

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

**From:** Beth Clifford, 181 Leach Point Road, Perry, Maine 04667

**Re:** Support for LD 1474, An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools

**Date:** April 22, 2025

My name is Beth Clifford, and I live in Perry. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1474, a bill that would help the state come into compliance with a law that requires the teaching of Wabanaki studies in all public K-12 Maine schools.

“Although LD 291 has been a legal requirement since 2001, few Maine schools succeed in offering curriculum that meets the mark and teachers struggle to find resources and time to learn how and what they should be teaching in Wabanaki Studies.” This was the conclusion of the ACLU of Maine, the Wabanaki Alliance, and the Abbe Museum after undertaking an extensive review of current practices within Maine schools “to evaluate the successes, challenges, and future of this important law.” Their findings include:

- The Wabanaki Studies Law is not meaningfully enforced across the state.
- School districts have failed to consistently and appropriately include Wabanaki Studies in their curriculum.
- Teacher training and professional development remain insufficient to equip educators to teach Wabanaki Studies.

LD 1474 establishes a permanent position at the Maine Department of Education for a Wabanaki studies specialist; brings Wabanaki voices into the process of developing and providing professional development and coursework for Maine’s educators and preservice teachers; and ensures the inclusion of Wabanaki Studies in essential instruction and graduation requirements.

Please support this bill in order to make the vision and learning outcomes established 24 years ago in LD 291 a reality.

Thank you!