

Susan Beaulier
Ashland
LD 1474

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Susan L. Beaulier, PO Box 726; 69 Masardis Rd., Ashland, 04732, PK-12
Visual Arts Teacher; MSAD #32

Date: 04/21/2025

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 Susan L. Beaulier, and I am a resident of Ashland, Maine. I have been a
PK-12 Visual Arts teacher and Coordinator of Programs for the Gifted and Talented
for 35 years in MSAD #32.

I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of
Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because I know that all Maine students are part
of a global community. I also believe that community begins at home. The four
Maine Indian tribes are the Maliseet, Micmac, Penobscot, and Passamaquoddy,
known collectively as the Wabanaki or "People of the Dawnland." These people are
our friends and neighbors. They live across all areas of our state. They live and work
in our communities. Their children attend our public schools. They are Mainers, and
they have made up the fabric of our state from its birth. The Wabanaki are our
heritage, and their culture should be celebrated as part of Maine's history and future.
I have taken part in workshops offered through the Maine Department of Education
regarding Wabanaki Studies. As a result, I have added a Wabanaki Studies unit to my
curriculum. When I think about the importance of this small step, I am amazed at
how simply introducing a topic can lead to enormous awareness and cultural
acceptance. I have one proud MicMac sophomore girl who has grown in composure,
confidence, and acceptance as we have explored her culture. Where she was once
timid, she now leads and supports her classmates as we weave baskets and try to
properly pronounce Wabanaki tribal names. She openly talks about her people, and
the other students are curious about her culture. These meaningful conversations have
become a refreshing part of the classroom discussion among peers.

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

Sincerely,
Susan L. Beaulier