

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
131ST LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR AND FIRST SPECIAL SESSION



Disposition of bills and summaries of all laws enacted or finally passed

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

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STAFF:

RACHEL OLSON, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
LYNNE CASWELL, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS
13 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333
(207) 287-1670
<http://legislature.maine.gov/opla>

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STATE OF MAINE
131ST LEGISLATURE
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**LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILLS AND
SUMMARIES OF ENACTED LAWS**

This *Legislative Digest of Bills and Summaries of Enacted Laws* provides the disposition of all LDs and summaries of all laws enacted or finally passed during the First Regular and First Special Sessions of the 131st Maine Legislature. Please note that all LDs and proposed amendments may be found through the Legislature’s webpage, and each includes a summary of what the bill or amendment proposed.

The *Legislative Digest of Bills and Summaries of Enacted Laws* is arranged alphabetically by committee. Within each committee section is a subject index of all LDs considered by that committee as well as a digest of the LDs, arranged by LD number. Also included are enacted law summaries of the LDs enacted or finally passed. Brief analyst notes on certain LDs are also included: a committee digest will indicate if additional notes are provided for an LD. These notes add information staff found useful and may provide useful information to users of this *Digest*; please note that most LDs do not have a note and lack of a note should not be interpreted as having any significance. A separate section of the *Digest* provides a digest of the relatively few LDs that were not referred to a committee or reported from a committee as a committee bill; enacted law summaries of the LDs enacted or finally passed are provided. Finally, an appendix provides a summary of relevant session statistics.

The final disposition of each LD is noted in the relevant summary digest and index. The following describes the various final actions.

CARRIED OVER..... carried over to a subsequent session of the Legislature
CON RES XXX..... chapter # of constitutional resolution passed by both houses
CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE..... Committee of Conference unable to agree; legislation died
DIED BETWEEN HOUSES..... House & Senate disagreed; legislation died
DIED IN CONCURRENCE..... defeated in each house, but on different motions; legislation died
DIED ON ADJOURNMENT..... action incomplete when session ended; legislation died
EMERGENCY..... enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days after session adjournment
FAILED, EMERGENCY ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE..... emergency failed to receive required 2/3 vote
FAILED, ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE..... failed to receive final majority vote
FAILED, MANDATE ENACTMENT..... legislation proposing local mandate failed required 2/3 vote
HELD BY GOVERNOR..... Governor has not signed; final disposition to be determined at subsequent session
LEAVE TO WITHDRAW..... sponsor’s request to withdraw legislation granted
NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY..... ruled out of order by the presiding officer; legislation died
INDEF PP..... indefinitely postponed; legislation died
ONTP, ACCEPTED, MAJORITY, MINORITY or REPORT X..... ought-not-to-pass report accepted; legislation died
P&S XXX..... chapter # of enacted private & special law
PUBLIC XXX..... chapter # of enacted public law
RESOLVE XXX..... chapter # of finally passed resolve
VETO SUSTAINED..... Legislature failed to override Governor’s veto

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular and First Special Sessions of the 131st Legislature is Thursday, June 29, 2023 and Wednesday, October 25, 2023, respectively. The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure may be found in the enacted law summary for that legislation.

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application is approved by the Qualifying Condition Review Board and the Director is eligible for all the rights, privileges and benefits granted to veterans under Maine law.

LD 1568 An Act to Protect Access to Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2023, chapter 320 provides that interfering with a voter attempting to cast a vote, which is a Class E crime, includes knowingly blocking or attempting to block a voter's access to a secured drop box. It also provides that, during the absentee voting period, to the extent possible, a municipality must ensure that a path to each secured drop box is clear of all barriers.

LD 1597 Resolve, to Establish the Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Resolve 2023, chapter 95 establishes the 10-member Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission to study the impacts of exposure to harmful chemicals on veterans who served at the Canadian military support base in Gagetown, New Brunswick, Canada. The commission shall submit a report, no later than December 6, 2023, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs with its findings, recommendations and any suggested legislation.

LD 1627 An Act to Improve Disclosure of Lobbyist Activities

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2023, chapter 279 reduces the number of days lobbyists, lobbyist associates and employers have to register as lobbyists after lobbying more than eight hours in a calendar month on behalf of an employer from 15 business days to 10 calendar days.

