D.O.E. position for a Wabanaki Studies Specialist. It requires a Wabanaki Studies component in the qualifications for certifying teachers, to prepare them to provide instruction in Wabanaki Studies. It provides money that school districts can apply for to support Wabanaki Studies activities and resources.

I ask you to vote "Ought to Pass" on L.D. 1474 and move Maine forward by supporting education that will benefit all of us.