

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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118th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1997

Legislative Document

No. 1601

S.P. 517

In Senate, March 20, 1997

**RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine
to Require the Legislature to Provide a Statewide System of Uniform and
High-quality Education.**

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered
printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator LONGLEY of Waldo.
Cosponsored by Senator CATHCART of Penobscot, Representatives: BAKER of Bangor,
BELANGER of Caribou, DESMOND of Mapleton, McELROY of Unity, MERES of
Norridgewock.

Constitutional amendment. Resolved: Two thirds of each branch of the Legislature concurring, that the following amendment to the Constitution of Maine be proposed:

Constitution, Art. VIII, Pt. First is amended to read:

Section 1. Legislature shall require towns to support public schools; uniform and high-quality education; duty of Legislature. A general diffusion of the advantages of education being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people; to promote this important object, the Legislature are is authorized, and it shall be ~~their~~ its duty ~~to require, the several towns~~ to make suitable provision, ~~at their own expense,~~ for the support and maintenance of public schools and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of uniform and high quality is established and continually maintained in all schools in the State; and it shall further be ~~their~~ its duty to encourage and suitably endow, from time to time, as the circumstances of the people may authorize, all academies, colleges and seminaries of learning within the State; provided, that no donation, grant or endowment shall at any time be made by the Legislature to any literary institution now established, or which may hereafter be established, unless, at the time of making such endowment, the Legislature of the State shall have the right to grant any further powers to alter, limit or restrain any of the powers vested in any such literary institution, as shall be judged necessary to promote the best interests thereof.

; and be it further

Constitutional referendum procedure; form of question; effective date. Resolved: That the municipal officers 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, at a statewide election, on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question:

"Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to require the Legislature to make suitable provision for public schools and to seek to ensure that uniform and high-quality education is established and continually maintained in all schools in the State?"

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within the corresponding square below the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must 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

2 votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review
the returns and, if it appears that a majority of the legal votes
4 are cast in favor of the amendment, the Governor shall proclaim
that fact without delay and the amendment becomes part of the
6 Constitution on the date of the proclamation; and be it further

8 **Secretary of State shall prepare ballots. Resolved:** That the
Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town
and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this resolution
10 necessary to carry out the purpose of this referendum.

12 SUMMARY

14 This resolution proposes an amendment to the Constitution of
16 Maine to strike the words requiring that towns make suitable
provision for the support and maintenance of schools to add
18 language requiring the Legislature to support schools and to seek
to ensure that a program of uniform and high-quality education is
20 established and continually maintained at all schools in the
State.