

**Testimony in Support of LD 1636,  
“Resolve, to Study Changing the Start of the State Fiscal Year to October 1<sup>st</sup>”  
April 22, 2025**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee.

I am Douglas Rooks of Augusta, and I am here to testify in favor of LD 1636.

I have been reporting on, commenting on, analyzing and trying to understand the state budget process for four decades. I do know one thing: Consideration of Maine’s biennial budget suffered a grievous blow in 1991, one from which it has yet to recover, especially in terms of public trust and confidence in this Legislature.

As a result of an impasse over the 1991 worker’s compensation crisis linked to the budget, no budget was approved that June and state government shut down for most of July – a time of chaos, never truly resolved, that has led to the uneasiness attending every budget considered since then, year after year.

One side fears, and sometimes experiences, another shutdown. The other feels its right to participate has been taken away. The procedural and political landscape is constantly shifting.

This study bill could provide a way out of this impasse, where simply enacting a budget consumes far too much time and effort – unfortunately ensuring that this committee cannot effectively fulfill its proper role; there just isn’t enough time left to do oversight and consider reforms.

There are many advantages to moving to Oct. 1 to match the federal fiscal year, as two states have already done. State and federal programs and their grant cycles will be much easier to match. And a more orderly and regular budget process will encourage increased attention to such important matters as General Fund bonding that will continue to require supermajorities for passage.

Aligning all the governmental players in Maine, including municipalities and the counties, will take careful attention. This bill creates a capable working group that should be able to provide clear answers when you reconvene in 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be most gratified to answer any questions you might have.