

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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(EMERGENCY)
(After Deadline)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 1505

H.P. 1111 House of Representatives, May 11, 1987
Approved for introduction by a majority of the
Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 27.
Reference to the Committee on Education suggested and
ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk
Presented by Representative BOST of Orono.

Cosponsored by Senator ESTES of York, Representatives
NORTON of Winthrop and MATTHEWS of Caribou.

STATE OF MAINE

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

1 **Resolve, to Establish the Special Commission to**
2 **Study School-entrance Age and**
3 **Preschool Services.**
4

5 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, Acts and resolves
6 of the Legislature do not become effective until 90
7 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies;
8 and

9 Whereas, current school entrance age law is based
10 on chronological age and allows children who become 5
11 years old on or before October 15th to start kinder-
12 garten in that year; and

13 Whereas, for various social and economic reasons,
14 many parents enter their child in school as soon as
15 eligible, regardless of developmental level; and

1 Whereas, there is great diversity in the rate of
2 cognitive development and social maturation among
3 preschool and school-aged children; and

4 Whereas, because of that fact, some children are
5 not ready for school although they qualify under the
6 law; and

7 Whereas, some studies indicate a correlation be-
8 tween starting school too early and later academic
9 and social difficulty; and

10 Whereas, no comprehensive study of
11 school-entrance age has been conducted in this State
12 for 20 years; and

13 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature,
14 these facts create an emergency within the meaning of
15 the Constitution of Maine and require the following
16 legislation as immediately necessary for the preser-
17 vation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 **Sec. 1. Special commission established.** Re-
20 solved: That the Special Commission to Study
21 School-entrance Age and Preschool Services is estab-
22 lished. The commission shall consist of 15 members
23 appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and
24 the Speaker of the House as follows: Five members of
25 the Joint Standing Committee on Education; 3 public
26 school teachers, one kindergarten teacher, one tran-
27 sition grade teacher and one teacher in grades 7 to
28 12; one school superintendent; one elementary school
29 principal; one school guidance counselor serving pri-
30 marily grades 1 to 6; one University of Maine System
31 faculty member familiar with early childhood develop-
32 ment issues; one director of a publicly-funded day
33 care center; one Headstart program director; and one
34 member of a local coordinating committee of a pre-
35 school coordination project. The Joint Standing Com-
36 mittee on Education shall develop a list of suggested
37 candidates for consideration by the President of the
38 Senate and the Speaker of the House in making ap-
39 pointments to the commission. Appointments to the
40 commission, as far as practicable, shall reflect geo-
41 graphical diversity and shall be made within 30 days
42 of the effective date of this resolve. At the first

1 meeting, the members shall select a chairman and co-
2 chairman. The Chairman of the Legislative Council
3 shall convene the first meeting; and be it further

4 **Sec. 2. Duties. Resolved:** That the special
5 commission shall review current research findings,
6 survey national and international trends and consider
7 the opinion of parents, teachers and administrators
8 on the issue of appropriate school-entrance age.
9 Specifically, the special commission shall:

10 1. Solicit expert testimony from various groups
11 and persons interested in school entrance-age and re-
12 lated issues, including, but not limited to, parents;
13 school psychologists; school medical personnel; spe-
14 cial education personnel; personnel for gifted and
15 talented students; and nursery school directors.

16 2. Review the experience with preschool, kinder-
17 garten and first grade screening, assessment and
18 evaluation programs in this State;

19 3. Consider possible alternatives to chronologi-
20 cal entrance age, including alternative grades,
21 ungraded classes, transitional grades and statewide
22 screening programs to provide appropriate education
23 services; and

24 4. Assess the impact, financial and otherwise,
25 of any change suggested to deal with the
26 school-entrance age issue; and be it further

27 **Sec. 3. Report. Resolved:** That the special
28 commission shall issue its report, including any pro-
29 posed legislative recommendations, to the Second Reg-
30 ular Session of the 113th Legislature no later than
31 March 1, 1988. In formulating the report, the spe-
32 cial commission should consider the need for modeling
33 innovative programs to provide the opportunity to
34 test and evaluate alternatives to chronological
35 entrance-age requirements; and be it further

36 **Sec. 4. Compensation. Resolved:** That the mem-
37 bers of the commission who are Legislators shall re-
38 ceive the legislative per diem, as defined in the
39 Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, for each
40 day's attendance at commission meetings. All members

1 of the commission shall receive reimbursement for ex-
2 penses upon application to the Executive Director of
3 the Legislative Council; and be it further

4 **Sec. 5. Staff. Resolved:** That staff assistance
5 for the special commission may be requested from the
6 Legislative Council. The Department of Educational
7 and Cultural Services shall also provide technical
8 assistance to the special commission; and be it fur-
9 ther

10 **Sec. 6. Appropriation. Resolved:** That there is
11 appropriated from the General Fund the amount of
12 \$8,000 to carry out the purposes of this Act.

13 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited
14 in the preamble, this resolve shall take effect when
15 approved.

16 **STATEMENT OF FACT**

17 This resolve establishes the Special Commission
18 to Study School-entrance Age and Preschool Services
19 in Maine and to report back to the Legislature.

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