

**Maine Education Association**  
Jesse Hargrove **President** | Beth French **Vice President** | Jaye Rich **Treasurer**  
Rebecca Cole **NEA Director** | Rachelle Bristol **Executive Director**

## Testimony

### Neither For Nor Against

LD 1474 An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools.

Jesse Hargrove, President, Maine Education Association

Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

April 22, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

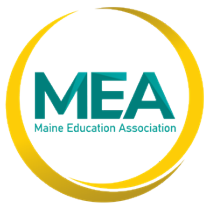
My name is Jesse Hargrove, I am a high school social studies teacher on leave to serve as Maine Education Association President. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators. Our members include teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, full-time faculty and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems, and thousands of retired educators.

I offer this testimony today on behalf of the MEA in **NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST** LD 1474 *An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools*.

We broadly support the intent of LD 1474 to strengthen teaching of Wabanaki Studies. Our state's educators want to do justice in incorporating Wabanaki studies into the school curriculum. Extensive work has been done to build resources and develop the professional support system. I'm extremely grateful for the guidance provided by the Wabanaki Specialist and the Maine MOOSE Project. The specialist has been extremely accessible at a wide variety of professional conferences working with educators to utilize Wabanaki resources on the Maine MOOSE Project and beyond. Making this position permanent establishes Maine's committee to Wabanaki studies, students, and educators.

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However, we are concerned about the Teacher Certification requirements in LD 1474. The requirements are unclear at a time when educator workforce shortages already exist. We already hear of educators from other states unable to obtain Maine certification. It's likely that requirements like this would add to that dilemma. We are also unclear how the provision would impact educators looking to re-certify. Adding a certification requirement doesn't necessarily aid the implementation. For this reason, we are unable to fully support the bill as presented. We know educators are eager for professional development offered by the Wabanaki Specialist and support an amended version removing the certification requirement.