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Legislative Document

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H.P. 497

House of Representatives, March 5, 2015

**Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Strengthen and Align the
Services Provided to Maine's Veterans**

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative GOLDEN of Lewiston.
Cosponsored by Senator COLLINS of York and
Representatives: DEVIN of Newcastle, ESPLING of New Gloucester, Speaker EVES of North
Berwick, GIDEON of Freeport, HANINGTON of Lincoln, KINNEY of Limington,
LONGSTAFF of Waterville, LUCHINI of Ellsworth, MONAGHAN of Cape Elizabeth,
SCHNECK of Bangor, TURNER of Burlington, Senators: CUSHING of Penobscot,
CYRWAY of Kennebec, MASON of Androscoggin, PATRICK of Oxford.

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

3 **Whereas,** a legislative study by a study commission needs sufficient time for the
4 commission to properly do its work; and

5 **Whereas,** there is insufficient time after the 90-day period for a study commission
6 to properly do its work before reporting to the Legislature; and

7 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
8 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
9 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
10 therefore, be it

11 **Sec. 1. Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to**
12 **Maine’s Veterans established. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the
13 Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine’s Veterans,
14 referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established; and be it further

15 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of
16 13 members appointed as follows:

17 1. One member of the Senate who sits on the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans
18 and Legal Affairs, appointed by the President of the Senate;

19 2. One member of the House of Representatives who sits on the Joint Standing
20 Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, appointed by the Speaker of the House of
21 Representatives;

22 3. The Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management or the
23 commissioner's designee;

24 4. Five members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

25 A. Three members, representing 3 different veterans' service organizations in the
26 State; and

27 B. Two members with expertise in veterans' affairs policy or representing a nonprofit
28 organization providing services to veterans that is not a veterans’ service
29 organization; and

30 5. Five members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives as
31 follows:

32 A. Three members, representing 3 different veterans' service organizations in the
33 State; and

34 B. Two members with expertise in veterans' affairs policy matters or representing a
35 nonprofit organization providing services to veterans that is not a veterans' service
36 organization.

1 Of the members appointed, at least one member must be serving or have served in the
2 Maine Army National Guard, at least one member must be under 30 years of age, at least
3 one member must be between 30 and 40 years of age, at least one member must be
4 between 41 and 64 years of age, at least one member must be over 65 years of age, at
5 least 2 members must be women and at least one member must be a combat-wounded
6 veteran and amputee; and be it further

7 **Sec. 3. Cooperation. Resolved:** That the Information Resource of Maine shall
8 provide information and assistance to the commission as requested by the commission for
9 the performance of its duties; and be it further

10 **Sec. 4. Chairs. Resolved:** That the Senate member is the Senate chair and the
11 House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission; and be it further

12 **Sec. 5. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all
13 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
14 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
15 Council once all appointments have been completed. The first meeting date must be set
16 within 15 days after and be held within 30 days after all appointments have been made;
17 and be it further

18 **Sec. 6. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:

19 1. Review the services provided by the State to veterans for gaps, duplications and
20 inefficiencies;

21 2. Study improving the State's engagement and communication with veterans of the
22 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq;

23 3. Study how the State can provide health care and mental health services to the
24 State's veterans when there is a clear gap in federal services;

25 4. Study how to better align community, state and federal services and resources for
26 homeless veterans;

27 5. Study how the State can develop and implement a campaign and marketing
28 strategy to communicate with veterans and military retirees and encourage them to attend
29 state colleges and to live and work in the State;

30 6. Make recommendations to the Commissioner of Defense, Veterans and
31 Emergency Management concerning practices and rules regarding services and programs
32 for veterans and the development of a 5-year work plan; and

33 7. Make recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal
34 Affairs concerning changes to services and programs for veterans; and be it further

35 **Sec. 7. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Department of Defense, Veterans
36 and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services and the Office of
37 Policy and Legal Analysis shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission;
38 and be it further

