

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

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Legislative Document

No. 1344

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H.P. 1007

House of Representatives, March 5, 2001

**Resolve, Establishing the Blue Ribbon Commission to Review Foster Care and Adoption Systems in the State.**

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Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

*Millicent M. MacFarland*

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative MacDOUGALL of North Berwick.  
Cosponsored by Senator LEMONT of York and  
Representatives: COLLINS of Wells, CRESSEY of Baldwin, FOSTER of Gray, MENDROS of Lewiston, SHIELDS of Auburn, SNOWE-MELLO of Poland, TRAHAN of Waldoboro, TREADWELL of Carmel.

2           **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That the Blue Ribbon  
Commission to Review Foster Care and Adoption Systems in the  
4 State, referred to in this resolve as the "commission," is  
established as follows.

6           **1. Membership.** The commission consists of the following 11  
members:

8  
10           A. Two members of the Senate, one of whom serves on the  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and  
12 one of whom serves on the Joint Standing Committee on  
Judiciary, appointed by the President of the Senate;

14           B. Four members from the House of Representatives, two of  
whom serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Health and  
16 Human Services and two of whom serve on the Joint Standing  
Committee on Judiciary, appointed by the Speaker of the  
18 House;

20           C. One member of the clergy in the State, jointly appointed  
by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House  
22 and;

24           D. One social worker, jointly appointed by the President of  
the Senate and the Speaker of the House;

26           E. One representative of an organization in the State with  
28 an interest in foster care, jointly appointed by the  
President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House;

30           F. One attorney who specializes in foster care issues,  
32 jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the  
Speaker of the House; and

34           G. One foster parent, jointly appointed by the President of  
36 the Senate and the Speaker of the House.

38           **2. Chairs.** The first named Senate member is the Senate  
chair and the first named House of Representatives member is the  
40 House chair.

42           **3. Appointments; meetings.** All appointments must be made  
no later than 30 days following the effective date of this  
44 resolve. The Executive Director of the Legislative Council must  
be notified by all appointing authorities once the selections  
46 have been made. When the appointment of all members has been  
completed, the chairs of the commission shall call and convene  
48 the first meeting of the commission no later than 10 days after  
all members have been appointed. The commission shall conduct at  
50 least 6 meetings.

2           **4. Duties.** The commission shall study foster care and  
adoption systems in the State.

4  
6           A. In conducting the study, the commission shall assess and  
study strategies to:

8                   (1) Improve management and coordination of all foster  
care and adoption service providers;

10                   (2) Improve seamless service between the Department of  
12 Human Services and the parties involved in the foster  
care and adoption systems in the State;

14                   (3) Improve checks and balances that provide  
16 independent review of state assessments of foster  
facilities and homes; and

18                   (4) Create regional citizen panels to improve advocacy  
20 for foster and adoptive parents, provide an independent  
arena for all constituencies to have needs addressed  
22 and provide oversight for efforts of the Department of  
Human Services.

24           B. To fulfill its duties the commission may:

26                   (1) Hold informational sessions for discussions with  
28 knowledgeable persons;

30                   (2) Conduct, summarize and analyze the results of a  
literature search;

32                   (3) Conduct, tabulate and analyze the results of a  
34 survey of the public or affected persons and groups;

36                   (4) Procure and analyze relevant data;

38                   (5) Conduct legal research and prepare opinions on  
legal questions within the scope of its study; and

40                   (6) Determine and summarize the legislative actions or  
42 governmental programs undertaken in other jurisdictions  
related to issues within the scope of the study.

44           **5. Staff assistance.** Upon approval of the Legislative  
46 Council, the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis shall provide  
necessary staffing services to the commission.

48           **6. Compensation.** The members of the commission who are  
50 Legislators are entitled to the legislative per diem, as defined

2 in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, and  
3 reimbursement for necessary expenses incurred for their  
4 attendance at authorized meetings of the commission. Other  
5 members of the commission who are not otherwise compensated by  
6 their employers or other entities that they represent are  
7 entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary expenses incurred  
8 for their attendance at authorized meetings.

9  
10 **7. Report.** The commission shall submit its report,  
11 together with any necessary implementing legislation, to the  
12 Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the  
13 Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary no later than January 15,  
14 2002. The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
15 and the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary may report out  
16 legislation pursuant to this order to the Second Regular Session  
17 of the 120th Legislature. If the commission requires a limited  
18 extension of time to conclude its work, it may apply to the  
19 Legislative Council, which may grant the extension.

20 **8. Budget.** The chairs of the commission, with assistance  
21 from the commission staff, shall administer the commission's  
22 budget. Within 10 days after its first meeting, the commission  
23 shall present a work plan and proposed budget to the Legislative  
24 Council for approval. The commission may not incur expenses that  
25 would result in the commission exceeding its approved budget.  
26 Upon request from the commission, the Executive Director of the  
27 Legislative Council shall promptly provide the commission chairs  
28 and staff with a status report on the commission's budget,  
29 expenditures incurred and paid and available funds.  
30

## 32 SUMMARY

33  
34 This resolve establishes the Blue Ribbon Commission to  
35 Review Foster Care and Adoption Systems in the State to report  
36 back to the Second Regular Session of the 120th Legislature.