



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

Jesse Hargrove, President, Maine Education Association

Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

April 22nd, 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 NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 957, *An Act to Integrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander History into the Statewide System of Learning Results*.

We have seen several bills that seek to mandate new courses, content, and curricula. Each time we add something new, something else is lost. While MEA understands the merits of LD 957, we also believe that our educators are working every day to improve instructional practices and celebrate the variety of cultures and people that have contributed to the history and success of our great state and nation. We must also consider the extent to which our educators have time to prepare for changes, how they fit within existing curricula, and hopefully how they reinforce a culture of skills-based learning with a focus on depth over breadth. The more curriculum that is mandated, the less authentic learning from student curiosity that takes place.

The current Maine Learning Results Standards for Social Studies specifically advises “a broad perspective on a variety of peoples, nations, regions...” There are over thirty references to “other cultures” “world cultures” or “variety of cultures” across each strand: Geography, Personal Finance & Economics, History, and Civics & Government. The Learning Results specifies application of skills such as analytical thinking with performance indicators that draw comparisons between past and present cultures from diverse regions.

35 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330 | 1349 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401
PO Box 310, Caribou, ME 04736 | 29 Christopher Toppi Drive, South Portland ME 04106

207-622-5866 | 207-888-2070 fax | www.maineaa.org



Maine Education Association

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

The best way to ensure that curriculum is being taught is to support educators with the opportunity to engage in efficient and ongoing professional development. Efforts towards this end are already in place. The Maine Council for the Social Studies has regularly included sessions on a variety of cultures and hosted [the Five College Consortium: Asian Pacific American Studies Program \(APA\)](#). I know educators are engaging and incorporating these studies into existing course curriculum or creating standalone courses such [Controversies in Contemporary Asia - Course Syllabus](#) at Hermon High School. There is always room for improved and increased professional development, however, to do justice the State and Local Districts would need to ensure that educators have the opportunity and resources to engage, incorporate, and implement. I would rather see resources be put in this area than into more mandates.