MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE

AN ACT to Set Aside Two Days in January of Each Legislative Session to Review the Several County Budgets.

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

3 MRSA § 5 is enacted to read:

§ 5. County legislative delegations; budget review and approval

   During the month of January the Legislative Council will designate 2 specific days of the session for budget review and approval in the several counties of the State by the county legislative delegations.

   Any Legislators, except those in leadership positions, who do not participate in the budget review and approval process will be considered absent from the session.

STATEMENT OF FACT

   Many Legislators are voting for their respective county budgets without having seen them or had sufficient time to discuss the contents with each other or the department head.

If the present system of legislative review and approval of county budgets is to continue there must be a more organized system by the county delegations. County delegation chairmen have indicated difficulties in mustering enough legislators to vote on their county budgets. At budget meetings in Augusta, Legislators who attend are walking in and out going to hearings, caucuses or whatever.

This system is an injustice and is demoralizing to county department heads and personnel. Expending of unappropriated funds is not considered sound business practice.

If this legislation is enacted the county legislative delegations could complete the entire budget process throughout the State in a single day. The committee and the legislative body could do the same.

This process would assure approval of budgets early in the session and county government could function more efficiently and effectively.