



State of Maine Judicial Branch  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
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MEMORANDUM

To: Senator Margaret Rotundo  
Representative Melanie Sachs  
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Amy Quinlan, State Court Administrator

Date: May 17, 2023

Re: Testimony of the Maine Judicial Branch on initiatives included in the Governor's Change Package.

My name is Amy Quinlan. I am the State Court Administrator for the Maine Judicial Branch. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to discuss the Judicial Branch initiative included in the Governor's Change Package.

When I came before you in February, I spoke about the backlog and efforts made by the Judicial Branch to address it by adopting technology solutions and adapting our business processes. I outlined the efforts made to understand why, despite our best efforts, we have made only a modest impact on reducing the excess of pending cases. And I explained what our analysis has revealed: the pandemic was the tipping point that uncovered a diminishing ability to keep pace with our case load. A review of filing trends, pending cases, and the length of time a case takes to resolve reveals that things began to slow well before the pandemic. You heard from Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill in her State of the Judiciary Address about some of those statistics and her message that the Judicial Branch had been straining to keep up with the demand of cases for at least 10 years before 2020.

While we have had some success in addressing the backlog, many cases are still taking too long to resolve. The time to disposition remains above pre-pandemic levels. Our budget requests have focused on resources to address the pending caseload and long-term staffing needs. We are grateful that the Governor's budget recognized the need and has included a substantial number of new positions for the Judicial Branch, including new judicial and support staff resources in her recently released Change Package as follows:

Page 94: General Fund    FY24 \$(1,626,668) / FY25 \$(1,590,272)

This initiative establishes one Superior Court Justice position, 3 District Court Judge positions, 4 Deputy Marshal positions, and 4 Assistant Clerk positions effective July 1, 2023, and provides funding for related All Other costs.

None of these statistics or trends that we have identified perfectly measures the resource deficit. There are many factors within the Judicial Branch and beyond that have contributed to the decline. But taken together the information corroborates the reports from across the state from judges and clerks, marshals and technology personnel, and employees at all levels at the Branch that we are struggling to keep up and the workload is not sustainable at current levels.

Our budget requests, including the 4 judicial positions and support resources, go a long way toward addressing our most pressing needs. We are grateful that the Governor has supported these requests. We hope that you will as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.