

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2015

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Legislative Document

No. 721

H.P. 497

House of Representatives, March 5, 2015

**Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Strengthen and Align the  
Services Provided to Maine's Veterans**

(EMERGENCY)

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Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative GOLDEN of Lewiston.  
Cosponsored by Senator COLLINS of York and  
Representatives: DEVIN of Newcastle, ESPLING of New Gloucester, Speaker EVES of North  
Berwick, GIDEON of Freeport, HANINGTON of Lincoln, KINNEY of Limington,  
LONGSTAFF of Waterville, LUCHINI of Ellsworth, MONAGHAN of Cape Elizabeth,  
SCHNECK of Bangor, TURNER of Burlington, Senators: CUSHING of Penobscot,  
CYRWAY of Kennebec, MASON of Androscoggin, PATRICK of Oxford.

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

3           **Whereas,** a legislative study by a study commission needs sufficient time for the  
4 commission to properly do its work; and

5           **Whereas,** there is insufficient time after the 90-day period for a study commission  
6 to properly do its work before reporting to the Legislature; and

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

11           **Sec. 1. Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to**  
12 **Maine’s Veterans established. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the  
13 Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine’s Veterans,  
14 referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established; and be it further

15           **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of  
16 13 members appointed as follows:

17           1. One member of the Senate who sits on the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans  
18 and Legal Affairs, appointed by the President of the Senate;

19           2. One member of the House of Representatives who sits on the Joint Standing  
20 Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
21 Representatives;

22           3. The Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management or the  
23 commissioner's designee;

24           4. Five members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

25           A. Three members, representing 3 different veterans' service organizations in the  
26 State; and

27           B. Two members with expertise in veterans' affairs policy or representing a nonprofit  
28 organization providing services to veterans that is not a veterans’ service  
29 organization; and

30           5. Five members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives as  
31 follows:

32           A. Three members, representing 3 different veterans' service organizations in the  
33 State; and

34           B. Two members with expertise in veterans' affairs policy matters or representing a  
35 nonprofit organization providing services to veterans that is not a veterans' service  
36 organization.

1           Of the members appointed, at least one member must be serving or have served in the  
2 Maine Army National Guard, at least one member must be under 30 years of age, at least  
3 one member must be between 30 and 40 years of age, at least one member must be  
4 between 41 and 64 years of age, at least one member must be over 65 years of age, at  
5 least 2 members must be women and at least one member must be a combat-wounded  
6 veteran and amputee; and be it further

7           **Sec. 3. Cooperation. Resolved:** That the Information Resource of Maine shall  
8 provide information and assistance to the commission as requested by the commission for  
9 the performance of its duties; and be it further

10           **Sec. 4. Chairs. Resolved:** That the Senate member is the Senate chair and the  
11 House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission; and be it further

12           **Sec. 5. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all  
13 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this  
14 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative  
15 Council once all appointments have been completed. The first meeting date must be set  
16 within 15 days after and be held within 30 days after all appointments have been made;  
17 and be it further

18           **Sec. 6. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:

19           1. Review the services provided by the State to veterans for gaps, duplications and  
20 inefficiencies;

21           2. Study improving the State's engagement and communication with veterans of the  
22 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq;

23           3. Study how the State can provide health care and mental health services to the  
24 State's veterans when there is a clear gap in federal services;

25           4. Study how to better align community, state and federal services and resources for  
26 homeless veterans;

27           5. Study how the State can develop and implement a campaign and marketing  
28 strategy to communicate with veterans and military retirees and encourage them to attend  
29 state colleges and to live and work in the State;

30           6. Make recommendations to the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and  
31 Emergency Management concerning practices and rules regarding services and programs  
32 for veterans and the development of a 5-year work plan; and

33           7. Make recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal  
34 Affairs concerning changes to services and programs for veterans; and be it further

35           **Sec. 7. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Department of Defense, Veterans  
36 and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services and the Office of  
37 Policy and Legal Analysis shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission;  
38 and be it further

