

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Implement Recommendations on Reinventing Government

CONCEPT DRAFT SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to establish a process by which more profound changes in governance and public policy in Maine can be advanced and implemented. It is intended to accomplish the more fundamental system reforms that elude the traditional legislative process.

This bill proposes a review of work produced over the past 5 years and more by numerous study groups that have convened to assess Maine's policy environment, government systems and public sector costs, with the objective of creating a more prosperous Maine economy. The reports that have emerged from these efforts have been widely praised and overlap substantially in their recommendations, yet the pathways from concept to implementation have been often elusive and ineffective. In the mainstream legislative process, it is too easy for the aggregated influence of more narrowly defined interests to impede the advancement of broader societal aims.

Among the more comprehensive studies and reports produced in recent years are the Brookings Institution report, *Charting Maine's Future; Time for Change*, the Final Report of the Joint Select Committee on Future Maine Prosperity; *Measures of Growth in Focus 2011* by the Maine Economic Growth Council; the 2-part series on *Making Maine Work* by the Maine Development Foundation and Maine State Chamber of Commerce; and *Reinventing Maine Government* by Envision Maine. Other organizations and policy experts that have advanced concepts for large-scale policy reform are associated with the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine, the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine, the Maine Heritage Policy Center, the Maine Center for Economic Policy, the Alliance for Maine's Future, Grow Smart Maine, the Maine Public Spending Research Group and others.

This bill is not intended as a replication of these past analytic efforts, though it includes a careful review and evaluation of past work. Instead, the emphasis of the bill is on translating past work into specific implementable changes in governance and policy and laying out a process that accomplishes those changes.

The bill proposes the appointment of a high-profile Commission on Reinventing Maine Government. The commission would be composed of established statesmen and stateswomen who have earned broad respect for their leadership, vision and commitment to Maine, who reflect a range of views and experience and who are sufficiently removed from government to have no direct interest in any particular set of changes. Each appointment to the commission should contribute to the group's credibility among Maine citizens and knowledge of how large organizations or governments function.

While the commission will review the many reports produced by past study groups to identify the substantive areas where legislative language might be crafted, the mission and product of the commission

is not a new report, or even a compilation of previous reports. The goal of the commission will be to produce practical and specific legislation that would accomplish large-scale reform in governance and government structure and policy. Those recommendations may encompass the organizational structures of government, the diverse programs and responsibilities of government, the revenue sources and spending composition of government and other related areas of public policy.

The legislation recommended by the commission would be treated by the Legislature in the same manner as a citizen-initiated referendum. Thus the Legislature could either pass the recommended legislation, as presented, or send the legislation directly to referendum. Because of the magnitude of change envisioned by the bill, the referendum approach is encouraged as a way to solidify and deepen the public credibility and acceptance of the reforms.