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Testimony of Debra McIntyre, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying in support of LD 1642 An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Debra McIntyre, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. On behalf of the members of MCLA, I am testifying in support of LD 1642 An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine.

The 2019 Maine Learning Results Social Studies Standards provide numerous performance expectations related to "Maine Native Americans". In addition, as the standards review process continues, Wabanaki topics will be considered for inclusion in all content areas. As you know, these standards are what guide the expectations for what students should know and be able to do and local districts use these standards in developing their curricula. We know that many school districts have struggled to develop appropriate curriculum and to implement learning experiences in Wabanaki studies. Many factors including a lack of aligned and rigorous resources and a lack of staff training are a few of the reasons that districts may have struggled with implementation.

This proposed bill supports staff without unnecessary requirements. The bill would support the formation of the Wabanaki Studies Commission to help school districts appropriate resources and support the Department of Education in this endeavor as well as identify professional development opportunities for educators. Supporting teachers in implementation of the required standards is necessary to have successful implementation. Over the past few years, there has been some movement in this area such as the modules created on the MDOE MOOSE platform and curriculum developed by individual school districts, but there is much more to be accomplished. This bill supports the implementation of standards already included in the Learning Results and does not interfere with the standard revision process in place.

For these reasons MCLA supports LD 1642. Thank you for your time.