

MAINE FAMILY LAW ADVISORY COMMISSION

Report to Maine Legislature Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary On LD 1618

“Resolve, to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Dedicated Family Court in Maine”

Introduction

The Maine Family Law Advisory Commission hereby reports to the Maine Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, on LD 1618 **“Resolve, to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Dedicated Family Court in Maine.”** For the reasons set forth below, the Commission supports the feasibility study of establishing a dedicated family court in Maine.

Discussion

LD 1618 seeks to establish a study group to undertake a comprehensive study to evaluate the feasibility, potential benefits, and challenges associated with establishing a dedicated family court system.

Having a dedicated family law court would provide many benefits. Families involved in legal proceedings may find it easier to locate resources and support networks within a centralized court system. A dedicated family court can provide a more consistent approach to family law cases. Centralizing family law matters can lead to more efficient case management and resolution, as resources and expertise are concentrated in one location. Having a designated court can also reduce confusion for individuals navigating the legal process, as they know where to go for specific types of family law cases. Judges in a family court may be better equipped to make informed decisions, as they have specialized experience in family law matters and are likely to be up-to-date on relevant case law and best practices. What’s more, a dedicated family court could facilitate the development of specialized expertise within the judiciary, such as specialized training in child custody, domestic violence, or child support. Finally, a dedicated family court using uniform trauma-informed practices and responses could substantially improve the state's efforts to eradicate domestic abuse.

Conclusion

FLAC supports LD 1618 resolve, to study the feasibility of establishing a dedicated family court in Maine, and to take part in that feasibility study. FLAC recognizes that having a designated family law court in Maine, or a centralized system for family law matters, offers several potential advantages. It can lead to more consistent and specialized handling of family cases, potentially improving efficiency and reducing confusion. It could also lead to more informed decision-making by judges due to their specialized experience.

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Respectfully submitted:
Maine Family Law Advisory Commission

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Maine Family Law Advisory Commission
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