



## Department of the Secretary of State

Shenna Bellows  
*Secretary of State*

Christian Cotz  
*Acting Maine State Archivist*

### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State  
and Christian Cotz, Acting Maine State Archivist

April 22, 2025

Testifying In Support

L.D. 1202, "An Act to Establish the African American Studies Advisory Council and Require Funding for African American Studies"

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Christian Cotz and I am the Acting Maine State Archivist. I am speaking today in support of LD 1202.

Title 5, Chapter 6 of the Maine Revised Statute defines the purpose and scope of the Maine State Archives in service to both the Maine State Government and the people of Maine. Specifically, §92 states: "The Legislature declares that it is the policy of the State to make the operations of State Government and local government more efficient, more effective and more economical through records management; and, to the end that people may derive maximum benefit from a knowledge of state affairs, preserve its records of permanent value for study and research."

It is that responsibility to preserve state records for study and research that brings me before you today. The Maine State Archives is pleased to support LD 1202 for its purpose driven goal of bringing this mostly unrecognized history to all Maine students, through historical records and resources. To best guide this work, the expertise and historical lens of an advisory council is greatly needed.

At the Maine State Archives, we regularly hear from Maine teachers who are seeking both resources and guidance on how to teach African American history. The training opportunities for Maine teachers will provide them with both the content and the confidence to teach this subject to their students. The Maine State Archives offers our assistance in this effort, by making available the applicable state records held within our collections.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.