



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 233

H.P. 163

House of Representatives, January 27, 2021

An Act To Provide Electronic Access to Confidential Juror Information

Received by the Clerk of the House on January 25, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Judiciary pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

R(+ B. Hunt

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

Presented by Representative HARNETT of Gardiner. Cosponsored by Senator MIRAMANT of Knox and Representatives: EVANGELOS of Friendship, MORALES of South Portland, WARREN of Hallowell, Senator: BAILEY of York. 1 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

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Sec. 1. 14 MRSA §1254-A, sub-§7, as amended by PL 2005, c. 285, §1, is further
amended to read:

4 7. Availability of qualification forms. The names of prospective jurors and the 5 contents of juror qualification forms are confidential and may not be disclosed except as 6 provided in this chapter. The names of prospective jurors and the contents of juror qualification forms may at the discretion of the court must be made available to the 7 8 attorneys and their agents and investigators and the pro se parties at the courthouse for use 9 in the conduct of voir dire examination. The court shall also provide this information electronically to the attorneys and their agents and investigators and the pro se parties at 10 11 their request.

SUMMARY

Current law authorizes a court to provide certain individuals access to confidential juror questionnaires, and the law allows such discretionary access to these questionnaires only at the courthouse itself. This bill eliminates the court's discretion and requires the court to provide access to these questionnaires at the courthouse. The bill also requires the court to electronically provide these questionnaires to authorized persons upon their request. The bill does not affect the confidentiality of such questionnaires and does not affect the receivers' obligation to maintain this confidentiality.