**An Act To Amend Legislative Expenses Reimbursement and Allowances**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec.** **1. 3 MRSA §2, first ¶,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 380, Pt. QQQQ, §1, is further amended to read:

~~Each~~ Prior to the 131st Legislature, each member of the Senate and House of Representatives~~, beginning with the first Wednesday of December 2000 and thereafter,~~ is entitled to $10,815 in the first year and $7,725 in the 2nd year of each biennium, except that if a Legislator who is a recipient of retirement benefits from the federal Social Security Administration files a written request with the Executive Director of the Legislative Council within one week after the biennium commences, the Legislator is entitled to $9,270 in each year of the biennium. Beginning with the 131st Legislature, each member of the Senate and House of Representatives is entitled to $20,000 for each year of the biennium. Each member of the Senate and the House of Representatives must receive ~~a~~ an annual cost-of-living adjustment in ~~annual legislative~~ salary, except that the percentage increase may not exceed ~~5% in any year, and except that the percentage increase may not exceed~~ 3% ~~beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014~~ in any year. Beginning December 1, ~~2001~~ 2024, the salary for each legislative session must be adjusted each December 1st by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the most recently concluded fiscal year~~; except that no member of the Senate or the House of Representatives may~~ ~~receive a cost-of-living adjustment in annual legislative salary for the Second Regular~~ ~~Session of the 124th Legislature, and except that no member of the Senate or the House of~~ ~~Representatives may receive a cost-of-living adjustment in annual legislative salary for the~~ ~~Second Regular Session of the 125th Legislature and the First Regular Session and the~~ ~~Second Regular Session of the 126th Legislature, and any percentage change in the~~ ~~Consumer Price Index for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2011, June 30, 2012 and June~~ ~~30, 2013 may not be applied to the base salary~~. In addition, each Legislator is entitled to be paid once each week for travel at each legislative session ~~once each week~~ at the ~~same~~ rate of the lower of the federal mileage rate and 56¢ per mile to and from that Legislator's place of abode ~~as state employees receive~~, the mileage to be determined by the most reasonable direct route, except that Legislators may be reimbursed for tolls paid for travel on the Maine Turnpike as long as they have a receipt for payment of the tolls, such tolls to be reimbursed when Legislators use the Maine Turnpike in traveling to and from sessions of the Legislature or in performance of duly authorized committee assignments. Each Legislator is entitled to mileage on the first day of the session, and those amounts of salary and expenses at such times as the Legislature may determine during the session, and the balance at the end of the session.

**Sec.** **2. 3 MRSA §2, 4th ¶,** as corrected by RR 2001, c. 2, Pt. A, §1, is amended to read:

~~Except~~ Prior to the 131st Legislature, except as provided in this section, each member of the Senate and House of Representatives is entitled to a meal allowance in the amount of $32 and a housing allowance in the amount of $38 for each day in attendance at sessions of the Legislature and for each day the member occupies overnight accommodations away from home either immediately preceding or immediately following attendance at daily sessions of the Legislature. Beginning with the 131st Legislature, each member of the Senate and House of Representatives is entitled to a meal allowance in the amount of $32 and a housing allowance in an amount determined at the beginning of each first regular session by the Legislative Council, which must be no less than the average nightly rate of lodging in the Augusta area or the federal per diem rate for lodging, whichever is less, for each day in attendance at sessions of the Legislature and for each day the member occupies overnight accommodations away from home either immediately preceding or immediately following attendance at daily sessions of the Legislature. The presiding officers may establish reasonable policies regarding allowances for meals and overnight accommodations for the day immediately preceding the session, which may include policies regarding whether an allowance is paid, whether the full amount or a portion of the statutory allowance is paid and whether receipts are required. In lieu of the meal and housing allowance, each member is entitled to a daily meal allowance in the amount of $32 and actual daily mileage allowances in an amount up to but not exceeding ~~$38 per day~~ the daily housing allowance amount. Each member of the Senate also receives an annual allowance for constituent services in the amount of $2,000, $1,300 in January and $700 in the month following adjournment of the regular session. Each member of the House of Representatives also receives an annual allowance for constituent services in the amount of $1,500, $1,005 in January and $495 in the month following adjournment of the regular session. Notwithstanding this section, during the first regular session of each legislative biennium, a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives may elect to receive the first payment of the annual allowance for constituent services in December following convening of the Legislature by notifying the Executive Director of the Legislative Council in the manner prescribed by the executive director. The Executive Director of the Legislative Council shall inform Legislators of the choice available for payment of the allowance for constituent services in the first year of the legislative biennium and of any tax implications associated with exercising that choice.

