

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

—
H.P. 1447 - L.D. 2158

An Act to Address Vacancies on the Knox County Budget Committee

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

Whereas, current law establishes the Knox County budget committee and requires the membership, consisting of 9 members, to be elected to the budget committee in an even-numbered year; and

Whereas, under the Knox County charter, business may not be conducted without the presence of a quorum, which is at least 5 members; and

Whereas, due to vacancies on the budget committee and the failure to fill those vacancies at the 2024 election, the budget committee no longer has a quorum; and

Whereas, this legislation provides for a temporary alternative method of appointment of members to the budget committee; and

Whereas, this legislation must take effect as soon as possible to allow the budget committee to complete its work on the Knox County budget for 2026; 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 enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. Temporary appointment of members to Knox County budget committee. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A, section 751 or in the Knox County charter regarding the election of members to the Knox County budget committee and the filling of vacancies on the Knox County budget committee, the following provisions apply.

1. Definitions. As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Budget committee" means the Knox County budget committee established in Title 30-A, section 751.

B. "County commissioners" means the county commissioners of Knox County.

C. "District" means the budget committee districts established in Title 30-A, section 757, subsection 2.

D. "Eligible resident" means an individual registered to vote in Knox County who is a resident of the district for which that individual is nominated and elected.

2. Appointment of eligible residents. The county commissioners may appoint an eligible resident to fill a vacancy on the budget committee when there are fewer than 5 members of the budget committee who have been duly elected or who have been appointed pursuant to this subsection and seated.

3. Candidates recommended by municipalities. Notwithstanding Title 30-A, section 751, subsection 1, paragraph B, a municipality may submit a written recommendation identifying an eligible resident to fill a vacancy on the budget committee. The county commissioners shall give due regard to such a recommendation when making an appointment to the budget committee pursuant to subsection 2.

4. Term of appointed members. A member of the budget committee appointed to fill a vacancy pursuant to this section fills the vacant seat for the balance of the unexpired term.

5. Voting status of appointed members. A member of the budget committee appointed to fill a vacancy pursuant to this section is a full voting member of the budget committee.

6. Authority to fill vacant seats when quorum exists unaffected. This section does not affect the requirement in Title 30-A, section 751, subsection 1, paragraph D that the budget committee fill a vacancy occurring on the budget committee when it has a quorum to act.

7. Termination of authority. The authority granted in this Act expires December 31, 2028.

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