

Maggie Corlett
RSU10
LD 1474

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Maggie Corlett, Livermore Falls, 04254, RSU10

Date:

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

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

My name is Maggie Corlett, and I am a 4th Grade Teacher at RSU10, teaching at Meroby Elementary School and I live in Livermore Falls.

I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because I believe we are just beginning to get somewhere in this impactful endeavor and this is NOT the time to cut back on resources, professional development opportunities for teachers, or implementation into curriculums taught in Maine! I have taught in several other states, and pursued a variety of Education-related degrees. In all of those programs, college students were exposed to a significant amount of Native American studies that related to the locations of the universities. This was easily incorporated into many different subjects of instruction. Moving to Maine ten years ago, I was surprised how challenging it was for me to learn about Wabanaki culture and history. I was thrilled when the law was passed that Wabanaki Studies needed to be incorporated into Maine standards and instruction, and I was thankful to be provided with suggestions found in the standards documents, but I found myself having to put in a lot of work to learn the history needed and spent lots of time hunting online, for information that I knew might not be quite accurate.

I was so disappointed when I learned about the work being done in Portland Schools to develop a curriculum incorporating the very Wabanaki Studies I was struggling to learn more about. I wanted to teach those lessons too, but I couldn't access them! You can imagine my excitement when the Maine DOE announced Wabanaki Studies in the Professional Development Offerings! I have participated TWICE in Bri Lolar's Wabanaki Studies Professional Developments, hosting one of them in my school. Each time, it was met with a large number of educators participating, on a Saturday! Every person who has participated in these events has found the information and knowledge gained is immediately applicable and usable in our classrooms. The best part is that every single resource that I have used in my classroom is met with excited engagement from my students. They are HUNGRY to learn about the Wabanaki culture and its role in the thread work of their state's history and current existence. At a time when teachers are struggling to keep students engaged in learning, this is a tremendously welcomed experience. I have easily incorporated Wabanaki Studies into Social Studies, Science, Literature, Math, and Outdoor Learning content that I am expected to teach.

As my students are hungry to learn more, so am I! The resources provided by the Maine Department of Education are so plentiful that I am looking forward to exploring more of them in my off time this summer. While there were many educators from my district attending the Wabanaki Studies Professional Development this fall, I know many more educators would have liked to have come, but the seats were all filled. Teachers and students both want MORE!!! This is not the time to cut back on Wabanaki Studies in Maine Education AT ALL!! If nothing else, the availability, and support for Wabanaki Studies should be INCREASED!

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

Sincerely,

Maggie Corlett