

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTEEN

H.P. 497 - L.D. 721

**Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services  
Provided to Maine's Veterans**

**Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas**, a legislative study by a study commission needs sufficient time for the commission to properly do its work; and

**Whereas**, there is insufficient time after the 90-day period for a study commission to properly do its work before reporting to the Legislature; and

**Whereas**, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

**Sec. 1. Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine's Veterans established. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine's Veterans, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established; and be it further

**Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of 11 members appointed as follows:

1. Two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate who are either veterans of military service or members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs;

2. Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives who are either veterans of military service or members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs;

3. The Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management or the commissioner's designee;

4. Three members appointed by the President of the Senate, representing both genders, including a member who is 30 years of age or younger and a member who is 65 years of age or older. Members appointed under this subsection must have experience in:

- A. Developing, implementing or advising on veterans' affairs policy;
- B. Representing a veterans' service organization; or
- C. Providing services to veterans as part of a nonprofit organization; and

5. Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, including a member who is between 30 and 40 years of age and a member who is between 41 and 64 years of age. Members appointed under this subsection must have experience in:

- A. Developing, implementing or advising on veterans' affairs policy; or
- B. Providing services to veterans as part of a nonprofit organization; and be it further

**Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the Senate member is the Senate chair and the 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. The first meeting date must be set within 15 days after and be held within 30 days after all appointments have been made; and be it further

**Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:

1. Review the services provided by the State to veterans for the purpose of identifying gaps, duplications and inefficiencies;

2. Consider methods and strategies for improving the State's engagement and communication with veterans of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq;

3. Identify gaps and insufficiencies in the provision of health care and mental health care services to veterans through both state and federal programs and consider ways in which the State can improve health care and mental health care services for veterans where insufficiencies or gaps in federal resources or state services exist;

4. Study how to better align community, state and federal services and resources for veterans who are facing the problem of homelessness;

5. Study how the State can develop and implement a campaign and marketing strategy to better communicate with veterans and military retirees regarding attending colleges in the State and to better attract veterans and military retirees to live and work in the State;

6. Study how the State can encourage partnerships with businesses, industry groups and nonprofit organizations to improve veterans' employment, career and volunteer opportunities;

7. Make recommendations to the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management concerning practices or rules regarding services and programs for veterans;

8. Work with the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management to develop a multiyear plan that identifies priorities and suggests initiatives to strengthen and align services provided to veterans in the State;

9. Make recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs concerning changes to services and programs for veterans; and

10. Study other critical veterans' issues that arise as agreed upon by the commission; and be it further

**Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission as approved by the Legislative Council; and be it further

**Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than January 15, 2016, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature based upon the report.

**Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.