



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

## **Nina Azella Milliken**

276 Turkey Farm Road

Blue Hill, ME 04614

Phone: (207) 412-8828

[Nina.milliken@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Nina.milliken@legislature.maine.gov)

### *Testimony of Rep. Nina Milliken supporting*

## **LD 791, An Act to Support the Maintenance of Historic Fort George in Castine**

### *Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry*

Good morning Senator Ingwerson, Representative Pluecker, and my friends and colleagues who serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. My name is Nina Milliken and I have the privilege of representing the good people of the Blue Hill Peninsula including the town of Castine where Fort George sits in the Maine State House.

My husband, Jesse Wessel, pitched the winning baseball game in the High School State Championship in 1997. He'd be very happy to tell you about the glory days of his youth and his favorite sport, but more than anything, you'd want to ask him about his favorite little league field.

The town of Castine has undoubtedly the most memorable little league field on the Blue Hill Peninsula and probably anywhere in the state of Maine. It sits on top of Fort George, a Revolutionary War Era fort built in a very strategic location in 1779. Where else in the US can you hit a homer on such an important piece of American History? Perhaps that is why it has hosted such famous ball players as Satchel Paige, one of the first African American players to play in the Major Leagues, and Penobscot Tribal Member, Louis Sockalexis, nicknamed the Deerfoot of the Diamond, the first Native American player to play for the pros.

Fort George is an integral part of the town and community. There are historical landmarks everywhere you turn in Castine, but Fort George has been an important part of the landscape and the lives of the citizens of the town for generations. It is large and hard to miss. Before coming to the legislature, I was a high school teacher. In education classes, I was taught to work to build bridges that connect the past to the present for students in my classes. I have tried extensively to make history relevant to the lives of students. Fort George does this without trying. Kids literally play sports on a military fort that was a sight of battles in American Wars of yore.

Little league aside, Castine itself is a goldmine of interest for history buffs like myself. It is the oldest permanent settlement in all of New England and at different times in history, has been occupied by four different countries. It is a tumultuous history that I don't have time to even get close to covering in this testimony, but I invite you to come to Castine and visit and I'd be happy to show you around a bit. We can explore some of the 13 forts Castine has from this era that is about 1 fort for every 63 residents of the town.

But, the Fort needs some help. She has found herself in a state of disrepair and, despite being a state historic landmark, she doesn't get any financial assistance from the state and is in dire need of some support to help fix some of her crumbling infrastructure. I was able to visit the fort last Friday with State Senator Nicole Grohoski and we were able to see firsthand the clear damage that time, adolescents in the area, and a lack of resources for upkeep has brought to this cool place.

Our history in Maine is important. Indeed, Fort George is a landmark of notable history for the entire country. I hope that this testimony and that of other supporters of this bill will compel you to consider sending some resources over to support this tangible relic of American history.

I appreciate your time and I will be happy to answer any questions you might have as I am able.





