

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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*State Of Maine
120th Legislature*

First Regular Session

Bill Summaries

*Joint Standing Committee
on
Legal and Veterans' Affairs*

August 2001

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120th Legislature
First Regular Session

Summary Of Legislation Before The Joint Standing Committees
August 2001

Enclosed please find a summary of all bills, resolves, joint study orders, joint resolutions and Constitutional resolutions that were considered by the joint standing select committees of the Maine Legislature this past session. The document is a compilation of bill summaries which describe each bill and relevant amendments, as well as the final action taken. 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 considered by the committees. It is organized 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. These bill summaries also are available at the Law and Legislative Reference Library and on the Internet (www.state.me.us/legis/opla).

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:

CARRIED OVER..... *Bill Carried Over to Second Regular Session*
CON RES XXX..... *Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses*
CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE..... *Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died*
DIED BETWEEN BODIES..... *House & Senate disagree; bill died*
DIED IN CONCURRENCE..... *One body accepts ONTP report; the other indefinitely postpones the bill*
DIED ON ADJOURNMENT..... *Action incomplete when session ended; bill died*
EMERGENCY..... *Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days*
FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE..... *Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote*
FAILED ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE..... *Bill failed to get majority vote*
FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT..... *Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote*
NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY..... *Ruled out of order by the presiding officers; bill died*
INDEF PP..... *Bill Indefinitely Postponed*
ONTP..... *Ought Not To Pass report accepted*
OTP ND..... *Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft*
OTP ND/NT..... *Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft/New Title*
P&S XXX..... *Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law*
PUBLIC XXX..... *Chapter # of enacted Public Law*
RESOLVE XXX..... *Chapter # of finally passed Resolve*
UNSIGNED..... *Bill held by Governor*
VETO SUSTAINED..... *Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto*

Please note the effective date for all non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session (unless otherwise specified in a particular law) is **September 21, 2001**.

David E. Boulter, Director
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Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans' Affairs

LD 1042

An Act to Amend the Election Laws

PUBLIC 310

<u>Sponsor(s)</u> TUTTLE DOUGLASS	<u>Committee Report</u> OTP-AM	<u>Amendments Adopted</u> H-527
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LD 1042 proposed to amend the definition of "immediate family" to include grandparents, stepgrandparents, grandchildren and stepgrandchildren and adds 2 new definitions. The bill proposed to clarify the time frames and requirements for party enrollment and the documentation that the registrar of voters must keep for the records of all voters who have not been removed from the voting list. The bill detailed the hearing process and notification that the registrar must follow before removing a voter from the voting list for failure to meet the voting qualifications. This bill also proposed to provide a consistent deadline by which all qualified political parties must hold their biennial municipal caucuses.

The bill proposed that the Secretary of State, rather than the Governor, declares vacancies that require a meeting of a particular political committee to fill the vacancy. This bill proposed to combine into one section of law the basic requirements for the format of a candidate ballot. This bill amends the terminology and explanations for certain types of votes or entire ballots that can not be counted because they are improperly marked or prepared. The bill proposed to provide uniformity in designating which election officials must sign certain election paperwork and permits the municipal clerk to correct obvious errors in the election returns before reporting them to the Secretary of State. The bill proposed that the Secretary of State designs the form of the absentee ballot application and return envelope. This bill also proposed to simplify the deadline by which a 3rd person must return an absentee ballot to the clerk. The bill also proposed to clarify the requirements for the list of absentee voters by combining requirements that are currently found in 2 sections of law. The bill proposed to remove references to obsolete punch card voting systems and provides uniformity in the ballot formats for electronic tabulating systems.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-527) amendment made nonsubstantive, clarifying changes to the original bill.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 2001, chapter 310 makes several changes to the election laws including:

1. Clarifying time frames and requirements for party enrollment;
2. Providing a detailed hearing and notification process that the registrar of voters must follow before removing a voter from the voting list for failure to meet necessary qualifications;
3. Establishing a consistent deadline by which all qualified political parties must hold their biennial municipal caucuses;
4. Specifically designating which election officials must sign certain election paperwork; and
5. Removing obsolete references to punch card voting systems.