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Testimony of Rep. Tavis Hasenfus introducing
**LD 1668, An Act to Provide Staffing for Ongoing Study Commissions During
Legislative Sessions**
Before the State and Local Government Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Tavis Hasenfus, and I represent House District 57, which is the communities of Readfield and Winthrop. I am here before you today to introduce **LD 1668, An Act to Provide Staffing for Ongoing Study Commissions During Legislative Sessions.**

The bill before you is a request to provide funding for one OPLA analyst, who would be tasked with continuing legislative studies throughout the legislative session. As you are likely aware, after our session ends the incredibly talented OPLA analysts, along with our colleagues and counterparts in the executive branch, get assigned to the many important studies that we have tasked them to perform. These studies go much further in depth than our individual bills and bill analysis can possibly hope to achieve, and the knowledge gained from these studies is instrumental in helping us to make well informed decisions about the importance, impact, need and effectiveness of the laws we make.

However, these studies end promptly upon our return to session, and too often the studies are left dormant and sometimes forgotten about, leaving a wealth of knowledge on the shelf while we work to sharpen the bills presented to us. The funding request in this bill proposes the hiring of an additional analyst who would be tasked with at least two important functions to make sure our studies are completed in a timely manner and used effectively.

The first task would be to allow for a new study while the legislature is in session. This would be incredibly helpful for emergency situations that arise immediately before or while we are in session. Currently, we must wait until the session has adjourned before we can even begin to more comprehensively study the unforeseen crises that arise. Think of last session's COVID-19 pandemic, the immediate need to address PFAS and the housing crisis. This position would allow us to be nimble and begin studies while we still have time to act instead of waiting for the second session or a new legislature to be the recipient of such knowledge.

The second task would be to be able to make sure that the important studies performed in past legislatures are effectively presented to committees and assists the committee in reporting out legislation if tasked to do so within the language of the study. An analyst tasked with synthesizing former studies, flagging them for committees and tying that report to the related bills within the committee would be extremely beneficial in ensuring our committees build off of the previous work done instead of, as is often the case, starting from scratch.

Additionally, I would like to point out that this is best served as a bill and not a request to legislative council. This request will require a fiscal note and a financial allocation. It is within this body's jurisdiction to allocate funds for this position without the consent of the chief executive. However, I feel that due to the involvement of executive branch officials in many legislative studies, as well as requiring funds from the same pool of all other government spending this proposal is competing with, it is desirable and healthy to our democratic process to make this request to this committee in the same manner as other requests to allocate state funds.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you have of me.