

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Maine. Legislature. Joint Select
Committee on the consolidation and
coordination of the recommendations
of certain studies concerning the
Maine Justice System (Report)

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STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330

February 25, 1977

The Honorable John L. Martin, Chairman
Legislative Council
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: H.P. 2324

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter will serve as the report of the Joint Select Committee on the consolidation and coordination of the recommendations of certain studies concerning the Maine justice system. The committee was appointed pursuant to H.P. 2324, a copy of which is attached.

The order required a committee of eight members, four Senators and four Representatives. The eight members were to represent the Joint Standing Committees on Education, Health and Institutional Services, Judiciary and State Government. The members appointed were Elmer F. Berry, Jr., Samuel W. Collins, Jr., Theodore S. Curtis, Jr., and Walter W. Hichens, from the Senate, and Peter J. Curran, Stephen T. Hughes, Elizabeth H. Mitchell, and James B. Wagner, from the House. Representative Hughes was elected chairman.

The five projects were the Commission to Revise the Statutes Relating to Juveniles, the Children and Youth Services Planning Project, the Community Justice Project, the Correctional Economics Project, and the Standards and Goals Project. All of these projects were funded, in whole or in part, by federal money administered by the Maine Criminal Justice Planning and Assistance Agency. The Correctional Economics Project was funded in part by the Maine Bar Association.

The committee was ordered to consolidate and coordinate any proposals for legislation from these projects, to submit final drafts to the 108th Legislature, and to make recommendations on the committees to which the bills should be referred.

The basic problems that the committee encountered were that only three projects had legislative proposals for the 108th Legislature and that these proposals were not presented in draft form before the session or early enough in the session for the committee to carry out its intended role of coordination and consolidation. The committee can therefore make only

limited recommendations about the proposed bills.

The Commission to Revise the Statutes Relating to Juveniles will consolidate its recommendations into one major bill. That bill, which has not been printed as of this writing, will presumably be referred to the Judiciary Committee, since most of the bill will deal with matters within that committee's jurisdiction. However, the bill will include parts that are within the usual jurisdiction of other committees. For example, the bill will deal with mandatory school attendance, an issue that the Education Committee has considered several times in recent years. The Joint Select Committee therefore recommends that such other committees be invited to participate in some way with the Judiciary Committee in reviewing this bill.

The Children and Youth Services Planning Project will present a number of proposals. It is our understanding that the legislative leadership has directed the chairpersons of the Health and Institutional Services Committee to monitor and coordinate these bills as they go through the legislative process. The Joint Select Committee endorses this procedure, which is in part what it would have done at an earlier stage if the bills had been introduced earlier.

The Correctional Economics Project proposed a very thorough report, "Costs of Maine State Correctional Institutions." The Joint Select Committee recommends that this report be carefully considered by the State Government Committee and the Health and Institutional Services Committee in their review of bills dealing with the disposition of the buildings and property of the former Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan.

Very truly yours,

Stephen T. Hughes, Chairman