



STATE OF MAINE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SPEAKER'S OFFICE  
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RACHEL TALBOT ROSS  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

January 9, 2023

Senator Rafferty Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

As Speaker of the Maine House and as a longtime champion of efforts to enrich our students' curriculum, I want to share my full support of LD 1642 An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools. As proposed in the legislation, the bill would establish the Wabanaki Studies Commission and additionally create more learning opportunities for education professionals. Ultimately, allowing educators to support our students with a more complete and accurate understanding of the history of our region and strengthen our efforts to provide the best possible learning experiences for all.

Maine's history cannot be taught correctly without the accurate inclusion of the Abenaki Confederacy and it is imperative that we provide our students with a thorough understanding of the contributions, traditions, and resilience of the Wabanaki people throughout the centuries. This legislation will improve upon our existing standards and send a powerful message of inclusivity and representation, while ensuring the Department of Education has the resources necessary to support this initiative.

I urge you to give careful consideration to this proposal and to work collaboratively with educators, community members, and Indigenous representatives to endorse a curriculum that accurately reflects the history and contributions of the Wabanaki people, supports the teachers tasked with its delivery and provides a comprehensive and inclusive education for Maine students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Talbot Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Speaker of the House  
Rachel Talbot Ross