

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

Legislative Document

No. 1607

S.P. 545

In Senate, March 2, 1999

**RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine
to Revoke Voting Rights of Convicted Felons While they are in Prison.**

Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BENNETT of Oxford.
Cosponsored by Senators: DAVIS of Piscataquis, MITCHELL of Penobscot, PENDLETON
of Cumberland, Representatives: BUMPS of China, LABRECQUE of Gorham.

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

4

Constitution, Art. II, §1 is amended to read:

6

**Section 1. Qualifications of electors; written ballot;
8 military servicemen; students.** Every citizen of the United
States of the age of 18 years and upwards, excepting persons
10 under guardianship for reasons of mental illness, having his or
her residence established in this State, shall be an elector for
12 Governor, Senators and Representatives, in the city, town or
plantation where his or her residence has been established, if he
14 or she continues to reside in this State; and the elections shall
be by written ballot. But persons in the military, naval or
16 marine service of the United States, or this State, shall not be
considered as having obtained such established residence by being
18 stationed in any garrison, barrack or military place, in any
city, town or plantation; nor shall the residence of a student at
20 any seminary of learning entitle the student to the right of
suffrage in the city, town or plantation where such seminary is
22 established nor may any person convicted of murder or a Class A,
B or C crime or a crime in another jurisdiction that is
24 comparable to murder or a Class A, B or C crime be entitled to
the right of suffrage while that person is imprisoned in a jail
or correctional facility in the State. No person, however, shall
26 be deemed to have lost residence by reason of the person's
absence from the state in the military service of the United
28 States, or of this State.

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Indians. Every Indian, residing on tribal reservations and
32 otherwise qualified, shall be an elector in all county, state and
national elections.

34

; and be it further

36

**Constitutional referendum procedure; form of question; effective
38 date. Resolved:** That the municipal officers of this State shall
notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and
40 plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding
a statewide election, at a statewide election, on the Tuesday
42 following the first Monday of November following the passage of
this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment
44 proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question:

46

"Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to revoke
the right of a convicted felon to vote while that felon is
48 imprisoned?"

2 The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall
vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a
4 cross or check mark placed within the corresponding square below
the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must be received, sorted,
6 counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings
and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as
8 votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review
the returns and, if it appears that a majority of the legal votes
10 are cast in favor of the amendment, the Governor shall proclaim
that fact without delay and the amendment becomes part of the
12 Constitution on the date of the proclamation; and be it further

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

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SUMMARY

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24 This resolution proposes an amendment to the Constitution of
Maine that revokes the right of a convicted felon to vote while
that felon is imprisoned.