

Cyril Francis
Sipayik

March 12, 2021

Good morning Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and other distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Cyril M. Francis, I'm a Passamaquoddy citizen of Sipayik, Maine. I present this testimony today in strong support of LD 453, An Act To Establish a Permanent Appointment of a Member of the Wabanaki Tribes to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System. In 1995, I earned my Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maine Machias. In 1998, I earned my Master of Social Work degree from the University of Maine Orono. I am very proud of these accomplishments and am extremely grateful for the opportunity to pursue my degrees in Maine. There hasn't been a member on the UMaine Board of Trustees who represented the Wabanaki Tribes in several years. The first serving member on this Board was Harvard graduate, Mr. Wayne Newell of Indian Township, Maine. Mr. Newell was appointed by Gov. John Baldacci in 2007. I believe there was another individual after Mr. Newell, but since that seat was vacated, it has not been filled. In order to have a diverse representation on this board of trustees, a member from the Wabanaki Tribes is warranted and would be most fitting. We have many tribal members who exemplify leadership qualities, possess team player attributes, and would be fair to all students. A member of our tribes would know best the needs of the Wabanaki students and would advocate for these students if necessary. I, as well as the Wabanaki Tribes, would be honored to contribute to a prestigious board such as the UMaine Board of Trustees.

I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.

Cyril M. Francis