

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DATE: 2/14/2000

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STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Reported by:

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**STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
119TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to S.P. 777, L.D. 2176, Bill, "An Act to Prohibit State Government from Using Automated Telephone Answering Equipment During Business Hours"

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, to Require Certain Reports Concerning the Use of Automated Telephone Answering Equipment by State Government'

Further amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and before the summary and inserting in its place the following:

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

Whereas, the purpose of state agencies is to serve the people of the State in a manner that is as accessible, efficient and responsive as possible; and

Whereas, several state agencies frequently use automated answering equipment instead of live operators to answer calls from the public; and

Whereas, the use of automated answering equipment, including automated operators and electronic menus, by state agencies is not always the appropriate means by which to communicate with the public and may result in frustration on the part of the public in trying to obtain information related to a problem or concern or assistance with necessary state services; and

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

2 **Whereas**, the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial
Services has acknowledged that there is a need to establish a new
4 policy on the use of automated telephone answering equipment by
state agencies; and

6 **Whereas**, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts
create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of
8 Maine and require the following legislation as immediately
necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
10 safety; now, therefore, be it

12 **Sec. 1. Preliminary report on new telephone answering policy.**

Resolved: That the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial
14 Services shall provide a preliminary report to the Joint Standing
Committee on State and Local Government on the efforts of the
16 Department of Administrative and Financial Services to implement
the new policy on the use of automated telephone answering
18 equipment by all state agencies. This report must be in writing
and be submitted to the committee by April 19, 2000. The report
20 must include information on any changes to the policy that was
proposed by the department on January 19, 2000 to the committee,
22 the number of agencies that have put into effect any part or
parts of the policy, a schedule of implementation of the policy
24 by the remaining state agencies, a summary of the problems
encountered by agencies in implementing the policy and a
26 compilation of any responses by the public to the policy; and be
it further

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30 **Sec. 2. Final report to next Legislature; authority to report out
legislation. Resolved:**

That the Commissioner of Administrative and
32 Financial Services shall report to the joint standing committee
of the Legislature having jurisdiction over state government
34 matters on the efforts of the Department of Administrative and
Financial Services to implement the policy on the use of
automated telephone answering equipment by state agencies. The
36 final report, which must be made in person to the committee by
January 19, 2001, must include information similar to that
38 required to be included in the preliminary report. The
commissioner shall also recommend to the committee any
40 legislation necessary to assist in the implementation of a new
policy. Following receipt of the final report, the committee may
42 report out a bill to the First Regular Session of the 120th
Legislature.

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Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the
46 preamble, this resolve takes effect when approved.'

48 Further amend the bill by inserting at the end before the
summary the following:

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FISCAL NOTE

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The Department of Administrative and Financial Services will incur some minor additional costs to compile information and provide certain reports. These costs can be absorbed within the department's existing budgeted resources.'

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SUMMARY

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This amendment is the majority report. It converts the original bill into an emergency resolve that requires the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services to make both preliminary and final reports to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over state government matters on the implementation of a new policy on the use of automated telephone answering equipment by state agencies. The amendment also grants authority to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over state government matters to report out a bill during the First Regular Session of the 120th Legislature. It also adds a fiscal note.

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