

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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(EMERGENCY)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 618

H.P. 463 House of Representatives, March 4, 1987
Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government
suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk
Presented by Representative CASHMAN of Old Town.
Cosponsored by Representatives NADEAU of Lewiston and
INGRAHAM of Houlton.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN

1 Resolve, Requiring a Legislative Study of
2 County Budget Procedures.
3

4 Preamble. Whereas, Maine law has traditionally
5 required the approval of county budgets by the Legis-
6 lature; and

7 Whereas, municipalities have long advocated for a
8 role in the county budget making function, since the
9 revenues used by the counties are to be a significant
10 degree obtained from the local property tax; and

11 Whereas, in recent years legislation has been en-
12 acted for individual counties which aims to locate
13 the approval process with the county commissioners or
14 at the municipal level; and

1 Whereas, this legislation has resulted in a large
2 number of diverse budgetary procedures; and

3 Whereas, it might be assumed that experience is
4 proving some of these procedures to be better than
5 others; and

6 Whereas, a simplified, uniform procedure would be
7 preferable administratively; and

8 Whereas, numerous reviews, in recent years, have
9 recommended revision of the county budget process;
10 and

11 Whereas, the Speaker's Select Committee on Prop-
12 erty Tax Reform has recommended that the Legislature
13 study the various provisions relating to county bud-
14 gets; now, therefore, be it

15 Study. Resolved: That the joint standing commit-
16 tee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over state
17 and local government shall study county budget proce-
18 dures, make recommendations for a uniform process for
19 all counties and initiate any required legislation.
20 The study shall include, but not be limited to, the
21 following questions:

22 1. Which of the following roles the Legislature,
23 legislative delegation, county commissioners or mu-
24 nicipal budget committees should have in regards to
25 the county budget: Review and recommend, revise,
26 adopt, first approval or final approval;

27 2. What procedure should be followed for budget
28 amendments;

29 3. What procedure results in the highest degree
30 of accountability of decision makers for county
31 spending decisions; and be it further

32 Findings; recommendations. Resolved: That the
33 committee shall present its findings, together with
34 any recommended legislation, to the Legislature by
35 January 1, 1988.

36 Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited
37 in the preamble, this Resolve shall take effect when
38 approved.

1 STATEMENT OF FACT

2 This resolve is the result of the recommendations
3 of the Speaker's Select Committee on Property Tax Re-
4 form. The committee was concerned about the impact
5 of the county tax upon the local property tax.

6 County budgets provide the basis for the county
7 tax. In recent years, procedures have been enacted
8 for 6 counties which change, in various ways, the
9 traditional procedure of legislative delegation ap-
10 proval of county budgets. The Speaker's Select Com-
11 mittee on Property Tax Reform recommends that the
12 Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Govern-
13 ment study county budget procedures and recommend a
14 uniform procedure for all counties which will result
15 in greater accountability for the level of county
16 taxes.

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