

STATE OF MAINE

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

—
H.P. 1016 - L.D. 1558

**Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Update Maine's Public Policy on
Higher Education**

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

Whereas, this legislation establishes the Commission to Update Maine's Public Policy on Higher Education; and

Whereas, this legislation must take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period so that the commission may timely meet and make its report to the Legislature by November 4, 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

Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved: That the Commission to Update Maine's Public Policy on Higher Education, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established.

Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission consists of 14 members, including:

1. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, who serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, including one member of the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and one member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature;

2. Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House, who serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, including one member of the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and one member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature;

3. One member who is a representative of a union representing the faculty of the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System or the Maine Maritime

Academy, appointed by the President of the Senate, as recommended by the Maine Education Association Board of Directors;

4. One member representing the Certification and Higher Education Committee of the State Board of Education, appointed by the President of the Senate, as recommended by the Chair of the State Board of Education;

5. One member representing private colleges and universities in the State, appointed by the Speaker of the House, as recommended by the Maine Independent Colleges Association;

6. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System or the chancellor's designee;

7. The Chair of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees or the chair's designee;

8. The President of the Maine Community College System or the president's designee;

9. The Chair of the Maine Community College System Board of Trustees or the chair's designee;

10. The Chair of the Maine Maritime Academy Board of Trustees or the chair's designee;

11. The President of the Maine Maritime Academy or the president's designee; and

12. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee.

In appointing members of the commission, the appointing authorities shall give consideration to race, gender, socioeconomic diversity and geographic diversity.

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

Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission; number of meetings. 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. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the commission to meet and conduct its business. The commission may not meet more than 8 times.

Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the commission shall review all related laws and rules addressing the State's public policy on higher education, including, but not limited to, the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 10902, and make recommendations for potential legislative changes. In conducting its review, the commission shall analyze present and future goals, including, but not limited to, expanding access to affordable high-quality higher education to help students achieve postsecondary success. To assist the commission in carrying out its review, the Department of Education, the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy shall each provide to the commission any data and information the commission considers relevant to its work. At the discretion of the chairs, the commission may seek input from

any students, faculty or staff in the State's public institutions of higher education, groups that have an interest in the State's public institutions of higher education and other stakeholders.

Sec. 6. Agreement for outside staffing. Resolved: That the Legislative Council shall enter into an agreement with the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to provide staffing services to the commission, for which the Legislature shall provide \$5,000.

Sec. 7. Report. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, no later than November 4, 2026, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. The joint standing committee may report out a bill related to the report to the 133rd Legislature in 2027.

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