

Anna Sommo
Portland
LD 1474

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Anna Sommo, 174 Woodlawn Ave Portland 04103- Maine Environmental Education Association
Date: 4/22/2025
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 Anna Sommo, and I am a concerned parent and community member and I also work with teachers through the Maine Environmental Education Association and I live in Portland.
I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because I believe Maine is behind the curve as far as Indigenous studies goes. Many states (like Montana, Oregon, and Minnesota, among many others) have strong teams of state-funded employees working to support statewide instruction of Indigenous studies. While we as a state have yet to establish a full Indigenous Studies department, creating a permanent position for one Wabanaki Studies Specialist and ensuring proper compensation for the contracted work of a group of Wabanaki advisors would be a meaningful beginning step towards the benchmark.
In my professional career I know that teachers WANT to teach students about Wabanaki Studies and NEED this support to do so. As a parent I want my daughter to learn accurate information about Wabanaki people throughout her educational career-not in a patchwork way or as an afterthought.
For these reasons, I respectfully encourage you to support L.D. 1474. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.
Sincerely,
Anna Sommo