

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SW
ROFS

L.D. 1649

Date: 6/12/25

(Filing No. S- 368)

MAJORITY
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to S.P. 657, L.D. 1649, "Resolve, to Establish the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Operations of the Legislature"

Amend the resolve by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study and Recommend Solutions for Modernizing and Improving the Effectiveness of the Legislature'

Amend the resolve by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

'Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved: That the Commission to Study and Recommend Solutions for Modernizing and Improving the Effectiveness of the Legislature, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established.

Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission consists of 10 members as follows:

1. Four members who are current or former members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, 2 of whom are from the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and 2 of whom are from the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature; and

2. Five members who are current or former members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 2 of whom are from the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, 2 of whom are from the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature and one without a party affiliation; and

3. One member who is a current or former tribal representative, appointed by the President of the Senate, based on the joint recommendation of the tribal governments of the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk, the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik and the Penobscot Nation. If the tribal governments do not make a unanimous joint recommendation, the President of the Senate shall appoint a current or former tribal representative.

1 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-appointed Senate member is the Senate
2 chair and the first-appointed House of Representatives member is the House chair of the
3 commission.

4 **Sec. 4. Working groups. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the
5 commission is supported by the following working groups.

6 1. The nonpartisan staff working group is established to work in coordination with the
7 commission to identify, study and report to the commission relevant findings and
8 recommendations regarding best practices and ideas on modernizing and improving the
9 efficiency and effectiveness of the Legislature. The nonpartisan staff working group
10 consists of the following members:

11 A. The Executive Director of the Legislative Council or the executive director's
12 designee;

13 B. The Director of the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis or the director's designee;

14 C. The Director of the Office of Fiscal and Program Review or the director's designee;

15 D. The Director of the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
16 or the director's designee;

17 E. The Clerk of the House of Representatives; and

18 F. The Secretary of the Senate.

19 2. The public citizen working group is established to work in coordination with the
20 commission to gather input from the general public. The public citizen working group
21 consists of up to 8 members, 4 of whom are appointed by the President of the Senate, with
22 2 of those appointments based on the recommendation of the Senate Minority Leader, and
23 4 of whom are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, with 2 of those
24 appointments based on the recommendation of the House Minority Leader. The members
25 appointed to the public citizen working group must reflect the geographic, demographic
26 and occupational diversity of the State and must have knowledge and expertise in public
27 policy, government relations, legal scholarship, political science, civic engagement,
28 municipal government, private business and organized labor. In carrying out its duties, the
29 public citizen working group shall:

30 A. Convene at least 5 public meetings in diverse locations across the State;

31 B. Solicit and receive testimony from the general public regarding experiences, ideas
32 and expectations for a modern, efficient and effective Legislature; and

33 C. Submit a summary report of findings and recommendations to the commission.

34 **Sec. 5. Appointments and convening of commission. Resolved:** That,
35 notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, all appointments to the commission and working groups
36 must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The
37 appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once
38 all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall
39 call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the effective
40 date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments to the commission have been
41 made, the chairs may call and convene the first meeting of the commission and begin to

conduct its business. The commission shall meet at least monthly and shall allow for remote participation by residents of the State.

Sec. 6. Duties. Resolved: That the commission and working groups shall study the existing structure and operations of the Legislature for the purpose of determining the adequacy and effectiveness of the structure and operations and to identify changes to modernize the Legislature in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness; provide better information to inform decisions; help prioritize legislative activity; develop, implement and coordinate a strategic plan; and reinforce political trust and support in the Legislature. In its work, the commission may consider, but is not limited to:

1. Improving efficiencies through technology;
2. Increasing transparency in the Legislature;
3. Improving physical access; evaluating remote access; and updating facilities for Legislators and legislative staff who have children to bring them to work;
4. Evaluating the overall structure of the Legislature, including the size of the Legislature, the benefit of a professional legislature versus a citizen legislature, the benefit of a year-round legislature versus a part-time legislature and the benefit of a unicameral legislature versus a bicameral legislature;
5. Evaluating the number of terms and the frequency of elections for members of the Legislature;
6. Evaluating the training and education of Legislators and legislative staff, including the use of policy research and data in the legislative process;
7. Exploring changes to the legislative staffing structure, including increasing partisan and nonpartisan staffing;
8. Exploring the reorganization of the legislative calendar;
9. Evaluating the process for allowing the introduction of bills, both before and after cloture, including limiting the number of bills in a legislative session and in a legislative biennium;
10. Evaluating the requirements for drafting legislation; evaluating the use of concept draft legislation; and exploring the prioritization of legislation;
11. Evaluating the structure of joint standing committees of the Legislature; evaluating the committee appointment process; evaluating meetings of the joint standing committees of the Legislature; and evaluating the responsibilities and jurisdiction of joint standing committees, including procedures for public hearings and work sessions, scheduling public hearings and work sessions and the rules for testimony;
12. Evaluating the process for forming and approving the state budget, including participation in budget hearings and work sessions;
13. Evaluating the legislative confirmation process for gubernatorial appointments; and
14. Exploring the adoption of a legislative strategic plan, including the inclusion of economic impact statements on legislation.

Sec. 7. Staff assistance. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to support both the

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COMMITTEE AMENDMENT " A " to S.P. 657, L.D. 1649 (S-368)

1 commission and the working groups, except that Legislative Council staff support is not
2 authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

3 **Sec. 8. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than December 3, 2025, the commission
4 shall submit a report that includes its findings and a survey of possible solutions for
5 modernizing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Legislature, including
6 suggested legislation, for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd
7 Legislature.'

8 Amend the resolve by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or
9 section number to read consecutively.

10 **SUMMARY**

11 This amendment replaces the resolve and changes the title. It establishes a commission
12 to study and recommend solutions for modernizing and improving the effectiveness of the
13 Legislature.

14 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

15 (See attached)

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 1649

LR 1690(02)

Resolve, to Establish the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Operations of the Legislature

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-358)

Committee: State and Local Government

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Legislative Cost/Study

Legislative Cost/Study

The general operating expenses of this study are projected to be \$14,860 in fiscal year 2025-26. The Legislature's proposed budget for the 2026-2027 biennium includes \$22,196 in each of fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for the costs of legislative studies, as well as \$8,265 in projected balances from fiscal year 2024-25 and \$33,073 of balances carried over from prior years for this purpose. Whether these amounts are sufficient to fund all studies will depend on the number of studies authorized by the Legislative Council and the Legislature. The additional costs of providing staffing assistance to the study during the interim can be absorbed utilizing existing budgeted staff resources.