LD 1630 An Act Regarding Campaign Finance and Lobbying Disclosure and Enforcement of Income Source Reporting Requirements

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2023, chapter 324 makes the following changes to the administration of campaign finance and lobbyist disclosure laws by the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices and the enforcement of income reporting requirements.

1. It provides for a preliminary penalty for when a Legislator or a legislative candidate does not file a statement of sources of income on time, which may be waived by the commission, of \$100 for a legislative candidate or \$250 for a Legislator.

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2. It increases penalties by \$50 per report when a lobbyist repeatedly files monthly reports late during a lobbying year.
3. It eliminates authority for the commission to meet by telephone and the requirement for the commission to be open during the last weekend before elections.
4. It amends the standard by which the commission may disclose financial or campaign information in a commission decision or investigative report by staff.
5. It authorizes the Office of the Attorney General to collect three times the amount owed when a court action is necessary to collect an unpaid penalty or repayment of Maine Clean Election Act funds.
6. It requires text messages that advocate for the election or defeat of a candidate and that are transmitted through a paid-for mass distribution technology to disclose the person that paid for the messages.
7. It directs the commission to consider the text and other objective elements of a communication distributed close to an election, including, if the communication is a digital communication, any links to publicly accessible websites related to the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate, when deciding whether the costs of the communication qualify as independent expenditures.
8. It eliminates the \$25,000 limit an individual may contribute in aggregate to state candidates in a calendar year.
9. It allows a person filing an independent expenditure report to make an online affirmation that the expense was not coordinated with the candidate named in the report rather than submitting a statement made under oath or affirmation.
10. It authorizes the automatic waiver of penalties of less than \$25 for filing a campaign finance report late.
11. It eliminates the authorization for candidates and political committees to file a campaign finance report after a deadline if a faxed version is submitted before the deadline.
12. It requires a political communication to influence ballot question elections that is a digital communication costing more than \$500 and includes a link to a publicly accessible website expressly advocating for or against an initiative or referendum that is on the ballot to clearly and conspicuously state the name of the person who made or financed the expenditure, unless the digital communication is excluded from this requirement because compliance is impracticable due to size or character limitations.
13. It confirms that a candidate's submission of fraudulent qualifying contributions is a violation of the Maine Clean Election Act.

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14. It requires a Maine Clean Election Act candidate to obtain and submit a record of labor performed by any member of campaign staff each day the member of the campaign staff is compensated more than \$3,000.

A provision authorizing the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices to deposit penalties for late filing by political action committees and ballot question committees in an existing special revenue account to pay for improvements to the commission's electronic filing systems, which was proposed in the original version of LD 1630, was not included in Public Law 2023, chapter 324, but was instead incorporated into the biennial budget, enacted as Public Law 2023, chapter 412, part SSS. See Appropriations and Financial Affairs, LD 258.

LD 1653 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Allow Persons Under Guardianship for Mental Illness to Be Electors

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Constitutional Resolution 2023, chapter 4 proposes to amend the Constitution of Maine to allow persons under guardianship to be electors for Governor, Senators and Representatives by removing the provision prohibiting such action, which has been found by the United States District Court for the District of Maine to violate the United States Constitution and federal law.

Constitutional Resolution 2023, chapter 4 as finally passed by the Legislature is contingent upon the approval of the voters at a statewide election to be held November 7, 2023.

LD 1690 An Act Regarding Ongoing Absentee Voting and Tracking of Absentee Ballots

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Effective December 31, 2025, Public Law 2023, chapter 404 makes the following changes to the provisions of law regarding ongoing absentee voter status.

1. It removes the requirement that an ongoing absentee voter be a voter who will be at least 65 years of age by the next election or who self identifies as having a disability.
2. It removes the requirement that the procedures for application for status as an ongoing absentee voter must include a process for notifying the voter that if the voter moves out of the municipality, that voter's status as an ongoing absentee voter in that municipality terminates.
3. It removes the requirement that the clerk or Secretary of State shall terminate a voter's ongoing absentee voter status upon the failure of the voter to vote by absentee ballot for a general election.