



# 130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2021

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Legislative Document

No. 1670

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H.P. 1241

House of Representatives, May 5, 2021

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**Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Study and Recommend  
Solutions for Modernizing the Maine Legislature**

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Received by the Clerk of the House on May 3, 2021. Referred to the Committee on State and Local Government pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative BAILEY of Gorham.  
Cosponsored by Representatives: CARLOW of Buxton, GERE of Kennebunkport,  
GROHOSKI of Ellsworth, McDONALD of Stonington, NEWELL of the Passamaquoddy  
Tribe, WARREN of Hallowell, Senator: STEWART of Aroostook.

1           **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That the Commission To Study and  
2 Recommend Solutions for Modernizing the Maine Legislature, referred to in this resolve  
3 as "the commission," is established.

4           **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule  
5 353, the commission consists of 15 members appointed as follows:

6           1. Four members who are current or former members of the Senate appointed by the  
7 President of the Senate, 2 of whom are from the party holding the largest number of seats  
8 in the Legislature and 2 of whom are from the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats  
9 in the Legislature;

10          2. Five members who are current or former members of the House of Representatives  
11 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 2 of whom are from the party  
12 holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, 2 of whom are from the party holding  
13 the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature and one without a party affiliation;

14          3. Four members recommended by the board of directors of an association of women  
15 voters in the State who are appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker  
16 of the House of Representatives;

17          4. One member appointed by the Governor; and

18          5. One member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court.

19           **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member and the first-named  
20 House of Representatives member shall serve as cochairs of the commission.

21           **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission; number of meetings.**  
22 **Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, all appointments must be made no later  
23 than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall  
24 notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been  
25 completed. After appointment of all members, the cochairs shall call and convene the first  
26 meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a  
27 majority but not all appointments have been made, the cochairs may request authority and  
28 the Legislative Council may grant authority for the commission to meet and conduct its  
29 business. The commission shall meet at least 10 times and shall allow for virtual  
30 participation by citizens of the State.

31           **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall study issues regarding and  
32 solutions for modernizing the Legislature, including, but not limited to:

33           1. Improving efficiencies through technology;

34           2. Improving the legislative process itself;

35           3. Increasing transparency;

36           4. Improving physical access;

37           5. Evaluating COVID-19 pandemic changes;

38           6. Evaluating remote access, as implemented during the First Regular Session of the  
39 130th Legislature;

40           7. Evaluating joint committee meetings;

- 1 8. Limiting the number of bills;
- 2 9. Reducing the size of the Legislature, including whether there should be 2 House
- 3 districts within each Senate district;
- 4 10. Exploring whether the State would benefit from a professional legislature versus a
- 5 citizen legislature;
- 6 11. Exploring whether the State would benefit from a year-round legislature;
- 7 12. Implementing a unicameral legislature versus maintaining a bicameral legislature;
- 8 13. Implementing multimember districts versus maintaining single-member districts;
- 9 14. Increasing term limits to 6 or 8 terms;
- 10 15. Imposing statutory term limits for leadership and committee chairs; and
- 11 16. Changing legislative staffing structure.

12 The commission shall consult with the National Conference of State Legislatures on  
13 best practices and ideas from other states for modernizing the Legislature.

14 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the  
15 Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission.

16 **Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, no later than  
17 November 2, 2022, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and  
18 recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on  
19 State and Local Government. The joint standing committee of the 131st Legislature having  
20 jurisdiction over state and local government matters may submit legislation based upon the  
21 report to the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

22 **SUMMARY**

23 This resolve establishes the Commission To Study and Recommend Solutions for  
24 Modernizing the Maine Legislature. The commission has 15 members. The commission is  
25 required to submit its report to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local  
26 Government no later than November 2, 2022.