

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Cynthia Nye, 14 Date St., Old Orchard Beach ME 04064, teacher
Date: April 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 Cynthia Nye, and I am a teacher. I live in Old Orchard Beach. I am testifying in support of L.D. 1474, "An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools," because as a teacher, parent, and community member, I believe everyone benefits from Wabanaki Studies in our schools.

The Wabanaki Studies curricula currently available on the DOE website are the best I've found there in 12 years of teaching. Wabanaki Studies Specialist Brianne Lolar and contracted advisors are building and revising the site to be organized, accessible, and relevant. Lessons incorporate Wabanaki texts and videos so that all teachers can bring Wabanaki voices into their classrooms. Using these resources builds learning and understanding.

L.D. 1474 also provides funding for Wabanaki Studies in schools. Bringing in guest speakers and acquiring books and other materials to start a program is expensive. Making funds available will help schools implement or improve Wabanaki Studies.

I fully support the implementation of Wabanaki Studies courses that count towards teacher certification and recertification. As a specialist in gifted and talented education, I collaborate with colleagues across grade levels, and I know Wabanaki Studies are relevant across the curriculum. Wabanaki Studies training also helps teachers support Wabanaki students. I've attended three programs with Ms Lolar hosted by environmental education organizations, and I think these professional partnerships are extremely valuable. I look forward to pursuing a microcredential in Wabanaki Studies. I appreciate that L.D. 1474 will provide educators across the state with access to high-quality professional development.

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

Sincerely,

Cynthia Nye