

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1649

S.P. 657

In Senate, April 15, 2025

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

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator STEWART of Aroostook.

Cosponsored by Senators: BALDACCI of Penobscot, BENNETT of Oxford, BERNARD of Aroostook, HICKMAN of Kennebec, Representatives: GREENWOOD of Wales, NUTTING of Oakland, SALISBURY of Westbrook.

1 **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** this resolve establishes the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the
4 Operations of the Legislature; and

5 **Whereas,** the effective and efficient functioning of the Legislature is essential to the
6 health, safety and welfare of the citizens and economy of the State; and

7 **Whereas,** the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that
8 the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next
9 legislative session; and

10 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
11 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
12 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
13 therefore, be it

14 **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That the Blue Ribbon Commission
15 to Study the Operations of the Legislature, referred to in this resolve as "the commission,"
16 is established.

17 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of
18 12 members appointed as follows:

19 1. Two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including one
20 member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature;

21 2. Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the
22 House of Representatives, including one member from each of the 2 parties holding the
23 largest number of seats in the Legislature;

24 3. Four public members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

25 A. One member who is a community leader with expertise in public policy;

26 B. One member who is a community leader with expertise in government relations and
27 who is registered with the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election
28 Practices;

29 C. One member who is a community leader with expertise in private business; and

30 D. One member who is a community leader with expertise in organized labor; and

31 4. Four public members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives as
32 follows:

33 A. One member who is a community leader with expertise in public policy;

34 B. One member who is a community leader with expertise in government relations and
35 who is registered with the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election
36 Practices;

37 C. One member who is a community leader with expertise in private business; and

38 D. One member who is a community leader with expertise in organized labor.

1 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission
2 shall elect 2 members to serve as chairs of the commission. Until that time, the first-named
3 Senate member and the first-named House of Representatives member of the commission
4 serve as chairs.

5 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all
6 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
7 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
8 Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members,
9 the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more
10 after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been
11 made, the chairs may call and convene the first meeting of the commission and begin to
12 conduct its business. Notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission shall meet at least
13 5 times and shall allow for remote participation by residents of the State.

14 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall study the existing structure
15 and operations of the Legislature for the purpose of determining its adequacy and
16 effectiveness and identifying changes to the Legislature that could improve efficiency;
17 provide better information to inform decisions; help prioritize legislative activity; develop,
18 implement and coordinate a strategic plan; and reinforce political trust and support in State
19 Government. In its work, the commission shall consider, but is not limited to, the following
20 elements:

- 21 1. The overall structure of the Legislature, including the size of the Legislature;
- 22 2. The number of terms and the frequency of elections for members of the Legislature;
- 23 3. The training and education of Legislators and legislative staff;
- 24 4. The use of policy research and data in the legislative process;
- 25 5. The assurance of transparency in the Legislature;
- 26 6. The reorganization of the legislative calendar;
- 27 7. The process for allowing the introduction of legislation, both before and after cloture;
- 28 8. The number of bills in a legislative session and in a legislative biennium;
- 29 9. The requirements for drafting legislation;
- 30 10. The use of concept draft legislation;
- 31 11. The prioritization of legislation;
- 32 12. The fiscal impact statement process;
- 33 13. The structure of joint standing committees of the Legislature and the committee
34 member appointment process;
- 35 14. The responsibilities and jurisdiction of joint standing committees of the Legislature,
36 including procedures for public hearings and work sessions, scheduling public hearings and
37 work sessions and the rules for testimony;
- 38 15. The process for forming and approving the state budget, including participation in
39 budget hearings and work sessions;
- 40 16. The legislative confirmation process for gubernatorial appointments;

17. The adoption of a legislative strategic plan; and

18. The inclusion of economic impact statements for legislation.

Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission.

Sec. 7. Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 3, 2025, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and suggestions for possible solutions for improving the operations of the Legislature, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This resolve establishes the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Operations of the Legislature. The commission consists of 12 members, including 4 Legislators and 8 members of the public who have expertise in public policy, government relations, private business and organized labor. The commission is required to study the existing structure and operations of the Legislature for the purpose of determining its adequacy and effectiveness and identifying changes to the Legislature that could improve efficiency; provide better information to inform decisions; help prioritize legislative activity; develop, implement and coordinate a strategic plan; and reinforce political trust and support in State Government.