



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Joshua Morris

P.O. Box 246
North Turner, ME 04266
Phone: (207) 754-7829
Joshua.Morris@legislature.maine.gov

April 14, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, distinguished members of the committee on State and Local Government, I am Representative Joshua Morris, and I represent the communities of Leeds, Turner, and Wayne. I am here to present **L.D. 1331, “RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Regarding When the Governor May Call the Legislature into Session”**.

Our government is built on separation of powers between the three branches of government. The Maine Constitution establishes an adjournment date for the legislature for both the 1st and 2nd regular sessions. In recent sessions, however, the legislature has adjourned earlier than the dates established in the Constitution, only to be called back almost immediately by the chief executive for a special session.

This resolution would limit the Governor’s ability to call us back for a special session to no earlier than 90 days after we have adjourned sine die. The reason for this is that laws passed by the legislature do not take effect until 90 days after we adjourn. We would not know how these laws are impacting our citizens until they take effect, so there is no need for the chief executive to call us in relating to those laws and their impacts.

The Constitution states that the Governor may call us back on extraordinary occasions, not just to finish the work that we haven’t gotten to yet. For example, calling the legislature back so we can commemorate official state reptiles and amphibians is hardly an extraordinary occasion that can’t wait until the 2nd regular session.

This resolution only addresses the Governor’s ability to call a special session of the legislature. It does not limit the ability of the legislature to call itself into a special session. If an extraordinary circumstance exists that needs to be addressed, the legislature can still choose to return at any time.

I will not attempt to hide the true motivation behind my proposal. I am sure everyone is aware of the reasons that would precipitate such a resolution being presented. The last three sessions have seen a majority budget passed at the end of March with a sine die adjournment only to see the legislature called back immediately.

The current process does not work for anyone. Passing the budget early has resulted in power being concentrated in the hands of a few legislators. It does not just cut out the voices of the minority party, it limits the voices of many in the majority as well. It effectively puts all the power over our state's finances into the hands of the Governor, the House Speaker, Senate President, and the chairs of appropriations.

Additionally, the resulting special session results in additional costs for the people of Maine. There is no requirement that the legislature be wrapped by the statutory adjournment date. Any days we are here past that date result in additional costs to Maine taxpayers. Last session we did not adjourn until late July. Judging by the flow of work in the present legislative session, I would not be surprised to see us here until August. Each day we are here beyond statutory adjournment means we are paid \$100 daily in addition to our allowances for meals, travel, and lodging.

If we pass this resolution, it will require the legislature to decide if they want to adjourn early or continue working until statutory adjournment and build consensus.

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

Joshua Morris
State Representative