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Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan presenting

LD 339, Resolve, to Provide Funds to the Maine Indian Education School District to Develop a Wabanaki-centered Curriculum

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and fellow distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Michael Brennan, and I represent House District 115, which includes a portion of Portland.

Today, I am here to introduce **LD 339, Resolve, to Provide Funds to the Maine Indian Education School District to Develop a Wabanaki-centered Curriculum.**

Native students in Maine often attend tribally-controlled schools for their pre-k to eighth grade education. However, once reaching ninth grade, they often attend local secondary schools on a tuition basis. With the exception of Calais High School, Native students do not have access to a specially-designed course of study.

LD 339 is intended to address this critical problem.

This measure provides \$100,000 for each year in the 2026-2027 biennium to the Maine Indian Education school district to develop and implement a Wabanaki-centered curriculum for Native American high school students. It requires the Maine Indian Education school district to administer a pilot program in coordination with state-approved high schools. The funds will be used for curriculum development, staff, transportation and support services.

Further, the bill directs the Department of Education and the superintendent to report back to this committee.

As I already mentioned, there has been a program at Calais High School that offered a planned course of study. The funds from this bill will allow that program to be adapted and expanded where appropriate to other locations.

The curriculum will provide flexibility for Native American students who need or want to take courses in their language and culture, including culturally-appropriate history, science and math courses. At this point, the initiative is being structured as a pilot program with the eventual goal being the possible creation of a Wabanaki High School. This effort could provide the catalyst for achieving that objective.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.