

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 Amend the Legislative Expense Reimbursement**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 3 MRSA §2, 4th ¶**, as corrected by RR 2001, c. 2, Pt. A, §1, is amended to read:

~~Except~~Until the 130th Legislature, except as provided in this section, each member of the Senate and House of Representatives is entitled to a meal allowance in the amount of \$32 and a housing allowance in the amount of \$38 for each day in attendance at sessions of the Legislature and for each day the member occupies overnight accommodations away from home either immediately preceding or immediately following attendance at daily sessions of the Legislature. Beginning with the 130th Legislature, each member of the Senate and House of Representatives is entitled to a meal allowance of \$32 and a housing allowance in an amount determined annually by the Legislative Council, which must be no less than the average nightly rate of lodging in the Augusta area, for each day in attendance at sessions of the Legislature and for each day the member occupies overnight accommodations away from home either immediately preceding or immediately following attendance at daily sessions of the Legislature. The presiding officers may establish reasonable policies regarding allowances for meals and overnight accommodations for the day immediately preceding the session, which may include policies regarding whether an allowance is paid, whether the full amount or a portion of the ~~statutory~~ allowance is paid and whether receipts are required. In lieu of the meal and housing allowance, each member is entitled to a daily meal allowance in the amount of \$32 and actual daily mileage allowances in an amount up to but not exceeding \$38 per day. Each member of the Senate also receives an annual allowance for constituent services in the amount of \$2,000, \$1,300 in January and \$700 in the month following adjournment of the regular session. Each member of the House of Representatives also receives an annual allowance for constituent services in the amount of \$1,500, \$1,005 in January and \$495 in the month following adjournment of the regular session. Notwithstanding this section, during the first regular session of each legislative biennium, a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives may elect to receive the first payment of the annual allowance for constituent services in December following convening of the Legislature by notifying the Executive Director of the Legislative Council in the manner prescribed by the executive director. The Executive Director of the Legislative Council shall inform Legislators of the choice available for payment of the allowance for constituent services in the first year of the legislative biennium and of any tax implications associated with exercising that choice.

### **SUMMARY**

This bill changes, beginning with the 130th Legislature, the per diem housing allowance from a set amount of \$38 per day to an amount that is established annually by the Legislative Council based on the average rate of lodging in the Augusta area.