

Alex Wu  
Scarborough  
LD 1667

Good evening Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and esteemed members of the joint standing committee on state and local government.

My name is Alex Wu, I am a junior at Scarborough High School, and I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 1667 - An Act Regarding Recommendations for Changing Place Names in the State.

I live on stolen land. I live on the unceded land of the Wabanaki people.

You all live on stolen land. You all live on the unceded land of the Wabanaki people.

The history of this land is one of colonialism. This is a fact. The names of many places in Maine are not of its true native heritage, but of the names that colonizers have placed upon this land. When we say these names, we bear acknowledgement to the forged history that colonization has falsified over this land.

I am a poet, and a member of many marginalized communities. I know the power that names hold over us. I myself was given an English name, because my parents had to endure the mispronunciation and pain from hearing something that was not their name. Every day I have to live through the disconnect I feel with my own name, because I know it was given to me to accommodate.

I have friends with names that native English speakers have difficulty saying, or even avoid saying all together. Some of them have nicknames selected for them because others are unable to say their names. That hurts. It is not their name. The disconnect they feel from their identity hurts because of that.

When we use the wrong names for things it hurts, and while I cannot acknowledge the lived experiences for the erasure of native named land, I can say confidently that the pain I feel from losing my name, the pain my friends feel from losing their names, is something that is unignorable. That is not our truth. The names colonialism has given to the land is not its truth.

This bill is the right way to hold ourselves accountable to the truths of the land. Both historically marginalized communities who hold extensive professional knowledge, as well as other experts are part of this council. This council is a step towards equity.

We all have a responsibility to uphold the truth of this nation, and of this land. Please vote ought to pass.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.