



Permanent Commission RACIAL, INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL POPULATIONS

LD 957 “An Act to Integrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander History into the Statewide System of Learning Results”

April 22, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee On Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Rae Sage, and I am the Policy Coordinator for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. The Permanent Commission’s role is to examine racial disparities across all systems and advise Maine State Government on ways to improve the status and outcomes of historically disadvantaged racial, Indigenous, and tribal populations.

The policy committee of the Permanent Commission fully supports LD957 as we support legislation that advances truth in education in relation to historically marginalized communities.

Maine law currently requires that African American Studies and Wabanaki Studies be included in the content standards.¹ Why should we not also include teachings about Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander History? AAPI history grapples with questions of sovereignty, immigration, class, cultural identity, and what it means to call not only the United States home, but Maine specifically.

Understanding the complex histories of AAPI communities and how racist policies and practices have impacted them throughout history combats stereotypes, violence, and the erasure of these communities’ stories at large. Following a similar framework of the African American and Wabanaki Studies bills, LD957 offers Maine students and educators a more whole picture of how our nation came to be.

¹ 20-A MRSA §4706, as amended by PL 2021, Chapter 247

Because many Maine communities are often composed of familiar faces and stories, it is easy to dismiss stories about identities that are not broadly represented at the local level. It is essential we build an education model that aids in building community cross-culturally-An act more essential now than ever.

As a community, we can be prone to repeating harmful cycles when we do not take the time to understand the systemic issues under the surface.

Comprehensive education can nourish minds and prevent racial tension and violence in the future. An education rooted in understanding our shared history is foundational to lasting societal change. Providing resources, solid guidance, and accountability structures to ensure our education goals are met in teaching Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander history is essential to making Maine a better place for all of us. Thank you very much for your time.