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Resolve, To Create a Study Commission To Review and Report on the Possibility of Making All Public School Teachers in Maine Employees of the State

Sec. 1 Commission established. Resolved: That the Commission to Review and Report on the Possibility of Making All Public School Teachers in Maine Employees of the State, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established; and be it further

Sec. 2 Commission membership. Resolved: That the commission consists of 13 members as follows:

1. Two members of the party holding the highest number of seats in the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
2. Two members of the party holding the 2nd highest number of seats in the Senate, appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;
3. Two members of the party holding the highest number of seats in the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
4. Two members of the party holding the 2nd highest number of seats in the House of Representatives, appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;
5. Two educators, one appointed by the President of the Senate and one appointed by the Speaker of the House;
6. One school administrator, appointed by the President of the Senate;
7. One school board member, appointed the Speaker of the House; and
8. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee as a nonvoting member.

Appointments must be made to represent all geographic areas of the State as much as possible; and be it further

Sec. 3 Chairs. Resolved: That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair of the commission and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission; and be it further

Sec. 4 Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. Within 15 days after appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission, which must be no later than 30 days after the appointment of all members is complete; and be it further

Sec. 5 Duties. Resolved: That the commission shall examine the issues surrounding making public school teachers in the State state workers, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Creating parity in health care and retirement benefits between teachers in the State and state workers;
2. Exploring the possibility of the State paying the salaries and benefits of teachers in the State and identifying a source of dedicated funding for this purpose;
3. Creating parity in pay between teachers in the State and state workers with consideration given to the cost-of-living difference;
4. Addressing the shortage of teachers in some geographic areas of the State for some disciplines; and
5. Exploring the property tax savings resulting from teachers becoming state workers; and be it further

Sec. 6 Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission; and be it further

Sec. 7 Compensation. Resolved: That the legislative members of the commission are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses related to their attendance at authorized meetings of the commission. Public members not otherwise compensated by their employers or other entities that they represent are entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary expenses and, upon a demonstration of financial hardship, a per diem equal to the legislative per diem for their attendance at authorized meetings of the commission; and be it further

Sec. 8 Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 15, 2009, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs may introduce legislation in the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature to implement the recommendations of the commission; and be it further

Sec. 9 Extension. Resolved: That, if the commission requires a limited extension of time to complete its study and make its report, it may apply to the Legislative Council, which may grant an extension; and be it further

Sec. 10 Commission budget. Resolved: That the chairs of the commission, with assistance from the commission's staff, shall administer the commission's budget. Within 10 days after its first meeting, the commission shall present a work plan and proposed budget to the Legislative Council for its approval. The commission may not incur expenses that would result in the commission's exceeding its approved budget. Upon request from the commission, the Executive Director of the Legislative Council shall promptly provide the commission chairs and staff with a status report on the commission budget, expenditures incurred and paid and available funds.

SUMMARY

This resolve establishes the Commission to Review and Report on the Possibility of Making All Public School Teachers in Maine Employees of the State.