

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1965

S.P. 772

In Senate, May 13, 2025

**Resolve, to Establish a Task Force to Create a Court Navigation
Program Plan**

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Judiciary 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 TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative POIRIER of Skowhegan and
Senators: BEEBE-CENTER of Knox, CARNEY of Cumberland, ROTUNDO of
Androscoggin, Representatives: HENDERSON of Rumford, KUHN of Falmouth, LEE of
Auburn, O'HALLORAN of Brewer, SINCLAIR of Bath.

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 legislation needs to take effect before the expiration of the 90-day
4 period due to the rise in the number of litigants who are not represented by an attorney and
5 in order to provide the task force established by this resolve sufficient time to complete its
6 work; and

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

11 **Sec. 1. University of Maine System to convene task force. Resolved:** That
12 the University of Maine System shall convene a task force, referred to in this resolve as
13 "the task force," to create a court navigation program plan. The membership of the task
14 force must consist of a representative from each of the following:

- 15 1. The schools of social work of the University of Maine System;
- 16 2. The University of Maine School of Law;
- 17 3. Maine Pretrial Services, Inc.;
- 18 4. Pine Tree Legal Assistance;
- 19 5. Disability Rights Maine;
- 20 6. The National Alliance on Mental Illness Maine;
- 21 7. 211 Maine; and
- 22 8. The Department of Health and Human Services.

23 The University of Maine System shall invite the participation of representatives of the
24 judicial branch, including representatives of the appropriate specialty courts.

25 **Sec. 2. Court navigation program plan. Resolved:** That the task force shall
26 create a court navigation program plan. In developing the plan, the task force shall examine
27 court navigation programs nationwide and recommend a model for a court navigation
28 program for use in this State. The court navigation program must provide guidance and
29 information about court processes and procedures to persons involved with the court
30 system. The court navigation program also must refer persons involved with the court
31 system to community-based resources related to their behavioral health needs, such as
32 mental health treatment and substance use disorder treatment, and their economic and
33 social service-related needs, such as housing, employment, transportation and food, in
34 order to address those needs. The task force shall consider experiential learning
35 opportunities for social work students and law students who assist in the court navigation
36 program to earn academic credit.

37 **Sec. 3. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than December 3, 2025, the task force
38 shall submit a report that includes the court navigation program plan required by section 2,
39 including a model for a court navigation program for use in this State, and that includes
40 suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. The joint standing

1 committee may report out legislation based on the subject matter of the report to the Second
2 Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

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

5 SUMMARY

6 This resolve directs the University of Maine System to convene a task force to create
7 a court navigation program plan. In developing the plan, the task force must examine court
8 navigation programs nationwide and recommend a model for a court navigation program
9 for use in this State. The court navigation program must provide guidance and information
10 about court processes and procedures to persons involved with the court system. The court
11 navigation program also must refer persons involved with the court system to community-
12 based resources related to their behavioral health needs, such as mental health treatment
13 and substance use disorder treatment, and their economic and social service-related needs,
14 such as housing, employment, transportation and food, in order to address those needs. The
15 task force must consider experiential learning opportunities for social work students and
16 law students who assist in the court navigation program to earn academic credit. No later
17 than December 3, 2025, the task force must submit a report that includes the court
18 navigation program plan, including a model for a court navigation program for use in this
19 State, and that includes suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.
20 The joint standing committee may report out legislation based on the subject matter of the
21 report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.