

RESEARCH AIDS

Legislators and citizen groups may seek the help of the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library in drafting bills or obtaining information on state government and the Legislature (287-1600).

The Legislative Council, made up of the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, the majority and assistant majority leaders and the minority and assistant minority leaders of each house, appoints the following non-partisan professionals:

- Executive Director of the Legislative Council, who acts as executive officer of the Legislature when it is not in session, coordinates activities of legislative service agencies and implements policy decisions of the Council;
- State Law Librarian, whose office provides comprehensive reference services on legislative questions for all Legislators and committees, as well as citizens;
- Director of the Office of Revisor of Statutes, who provides research services and bill drafting for Legislators;
- Director of the Office of Fiscal and Program Review, who assists the Legislature in fiscal matters;
- Director of the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis, who provides research assistance for the Joint Standing Committees.
- Director of the Office of Legislative Information Services, who provides computer and telecommunications support to all legislative offices.

PUBLICATIONS

The Legislature offers many documents and publications including:

- Official list of Senators and Representatives showing their home addresses and party affiliations;
- Registers containing the Constitution, rules, directory of members and committees;
- Maine Legislature Roster, which includes photos of members, home addresses, party affiliations and seat numbers.

- List of committees and their members;
- Legislative Record, a verbatim account of legislative proceedings and debates published after each session;
- Register of All Bills and Resolves: History and Final Disposition, published at the end of each session;
- Acts and Resolves as Passed by the Legislature, official printing of enactments of each Legislature;
- Weekly Legislative Report, lists bills printed, bills passed, etc.;
- Weekly Hearing Schedule, lists bills to be heard, when, where and by which committee.

Copies of all these publications are available from the Clerk of the House office. The Legislative Document Service also sells publications through the Clerk's office. Information on legislative publications is available through the Library.

LEGISLATORS

SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES are elected in November of even-numbered years for two-year terms. A legislator may not serve more than four consecutive terms in the House or the Senate. Senators are elected from Senatorial districts which are about 4 1/2 times larger than House districts.

Legislators receive a salary, as well as allowances for travel, meals, housing and constituent services. A larger salary is received for the first regular session, than for the second. Per diem salaries are paid for special sessions.

To **QUALIFY** to seek legislative office, an individual must be a U. S. citizen for at least five years, a resident of Maine for at least one year, and a resident of the district he/she is seeking to represent for at least three months immediately preceding the election. A person must be at least 21 years of age to run for the House, and at least 25 years of age to run for the Senate.

LEADERS of the House and Senate receive a higher salary than other members. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House receive 50% above regular compensation. Majority and minority leaders receive 25% above regular compensation, and assistant majority and minority leaders receive 12 1/2% above regular compensation.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

Legislators depend on letters and phone calls to know and understand the feelings of their constituents. Address letters to:

The Honorable John Doe
The Senate
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

The Honorable John Doe
House of Representatives
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

When in session, messages may be left for Legislators at the following toll-free numbers:

Senate
1-800-423-6900

House of Representatives
1-800-423-2900

The hearing impaired may call the TTY line at (207) 287-4469

For year round information contact either:

