An Act to Increase the Hourly Reimbursement Rate of the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services Lawyers to $150 per Hour

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Judiciary suggested and ordered printed.

Presented by Senator KEIM of Oxford.
Cosponsored by Representative MORIARTY of Cumberland.
Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services exists to provide legal representation to Maine citizens who are entitled to counsel at state expense under the United States Constitution or under the Constitution of Maine or the Maine Revised Statutes; and

Whereas, at current reimbursement rates the commission cannot recruit and retain a sufficient number of attorneys to represent indigent clients entitled to counsel; and

Whereas, this has created a shortage of attorneys rostered with the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services, which cannot meet the demand for counsel; 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. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES, MAINE COMMISSION ON

Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services Z112

Initiative: Appropriates ongoing funding to increase attorney reimbursement for indigent legal services from $80 per hour to $150 per hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL FUND</th>
<th>2023-24</th>
<th>2024-25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>$17,985,730</td>
<td>$17,985,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</td>
<td>$17,985,730</td>
<td>$17,985,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This bill provides General Fund appropriations to the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services to increase the reimbursement rate for indigent legal services from $80 per hour to $150 per hour.