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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 1642

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Michelle Stattard and I am a member of the board of directors for the Maine Council for the Social Studies (“MCSS”). MCSS is the largest professional organization for social studies teachers in the State of Maine and we are affiliated with the National Council for Social Studies (“NCSS”), the largest professional organization for social studies teachers in the United States. One of the goals of MCSS is to “provide institutional representation for the interests of and concerns of social studies educators”. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the board and members of MCSS in support of L.D. 1642.

The MCSS Board supports LD 1642 and further inclusion of Wabanaki subjects into Maine’s school curriculums. The experience, history, and study of Maine’s native people is integral to Maine’s history as well as its present. We hope to partner with this commission to complete its mission of teacher education, disseminating resources to our membership, and professional development.

We are concerned about the number of requirements either being added or newly enforced in our standards and the short amount of time in social studies required to obtain a Maine diploma. MCSS proposes that the two-year requirement for social studies in high school be increased. Although the bill indicates that Wabanaki studies can be taught in an English, Language Arts, Math or science class, the teaching of governments, cultural systems, territories, and economics are curricula traditionally taught in social studies classes. Current social studies diploma requirements are only two years and if this bill leads to a dedicated class without additional time added to social studies instruction, social studies education for students will be further marginalized.

The Maine Council for Social Studies urges the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1642.