

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE
117TH LEGISLATURE**

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

**BILL SUMMARIES
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
LEGAL AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

JUNE 1996

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Staff:

Jon Clark, Legislative Analyst

Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

Room 101/107/135, 13 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

(207)287-1670



Maine State Legislature
OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

13 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0013
 Telephone: (207) 287-1670
 Fax: (207) 287-1275

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

Summary Of Legislation Before The Joint Standing Committees
June 1996

We are pleased to provide this summary of bills that were considered by the 15 Joint Standing Committees of the Maine Legislature staffed by this office. The document is a compilation of bill summaries which describe each bill, committee amendments and other relevant amendments, as well as the final action taken on the bill. Also included are statistical summaries of bill activity this Session for the Legislature and each of its joint standing committees.

The document is organized for convenient reference to information on bills handled by the joint standing committees. It is organized alphabetically by committees and within committees by bill (LD) number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor for each bill and the lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are listed by paper number. Two indices, a subject index and a numerical index by LD number are provided for easy reference to bills. They are located at the back of the document. A separate publication, History and Final Disposition of Legislative Documents, may also be helpful in providing information on the disposition of bills.

Final action on each bill is noted to the right of the bill title. The abbreviations used for various categories of final action are as follows:

<i>CARRIED OVER</i>	<i>Bill carried over to Second Session</i>
<i>CON RES XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses</i>
<i>CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE</i>	<i>Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED BETWEEN BODIES</i>	<i>House & Senate disagree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED ON ADJOURNMENT</i>	<i>Action incomplete when session ended; bill died</i>
<i>EMERGENCY</i>	<i>Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days</i>
<i>FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>FAILED ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill failed to get majority vote</i>
<i>FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>INDEF PP</i>	<i>Bill Indefinitely Postponed</i>
<i>ONTP</i>	<i>Ought Not To Pass report accepted</i>
<i>P&S XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law</i>
<i>PUBLIC XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Public Law</i>
<i>RESOLVE XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of finally passed Resolve</i>
<i>UNSIGNED</i>	<i>Not signed by Governor within 10 days</i>
<i>VETO SUSTAINED</i>	<i>Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto</i>

Please note the effective date for all non-emergency legislation enacted in the Second Regular Session (unless otherwise specified in a particular law) is July 4, 1996.

LD 1823, a citizen initiative, proposed to change campaign and election laws. The initiative proposed a voluntary, publicly financed campaign financing option for candidates running for Governor, State Senator and State Representative. The initiative proposed that participating candidates not be permitted to accept or spend private contributions during the primary or general elections and be required to abide by other campaign contribution and spending restrictions. The initiative proposed to establish a special fund to fund these campaigns. Sources of revenue for the fund would be qualifying contributions obtained by participating candidates, a transfer of money from the legislative and executive budgets, a voluntary \$3 income tax checkoff and voluntary donations.

The initiative proposed to change the makeup and process of selection of the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices and to fund its operations in monitoring campaign finance data by increasing lobbyist registration fees.

The initiative proposed to reduce the amount of money that political action committees, committees, corporations, associations and individuals may contribute to candidates.

The House of Representative requested an Opinion of the Justices on several legal questions about the initiative. The justices responded on April 3 (Docket N. OJ-96-3) by stating that since the bill had “expired” in the legislative process, there was no solemn occasion and they had no authority to issue an opinion.

Because LD 1823 was not enacted, the initiative is subject to referendum in November, 1996.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-836), which was the Minority Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs, proposed to add a fiscal note to the bill.

LD 1827	An Act to Seek Congressional Term Limits	ONTP
	<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>
	ONTP	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>

LD 1827, a citizen initiative, proposed to require the Secretary of State to print certain words next to the names of candidates who either refused to pledge to support congressional term limits or who failed to undertake any one of a number of listed activities in support of congressional term limits or in support of the calling of a Constitutional Convention. This initiative also proposed to direct the Legislature to make application to Congress calling for a constitutional convention to propose an amendment to the federal constitution to establish congressional term limits and to direct the Governor to aid in such application. It proposed to direct the State's congressional delegation to work to support such an amendment to the federal constitution.

The House of Representatives sought an Opinion of the Justices on several legal questions raised by this initiative. The justices responded with their opinions on these questions on April 3, 1996 (Docket No. OJ-96-2).

Because LD 1827 was not enacted, the initiative is subject to referendum in November, 1996.

LD 1851	An Act to Clarify the Process for Referendum Recount	DIED BETWEEN BODIES
	<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>
	COMMITTEE BILL	OTP
		<u>Amendments Adopted</u>

LD 1851, which was reported by the Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans' Affairs pursuant to Public Law 1995, chapter 506, section 2, proposed to recast the election recount process in the context of referendum recounts to clarify the various procedural requirements.

This bill also proposed to allow the Secretary of State to conduct a recount in stages or by region and to direct the State Police to take physical control over ballots in a sequence or order that facilitates the orderly recount of the ballots.

Currently, the costs of conducting a referendum recount are not budgeted since the costs are speculative until a recount is actually requested and conducted. This bill proposed to provide that the costs of conducting a referendum recount are paid from the Rainy Day Fund and, to the extent necessary, from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund.

Senate Amendment "A" (S-587) proposed to remove language in the bill that authorizing transfer from the Rainy Day Fund and the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to fund costs of conducting a referendum recount.

(Not adopted)

Senate Amendment "B" (S-588) also proposed to remove language in the bill that authorizes transfers from the Rainy Day Fund and the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to fund costs of conducting a referendum recount. The amendment proposed to appropriate \$5,700,000 to the rainy day fund program in fiscal year 1995-96; deappropriate \$1,800,000 from available balances in the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program; authorize the State Controller to transfer any remaining balance in the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program at the end of fiscal year 1995-96 to the rainy day fund program; and prohibit the transfer of any remaining balances in the General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program for any other purpose for the balance of fiscal year 1995-96.

(Not adopted)

Senate Amendment "C" (S-596) also proposed to remove language in the bill that authorizes transfers from the Maine Rainy Day Fund and the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to fund costs of conducting a referendum recount. The amendment proposed to appropriate \$5,700,000 to the Rainy Day Fund program in fiscal year 1996-97 and deappropriate \$1,800,000 from General Purpose Aid for Local Schools.

(Not adopted)

LD 1867 **An Act to Establish a Review Process for Certification of Political Petitions** ONTP

Sponsor(s)
LAWRENCE

Committee Report
ONTP

Amendments Adopted

LD 1867 proposed to provide that, whenever a petition is circulated and filed with the Secretary of State in accordance with the laws governing elections, the circulator may request that the Secretary of State return names to the registrar or registrars of the appropriate municipality or municipalities for a review of the certification of names appearing on the petition.