

Testimony on LD 1474

Alex Silver, Scarborough

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Alex Silver and I live in Scarborough. I am here to testify in support of LD 1474: An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools. As a early-career teacher eager to deliver high-quality curriculum and civics education in my community, I wish the provisions in this bill had existed during my master's work at USM only three years ago.

As part of my teacher certification, I created a "series of lessons" and chose Wabanaki history as my subject. However, I found myself using limited or even outdated resources, primarily pulled from the Abbe Museum's Educator Hub. Today, thanks to recent initiatives supporting Wabanaki curriculum development, I've noticed a proliferation of resources on this same web portal. I personally had no education in Native American studies as a K-12 or college student from Michigan, therefore I need these resources to responsibly effectuate the 2001 Wabanaki studies law.

Considering the substantial advances we've seen in just a few years, I would like to see a sustainable structure emerge in our state. A permanent DOE position for a Wabanaki Studies Specialist, for example, would do wonders. While teachers are willing to seek curriculum on their own, a "wild west" approach does not lead to well-distributed outcomes. Dedicating state resources to a Specialist and professional development, along with an update to teacher certification rules, would provide all educators with training they are currently missing. I cannot see a way to faithfully implement the Maine state law without it. I urge you to vote "yes" on this bill.

Please vote 'Out to Pass' on LD 1474 and support teachers' legally-mandated work. Thank you for your time.

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