



May 17, 2023

Sen. Margaret Rotundo, Chair  
Rep. Melanie Sachs, Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations  
& Financial Affairs  
Maine State Legislature  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: *Comments of MSBA regarding LD 258, Part A regarding Judicial Branch funding in Governor's "Change Package"*

Dear Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Sachs, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Maine State Bar Association, we are pleased to provide comments in **support** of increased funding for the Judicial Branch as proposed in the Governor's "Part 2" Budget change package.

**About us.** The Maine State Bar Association is a statewide trade association chartered in 1891 by the Maine Legislature. The Association currently represents approximately 3,000 attorneys in the State in both public service and private practice. The Association maintains 28 separate sections covering nearly every field of law practiced in Maine, from Administrative Law to Workers' Compensation Law. Access to justice is a key element of our mission, hence our strong and longstanding interest in issues pertaining to the Judicial Branch.

**Part 2 Budget increased Judicial Branch Funding.** The COVID-19 pandemic brought several issues to the forefront, including issues of adequate staffing and resources for our State's Judicial Branch. Such issues have resulted in a backlog of dockets that can only be addressed with adequate resources and funding to work through such backlog and ensure that all Mainers have access to Maine courts on a timely basis. The Governor's "Part 2" Budget proposes to fund four new judges – three District Court judges and one Superior Court judge – to assist in addressing the backlog of dockets in the State's courts. The Governor previously proposed the same addition of judges in her "Part 1" Budget, which MSBA supported. This additional funding for new judges is needed, and for this reason, we once again write to express our support.

**Conclusion.** Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on LD 258. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

Stacy O. Stitham  
President, Board of Governors

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cc: Angela Armstrong, Executive Director  
Rachel Okun, Chair, MSBA Legislative Committee  
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP  
Clara McConnell, Maine Street Solutions