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TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 1642

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE TEACHING OF WABANAKI STUDIES IN MAINE SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association neither for nor against L.D. 1642.

Education law in Title 20-A, §4706 already requires the teaching of Maine Native American studies, including Maine tribal governments and political systems; Native American culture and history; and, Maine Native American territories and economic systems. They also must be included in the review of content standards and performance indicators as part of the system of the Maine Learning Results. We do support the change in language from Native American studies to Wabanaki studies.

The bill directs the Department of Education to establish and fund teacher education programs in Wabanaki studies. Before we can support the bill, our associations are interested in the scope and sequence of these courses, and the additional amount of time that will be required to include these courses in the curriculum above what schools are already doing. The level of funding that will be required is also unknown, again making it hard to support this bill.