

Laura Hepner
Waldo
LD 1642

My name is Laura. I live in Waldo, and am a current High School student in this land known as Maine. I am in support of passing LD 1642: An Act to Strengthen the Teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine Schools. As a 15-year-old, non-Indigenous student, citizen, and community member, it is very important to me to learn the full history of the land that has been my only home. Learning about the Indigenous people and their relationship to these lands and waters – as well as where my ancestors come into the story – gives me a greater understanding of my place in community, and my responsibility to live consciously aware of the lasting impacts and continued cultural themes of colonialism. Learning this history is the only way I can begin to help build a better way forward, away from the continuation of colonialist ideology and unethical treatment of Indigenous people, and towards working collectively for a more just society. I also believe that myself and other non-Indigenous people of Maine have the chance to improve our environmental sustainability and connection to place by incorporating Indigenous points of view into our common thought. This change must begin at the root of the issue: by teaching accurate, culturally appropriate Wabanaki Studies. It is essential that these courses are engaging and culturally appropriate, and for this we need resources and proper training for teachers. I therefore urge the committee to pass LD 1645, in order to provide funding and proper training for the teaching of Wabanaki Studies in Maine schools.