

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
From: Marta Rackmales, 36 Hidden Oaks Drive, Freeport, ME  
Date: Apr 22, 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 Marta Rackmales, and I am a second grade teacher at the Maine Coast Waldorf School. I live in Freeport. I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because I believe Wabanaki studies are the foundation of our history in Maine.

I have been teaching for 30 years in both public and private schools. Because of the work done by Brianna Lolar and others, I now feel as though resources are available to me to teach children Wabanaki history and culture. I am a white teacher and well-aware of how cultural appropriation can mar teaching and learning of history and culture. I have contacted the specialist, the creator of the curriculum, (who has given their time) with questions as I implement the curriculum.

What is outlined in this bill will benefit not only the children learning, but the teachers and schools as a whole. The training opportunities provided by the Wabanaki contributors to the curriculum allow teachers to become familiar with the curriculum on the DOE site, hear about additional resources, and come together in person with other teachers. A unified program in training, with credits towards professional development, will allow for Wabanaki studies to take permanent (long awaited) root in our Maine schools from k-12.

Over my years of teaching, the education about indigenous culture has almost always had the theme of history. That they are a people of the past. But indigenous people, Wabanaki people in Maine **are still here**. They are part of Maine. They are the reason our beautiful natural landscape is still here. Their music, stories, growing of food and art and more are part of the fabric of Maine. Wabanaki citizens carry an unbroken thread of history, thousands of years long, to connect our today to our past. We need **permanent Wabanaki voices** in leadership roles in our Maine DOE to make this a **permanent component** of a child's education. I can not adequately describe how much of a difference it has made to me and to my second graders to have access not only to the Wabanaki Framework but also to one of its authors, Brianna Lolar, as a resource.

Please pass this L.D. 1474. As a teacher I assure you it will only make Maine education better. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Marta Rackmales

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Freeport  
LD 1474

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