



Maine Curriculum Leaders Association

Championing Policies And Practices That Enhance Teaching And Learning

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Testimony of Debra McIntyre, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying Neither For Nor Against LD 1474 An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools.

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Debra McIntyre, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. On behalf of the members of MCLA, I offer testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 1474 An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools.

We appreciate the intent of LD 1474 and recognize the importance of ensuring that Wabanaki Studies are taught effectively and meaningfully in all Maine schools, as already mandated by law. This legislation clearly seeks to elevate and strengthen that work, and for that we commend the sponsors and supporters.

LD 1474 proposes the addition of a position within the Maine Department of Education dedicated solely to Wabanaki Studies. While we acknowledge the importance of cultural specificity, we believe that a broader **content area specialist** who can not only support the integration of Wabanaki Studies into the wider social studies, history, and humanities curriculum but also provide additional content area support would be a greater systemic benefit.

In a year when schools and districts across the state are navigating tight budgets and difficult staffing decisions, we urge careful consideration of the financial implications of this bill. While the bill identifies a need, it is currently unclear what the total cost of this proposal will be, both at the state and potentially the district level.

We are also concerned about the possibility of new certification requirements that may be associated with the implementation of this bill. Schools are already grappling with significant staffing shortages, and any additional barriers to entry, could exacerbate existing challenges. In summary, MCLA supports the ongoing effort to honor and teach Wabanaki history and culture in Maine schools. We simply urge the committee to consider the overall fiscal impact, and implementation, especially in a climate of limited resources and capacity. Thank you for your time and for your dedication to improving education in Maine.