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I would like to thank the legislature for the opportunity to speak. I am an Assistant Professor of Biology and Africana Studies with over a decade of experience teaching at the collegiate level and doing science literacy outreach work with K-12 populations. I also have lived experience as a professional scientist, a teacher, and a Black and Indigenous woman. I participated in the advisory and writing committees to provide expertise about inclusive teaching methods and content to follow our charge from LD 1664.

As Ms. Lambert has testified, the committee was composed of educators from around the state, representing a range of instructional grades. There were also leaders from Wabanaki tribes and content experts like myself from different disciplines related to the charge. The committee decided early on to maintain the wording of all of the standards. Those did not change. To execute the charge of LD 1664 we instead provided suggested illustrations for classroom implementation. Careful thought was given to age-appropriateness, evidence-based pedagogy for science education, and the connection of the illustrations to Maine. The document, before you represents hours of research, preparation, and robust discussion, focused on what's best for children and reasonable for implementation with educators. To the last point, I and others connected to the Department of Education, like the Moose program, have curated resources for professional development training to be made available in the future.

Regarding questions that arose during the public comment period:

1)The National Science Teaching Association in a 2016 statement outlines that including societal and personal context in the teaching of science not only enhances the teaching but also does not diminish the rigor of material. Further in a 2019 CBE Life Sciences article, Hewitt and colleagues looked at the effect of using a socio-scientific issues (SSI) framework to contextualize scientific and socially relevant issues for students. They found increased motivation for engaging in laboratory work and other metrics associated with increased self-determination, student success, and persistence in STEM.

2)Regarding the comments about the misinterpretation of evolution leading to atrocities like the Holocaust, I point to the work of Francis Galton, who proposed the application of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution from plants and non-human animals, to human character, intelligence, and perceived morality. Galton's writings were cited to apply Social Darwinism in the US, which in turn, inspired Adolf Hitler to write his manifesto, Mein Kampf, outlining the need to "annihilate" Jews whom he called "parasites". He ended up killing 6 million people. The record is clear that the misuse and misinterpretation of evolution and genetics have directly caused war and genocide.