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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 2001

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Michele Strattard 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 LD 2001 “An Act to Establish the African American Studies Advisory Council and Require Funding for African American Studies”.

The MCSS Board unanimously supports LD 2001. At a time when there are attacks and outright bans on the teaching of African American history, it is important that students learn about the struggles and contributions of African Americans to the United States. To quote from a response from the NCSS:

NCSS supports the teaching of Black histories in a manner that engages students in learning about the achievements, joy, perseverance, agency, and resilience of Black Americans Every student has the right to learn about Black histories and the Black experience, and every teacher has the right to teach Black histories and the Black experience without the fear of intimidation and retaliation.

The Maine Council for Social Studies urges the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2001 .