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Judicial Branch testimony in favor of LD 2277, Resolve, Authorizing the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to Convey by Sale the Interests of the State in 3 Properties Located in Biddeford, Sanford and York:

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing, my name is Julie Finn and I represent the Judicial Branch. I would like to provide some comments in favor of this bill.

In 2016, the Legislature enacted Public Law 2015, Chapter 468 which authorized the Judicial Branch to undertake three courthouse projects. One of these was the construction of a new courthouse in York County, consolidating three district courts and one superior court into one new building. The former superior court was housed in a county building; the three district court buildings are in State ownership.

After the bond was authorized and a site selected, the Judicial Branch constructed the York Judicial Center (YJC). Construction was completed in the spring of 2023, with the four courthouses consolidating their space into the YJC during the months of April and May 2023. After a soft opening in May, we officially held an opening ceremony in early June 2023. The Judicial Branch has not occupied any of the old buildings since we moved into the YJC in April and May of 2023.

The Judicial Branch has been charged with the maintenance and upkeep for the three vacant former district courthouses until they can be sold. Because the Judicial Branch understood that the Bureau of General Services (BGS) would take over responsibility for the buildings once they were emptied and pending disposition, we had no funds set aside for this maintenance and thus have requested funds in the supplemental budget. Reference # 597 in the supplemental budget bill provides \$355,000 for these costs in FY 2023-24.

We thus support this bill and the sale of these buildings so that future funds are not expended for the maintenance of vacant buildings.

Thank you for your consideration.