

Eve Allegra Raimon
South Portland
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Dear Committee members,

First, thank you for your dedication to the advancement of students across Maine.

I am a Professor of English Emeritus at the University of Southern Maine. I taught American and African American literature and culture there from 1995-2022. I have published on 19th century African American writers through the 21st Century.

The main point that I would like you to know and remember as you consider this legislation is this: I do not believe there was ONE COURSE that I taught that included African American literature where A MAJORITY of the class did not express DISAPPOINTMENT and often ANGER that the course was the first time they had been exposed to this literature AND THIS HISTORY in any serious fashion. They knew full well that an important element of American history and culture had been withheld from them. They knew that to be truly educated citizens, they needed to know this history and this body of literature. They knew that in an increasingly multiracial and multi-ethnic nation such knowledge and understanding was absolutely vital if they were to become informed and engaged citizens.

As a retired college professor, I am admittedly not as well versed in the K-12 curriculum. Neither am I suggesting that this history and this literature are NEVER taught in those grades. However, I am convinced that African American Studies is not sufficiently embedded in the curriculum. Further, I suspect that Maine has an opportunity to become a leader in this area even as other states are denying their students the opportunity to receive a real education.

For the sake of the future education of the students of our state, I urge you to recommend passage of this bill.

Sincerely yours,
Eve Allegra Raimon, Ph.D.