

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 301

H. P. 256

House of Representatives, February 2, 1979

Referred to the Committee on State Government. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Doukas of Portland.

Cosponsors: Mr. Marshall of Millinocket, Mrs. Kany of Waterville and Mr. Tuttle of Sanford.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-NINE

AN ACT to Provide for an Advisory Referendum of Reducing the Number of Members of the Maine House of Representatives from 151 to 99 Members.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Sec. 1. Special advisory referendum on the size of the Maine House of Representatives. The Secretary of State shall, at the special statewide election on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November following the passage of this Act, hold a special advisory referendum to determine the sentiment of the people on whether or not the Maine House of Representatives should be reduced in size from 151 to 99 members, provided the pay for a Legislator during the first year of each legislative biennium is increased to \$8,500.

Sec. 2. Advisory referendum procedure; submission at special statewide election; effective date. This advisory referendum shall be submitted to the legal voters of the State of Maine at a special statewide election to be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November following passage of this Act. The city aldermen, town selectmen and plantation assessors of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, to give their opinion on this question by voting on the following:

“Shall the size of the Maine House of Representatives be reduced from 151 to 99 members, provided that the pay for a Legislator during the first year of each legislative biennium is increased to \$8,500?”

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question, and shall designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within a corresponding square below the word “Yes” or “No.” The ballots shall be received, sorted, counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review the returns and shall proclaim, without delay, the total number of ballots in favor of and opposed to the reduction of the size of the Maine House of Representatives.

The Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this Act necessary to carry out the purposes of this advisory referendum.

STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill requires a special advisory referendum on the question of reducing the size of the Maine House of Representatives from 151 to 99 members, provided that the pay for a Legislator during the first year of each legislative biennium is increased to \$8,500. This issue has been a controversial one for many years. This bill would give the Legislature the feeling of Maine voters on the subject. It should be noted that any constitutional amendment to reduce the size of the House of Representatives must be initiated by the Legislature. There is no recourse under the Constitution of Maine for the people to amend the Constitution by direct initiative.