



Matthea Elisabeth Larsen Daughtry
President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Support of
LD 434, An Act to Authorize the Maine Governmental Facilities Authority to Issue Additional
Securities for the Replacement of the Legislative Management System for the Senate and the
House of Representatives
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
February 26, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownall, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. I am pleased to co-sponsor LD 434, "An Act to Authorize the Maine Governmental Facilities Authority to Issue Additional Securities for the Replacement of the Legislative Management System for the Senate and the House of Representatives" I would like to thank Speaker Fecteau for bringing forward this important measure to safeguard Maine's Legislative Branch and prepare us for the future.

When I began my term as Senate President, one of my goals was to make the operations of the Legislature more efficient, effective and maintain transparency. I wanted to ensure the public could participate and find it easy to follow along. I wanted to look at issues we've had for some time and be open about possible solutions. One of those solutions is outlined in this proposal.

Maine's Legislature is special in many ways; one is that we have a hearing for every bill. One is that regular citizens from all walks of life serve. Our Joint Standing Committees made up of Representatives and Senators have multiple opportunities for agreement and collaboration before our bills even hit the floor. However, with our unique system comes the need for upkeep. There is a need to upgrade Maine's legislative management system. You see, the system we have was put in place in 1998 and will sunset in the coming years.

This bill will address a significant and ongoing issue within the legislative operations. The House and Senate is operating with a management system, called LawMaker, that has been serving the legislature since the 1990s. LawMaker is essentially the "brains" behind the Legislature. It consists of a collection of applications that are used by the Senate and House for managing legislative information, such as:

bills (acts and resolves), orders, resolutions, sentiments, and communications;
creating House and Senate Calendars and Supplements;
recording roll call votes; and
stamping of legislative actions for inclusion as printed documents to bill jackets and for posting to the bill status website.

Created by International Roll-Call Corporation (IRC), LawMaker is the exclusive responsibility of the Senate Secretary's Office and the House Clerk's Office and serves as their primary legislative management application.

LawMaker has served the staff and legislature well; however, LawMaker has not kept pace with the multiple generations of information technology designed to offer more reliable, customizable, and

easier-to-learn solutions that will allow for documents and information to be created more accurately and faster while better meeting the needs of the legislature, members, and staff. The system has been outdated for a while now, but more concerning is that its "end of life" is anticipated to be in 2026.

The Senate and House are aware of this pending issue. Secretary Grant and Clerk Hunt have been steadfast working with previous legislative council and leadership to identify potential funding for a replacement system.

This work initiated a study in 2023 to assess the current system to document the workflow, resources, and legislative process documents currently created and used by the Senate and House through all steps of the legislative process; and to decide the course of the future relative to a new system to improve the process of delivering legislative documents and related information.

The study provided a "roadmap" for the Maine Legislature and other legislative agencies to understand where innovation could be used to improve the current legislative procedures and processes and the technologies used to support them, with the goal of modernizing the Maine Legislature's chamber systems, with a focus on the existing LawMaker, Paperless Chamber System, Voting and Bill Status technology applications presently used in the Senate and House. In addition, the study identified and documented requested process modifications that can be considered in the development and implementation of future system modules and functionalities.

Maine's legislative workflow is different from many other states. The Maine Legislature has a uniquely efficient structure which relies on joint standing committees and achieving concurrence at multiple stages of the process. This uniqueness means we cannot simply replicate an existing system from another state.

The Secretary's Office and Clerk's Office continue to experience increased issues with LawMaker. Frequently they spend hours, and even days, working with the Legislature's IT and IRC to resolve problems as they arise. The most recent major problem occurred at the beginning of the 132nd Legislature, when staff had to work over the Thanksgiving holiday to fix the system and ensure that the new Legislature could do what it needed to do on swearing-in day. Upon resolution, we found that the issue would have been avoided with a new system. As the "Lawmaker" sunset approaches, this is often the case.

These delays and disturbances have the potential to someday stop the Legislature from being able to function in its fundamental work. This is something we believe will happen at some point if we don't replace the system.

Benefits of a new system, as highlighted by senior staff in the Secretary's Office, our front users of the program:

1. System Obsolescence and Sustainability

As technology advances, maintaining and updating LawMaker becomes increasingly difficult and time consuming. The system lacks compatibility with newer technology, posing a risk of failure or security vulnerabilities. A replacement ensures continuity of legislative operations and avoids a crisis when LawMaker becomes unusable.

2. Greater Flexibility and Adaptability

The legislature's needs evolve, but the current system is outdated and difficult to modify. New software will allow for easier updates, customization, and integration with emerging technologies.

3. Increased Efficiency and Productivity

The current system requires excessive manual data entry, re-keying, and proofreading, slowing down legislative work.

4. Reduced Errors and Greater Accuracy

Manually entering the same data into multiple systems increases the risk of errors. A unified system that shares data across platforms ensures consistency and minimizes mistakes.

5. Better Collaboration Across Offices

Many legislative processes involve multiple departments (Clerk's Office, Legislative Information Office, Revisor's Office, etc.). A modern system allows for seamless data sharing, reducing miscommunication and inefficiencies.

6. Enhanced Legislative Tracking and Workflow

The ability to track the movement of legislation in real time will prevent bottlenecks and delays. Automated notifications and dashboards will keep staff informed of deadlines and next steps.

7. Improved Document Management

Legislative documents are created, edited, and published across multiple platforms. A centralized system will streamline this process, ensuring documents are properly formatted, stored, and accessible when needed.

This is all to outline how much careful consideration has gone into making sure we are the best stewards of this Legislature. LD 434 would ensure the Maine Legislative Branch could modernize and remain accessible and transparent. This bill would allow a decades-old system to function into the future. It is a bipartisan bill supported by all four leaders. Importantly, this initiative is a necessity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

President of the Senate, Senate District 23

Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth