

## 130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## **FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2021**

**Legislative Document** 

No. 1670

H.P. 1241

House of Representatives, May 5, 2021

Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Study and Recommend Solutions for Modernizing the Maine Legislature

Received by the Clerk of the House on May 3, 2021. Referred to the Committee on State and Local Government pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative BAILEY of Gorham.

Cosponsored by Representatives: CARLOW of Buxton, GERE of Kennebunkport, GROHOSKI of Ellsworth, McDONALD of Stonington, NEWELL of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, WARREN of Hallowell, Senator: STEWART of Aroostook.

- **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That the Commission To Study and Recommend Solutions for Modernizing the Maine Legislature, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established.
- **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission consists of 15 members appointed as follows:
- 1. Four members who are current or former members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, 2 of whom are from the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and 2 of whom are from the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature;
- 2. Five members who are current or former members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 2 of whom are from the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, 2 of whom are from the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature and one without a party affiliation;
- 3. Four members recommended by the board of directors of an association of women voters in the State who are appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
  - 4. One member appointed by the Governor; and

- 5. One member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court.
- **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member and the first-named House of Representatives member shall serve as cochairs of the commission.
- **Sec. 4.** Appointments; convening of commission; number of meetings. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the cochairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority but not all appointments have been made, the cochairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the commission to meet and conduct its business. The commission shall meet at least 10 times and shall allow for virtual participation by citizens of the State.
- **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall study issues regarding and solutions for modernizing the Legislature, including, but not limited to:
  - 1. Improving efficiencies through technology;
  - 2. Improving the legislative process itself;
  - 3. Increasing transparency;
  - 4. Improving physical access;
- 5. Evaluating COVID-19 pandemic changes;
- 6. Evaluating remote access, as implemented during the First Regular Session of the 130th Legislature;
  - 7. Evaluating joint committee meetings;

1 8. Limiting the number of bills; 2 9. Reducing the size of the Legislature, including whether there should be 2 House districts within each Senate district; 3 4 10. Exploring whether the State would benefit from a professional legislature versus a 5 citizen legislature; 6 11. Exploring whether the State would benefit from a year-round legislature; 7 12. Implementing a unicameral legislature versus maintaining a bicameral legislature; 8 13. Implementing multimember districts versus maintaining single-member districts; 9 14. Increasing term limits to 6 or 8 terms; 10 15. Imposing statutory term limits for leadership and committee chairs; and 11 16. Changing legislative staffing structure. 12 The commission shall consult with the National Conference of State Legislatures on best practices and ideas from other states for modernizing the Legislature. 13 14 Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the 15 Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission. 16 **Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, no later than November 2, 2022, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and 17 recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on 18 State and Local Government. The joint standing committee of the 131st Legislature having 19 20 jurisdiction over state and local government matters may submit legislation based upon the 21 report to the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature. 22 **SUMMARY** 23 This resolve establishes the Commission To Study and Recommend Solutions for 24 Modernizing the Maine Legislature. The commission has 15 members. The commission is 25 required to submit its report to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local 26 Government no later than November 2, 2022.