

Administrative Office of the Courts

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Judicial Branch testimony neither for nor against LD 338, An Act to Increase the Size and Balance of Jury Pools:

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Julie Finn and I represent the Judicial Branch. I would like to present testimony regarding LD 338.

Under current law, the Judicial Branch obtains lists of potential jurors from the Secretary of State's office, specifically lists of licensed drivers and persons issued a state identification card. The pool of possible jurors also includes "any person who notifies the clerk of the court in the county of their residence and requests to be put on the source list of prospective jurors..." 14 MRS § 1252-A(1).

LD 338 proposes to add registered voters, state income tax filers, recipients of public assistance benefits, and recipients of unemployment benefits to the pool of individuals from which potential jurors could be drawn.

The Judicial Branch has no objection to this change. However, we believe that there is significant overlap between the group of proposed new jurors and the group of individuals currently being summonsed for jury duty. Many of the people in the groups listed in the bill are also holders of state identification cards or driver's licenses.

In addition, in order to obtain the additional pools of potential jurors listed in the bill, the Judicial Branch would have to build technical interfaces with the agencies enumerated, such as Maine Revenue Services or the Bureau of Unemployment Compensation. This would cost both time and money at a time when our IT department is working very hard to expand our electronic case management system into the criminal realm.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer your questions.
