



Maine Association of Registers of Probate

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March 6, 2025

132nd Maine State Legislature
Judiciary Committee
Hon. Senator Anne Carney, Chair
Hon. Representative Amy Kuhn, Chair
Room 438
State House Station 100
Augusta ME 04333

In RE: LD 505- An Act to Update Processes and Fees in the Probate Court System

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Catherine Moore, and I am the Register of Probate for Lincoln County and President of the Maine Association Registers of Probate (MARP), and I am speaking on behalf of MARP in favor of LD-505.

Probate fees were increased in 2021, but the overall costs of the Probate Courts continue to rise. Court appointments for Guardian Ad Litem, Attorney fees have increased from \$80.00 to \$150.00 per hour and Visitors \$30.00 to \$80.00 per hour. Salaries, postage, supplies all have increased significantly.

Costs associated with maintaining the Probate Courts electronic case management and filing system are expected to increase at the end of the year when our contracts expire. This does not reflect the proposed amendments to Maine Rules of Probate Procedure for Electronic Filing to take effect on 4-1-25 which will require updates to current software.

I have recently read somewhere that since 2021 the cost of living has increased 20% while our fees have remained stagnant. This revenue will help offset some of the increases that may be needed during our budget seasons as less funds will be needed to accommodate our needs due to having more revenue to offset those costs.

Maine Association Registers of Probate are also asking the Judiciary Committee to consider updating processes in the Probate Courts.

- **Inventory Requirement** requires the personal representative to file an inventory with the Probate Court which would be more accessible to parties to the record, and it is a widespread practice in many states.
- **Adoption Consent:** the consent of an adoptee ages 12-13 to execute their consent in front of the Judge.
- **Use of Artificial Intelligence:** make certain that any AI generated content that is filed by a party is accurate- noncompliance the Probate Court may impose sanctions.
- **Quasi-Judicial Immunity for Court Appointed Visitors:** roles are similar to **Guardian Ad Litem**- visitors are appointed by the Probate Judge in guardianships and conservatorships for adults. This would entitle them to immunity for acts performed within the scope of their duties as visitors.

We urge you to pass LD505.

MARP is willing to work with the Judiciary Committee on any issues that you may have regarding these changes. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Catherine" on the top line and "Moore" on the bottom line.

Catherine Moore
President MARP