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Testimony of Rep. Rafael Macias introducing

LD 702, An Act to Designate January 6th as A Day to Remember and to Preserve the Accounts of Witnesses to the Events of January 6, 2021 Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Rafael Macias, and I represent House District 51, which includes a part of Topsham.

When I was young, I spent a lot of time confined to my room until I cleaned it up. Luckily, there was a new volume of Encyclopedia Britannica on the shelf, and I would lose myself in its pages. I read about world history, the sciences, but especially about world wars, their weapons, ships and aircraft.

My father was a Cold War submariner. He often hinted at stories he couldn't tell me—things he said would be declassified someday. I joined the U.S. Navy at 17, following in his footsteps. Like him, I became an electronics technician and went to nuclear power school. I even had orders to a submarine.

In 2006, I was serving in Afghanistan, just outside Kabul, when I got word that my father had passed away. I never did get to hear his stories. He never wrote that book. Now those stories are gone—like they never happened.

That experience taught me a truth I've never forgotten: if we don't write history down, we risk losing it forever.

That's why I'm here today to speak in support of LD 702 "**An Act to Designate January 6th as A Day to Remember and to Preserve the Accounts of Witnesses to the Events of January 6, 2021**" to preserve the firsthand accounts of Maine's congressional delegation about what they experienced on that day.

There's a phrase from history that comes to mind: "To the victor belong the spoils." I always thought it came from a victorious general or a British commodore. But it was actually a U.S. senator—William Marcy of New York—defending President Andrew Jackson's partisan appointments in 1832. He said:

"They see nothing wrong in the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy."

Today, we're seeing something even more troubling—when history itself becomes one of those spoils. Government websites quietly remove images and documents. Stories of heroism, brutality, courage and failure—erased or rewritten to match the language or politics of the moment.

And if it's not written down somewhere—it didn't happen.

The final printed volume of Encyclopedia Britannica was twelve years ago. That matters. We are losing our commitment to documentation, to fact, to memory.

Eight months after January 6th, I was on crutches when I met Representative Chellie Pingree outside the Capitol in D.C. I asked her what pain level she felt on January 6th. She said, "An 8."

Then I asked what she felt that day, standing there in front of me. She said, "Still an 8."

Our congressional delegation lived through a historic attack on our democracy. Their voices matter. Their memories matter. And if we don't preserve them—fully, officially, publicly—we risk letting others tell the story for us, or worse, letting the story disappear entirely.

This bill is simple, and it's urgent. We must preserve those firsthand accounts—while we still can.

Let Maine be a state that stands for truth. Let us write it down—generations of our future deserve to know the truth from our generations' past.

Thank you for your consideration of LD 702 An Act to seek the truth. Please vote Ought to Pass.