

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Richard Farnsworth

Re: L.D. 957: An Act to Integrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander History into the Statwide System of Learning Results.

Senator Rafferty

Representative Murphy

Distinguished members of this committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you the essence of this legislation which is a major step in our efforts to broaden the awareness of our school age population to the number of minority groups that have made major contributions to our state and nation but have been overlooked in the development of our school curriculum. You can see from the insertion of this legislation, in the already existing law, that has grown over time to include African Americans, Wabanaki Tribes and the History of Genocide and the Holocaust in our state, nation and world. In addition to taking this step, this legislation further clarifies what groups are to be included in this initiative, an important step in establishing the guidelines for the scope of coverage in the design of this curriculum.

This component takes into consideration the other groups covered in MRS 4706 by recognizing the complexity of the development of this curriculum in concert with these other groups that have an equal need for acknowledgement and recognition . This modification allows not only for a multifaceted work group to develop the curriculum but allows for enough of a time span, with oversight by the Department, to submit recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Services, no later than April 1 of 2030 .

I recall very well the discussions we had in Committee when we had the request to expand the law to include African Americans and the History of Genocide including the Holocaust. While there was never a question about the inclusion of these issues in the curriculum, the problem arose as to how to effectively include them in an already over stretched learning experience. I do not believe that issue has not gone away and will require some creative thinking as to how to effectively include these topics, a challenge for the Department in their role as facilitator.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation which is designed to fill a gap in the educational experience and enrichment of our school age population.