**Sec.** **3. 3 MRSA §2,** as amended by PL 2019, c. 475, §§11 and 12, is further amended by adding after the 7th paragraph a new paragraph to read:

Beginning with the 131st Legislature, in a period of national emergency declared by the President of the United States or the United States Congress or a period of civil emergency declared by the Governor, if the Legislature is in session and Legislators are required to work remotely from home or any other location, during any week in which a Legislator attends an authorized committee meeting and does not otherwise travel to the State House, that Legislator is entitled to a weekly allowance of $250, which must be adjusted each December 1st by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the most recently concluded fiscal year.

**Sec.** **4. 3 MRSA §2, 11th ¶,** as amended by PL 1989, c. 501, Pt. O, §5; c. 600, Pt. B, §§9 and 10; and c. 878, Pt. D, §§14 and 15, is further amended to read:

The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the floor leaders and their assistants and members of a committee, with the approval of the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Representatives as to members of a committee, may also meet on days when the Legislature is not in daily session at any convenient location within the State. Each member of the Senate and House of Representatives ~~shall~~ ~~receive~~ is entitled to $55 for every day's attendance when meetings or daily sessions are held, a meal allowance in the amount of $32 and a housing allowance whereby actual lodging expenses will be reimbursed at the ~~single-room rate, provided that~~ rate determined by the Legislative Council at the beginning of each first regular session, as long as a receipt is submitted to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council for each day in attendance at such meetings or daily sessions and for each day that member occupies overnight accommodations away from home either immediately preceding or immediately following attendance at daily sessions of the Legislature, and actual daily mileage allowances ~~which~~ ~~shall be paid at the same rate paid to state employees~~ at the rate of the lower of the federal mileage rate and 56¢ per mile to and from that Legislator's place of abode, the mileage to be determined by the most reasonable direct route. In lieu of the meal and housing allowance, each member ~~shall be~~ is entitled to a daily meal allowance in the amount of $32 and actual daily mileage allowances.

**Sec.** **5. 3 MRSA §2, 13th ¶,** as amended by PL 1989, c. 501, Pt. O, §6; c. 600, Pt. B, §§9 and 10; and c. 878, Pt. D, §§14 and 15, is further amended to read:

If a member of the Legislature dies or otherwise vacates the office, the successor is entitled to a salary ~~from the date of seating,~~ for that calendar year that is computed as follows: ~~two hundred ten dollars per week times the number of weeks remaining in the~~ ~~calendar year if the vacancy occurs in the first year and $150 per week for the number of~~ ~~weeks remaining in the calendar year if the vacancy occurs in the 2nd year~~ the annual salary for that office divided by 52, the result of which is multiplied by the number of weeks between the date of the successor's seating and the end of that calendar year.

**SUMMARY**

This bill makes changes to the laws governing compensation, reimbursements and allowances for Legislators.

1. Beginning with the 131st Legislature, it increases the salary of Legislators from an estimated $15,954 in the first year and $11,125 in the 2nd year of a biennium, after adjustment for inflation, to $20,000 in each year of the biennium.

2. It increases the mileage allowance for Legislators from 44¢ per mile to the lower of the federal mileage rate and 56¢ per mile.

3. Beginning with the 131st Legislature, it changes the lodging rate for Legislators. Currently, the lodging rate is $38 per day; this bill changes the rate to an amount determined annually by the Legislative Council, which must be no less than the lower of the average nightly rate of lodging in the Augusta area and the federal per diem rate for lodging.

4. Beginning with the 131st Legislature, it provides a weekly allowance of $250 for any week during a period of national emergency or civil emergency in which a Legislator is required to work remotely, attends an authorized committee meeting and does not otherwise travel to the State House.