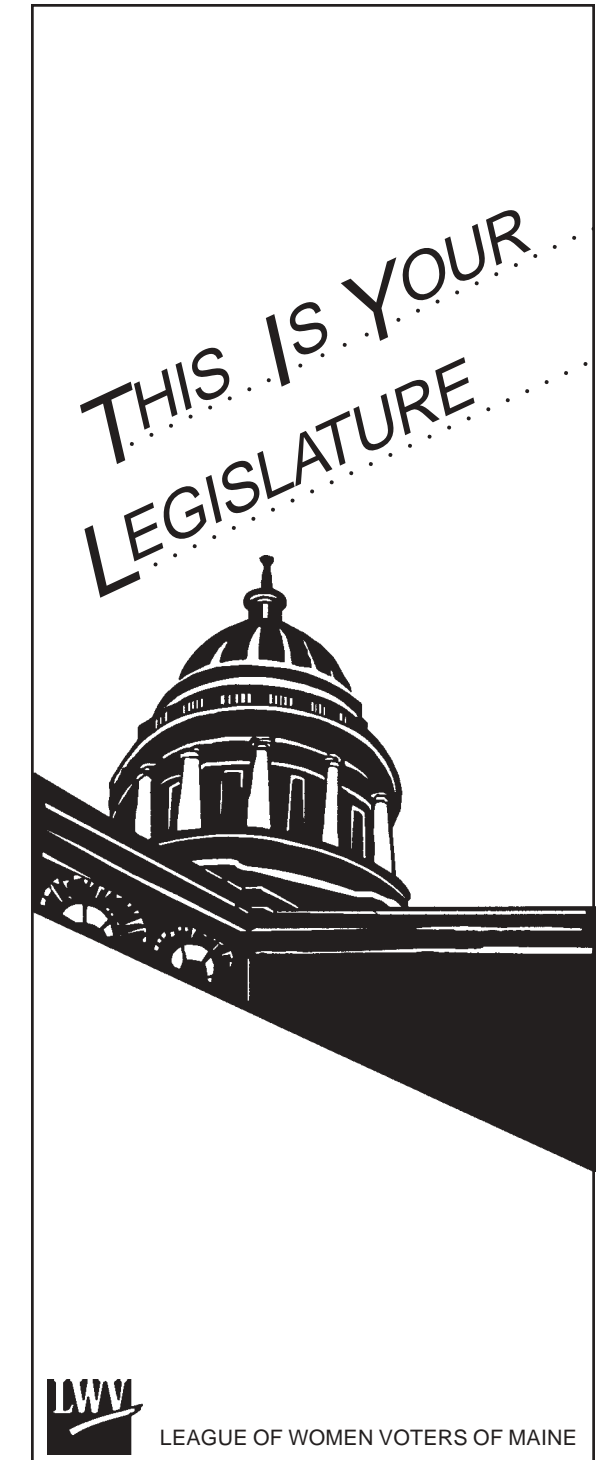
Clerk of the House: 287-1400
Secretary of the Senate: 287-1540

LEGISLATIVE WEBSITE: contains information about members, procedures, and the status of legislation. Text of many legislative publications, bills and amendments are also available online:

www.state.me.us/legis/homepage.htm

Brochures are available on request:
LWV- Maine
P.O. Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863
Tel.: (207) 622-0256

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LEGISLATURE

The Maine Legislature is the law-making branch of the state government. It is made up of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate consists of an odd number of members, not less than 31 nor more than 35. (In 2003 there were 35 Senators.) The House consists of 151 voting members and two nonvoting Tribal Representatives. Senators and Representatives are elected to two-year terms by voters in even-numbered years. Members of the Legislature in either house are limited to four consecutive terms.

The Legislature's powers include the election of the Secretary of State, State Treasurer and Attorney General at first regular sessions, and the election of State Auditor every four years. The Secretary of State, State Treasurer and Attorney General may not serve more than four consecutive terms. The State Auditor is limited to two consecutive terms.

During the Legislature's first session, held in odd-numbered years, from 1500 to 2000 bills are introduced. Traditionally, about one-third of these are enacted. The Legislature's second session, held in even-numbered years, is reserved for bills carried over from the first session and for emergency bills. Generally 300 to 400 bills are considered (including those carried over) and a little more than one-third of these are enacted. Special sessions of the Legislature may be held to address emergency issues.

CALENDAR

First regular sessions are convened on the first Wednesday of December in the even-numbered years. Second regular sessions are convened on the first Wednesday after the first Tuesday of January in the even-numbered years. Special sessions may be called by the Governor on extraordinary occasions, or by a majority of the Legislators of each political party.

Adjournment for the first session is scheduled for the third Wednesday in June; second session for the third Wednesday in April. However, each regular session may be extended up to ten legislative days by a 2/3 vote of each house, with an extra day beyond this to override a veto. The Legislature

does not adjourn until all legislative business has been concluded.

PROCEDURES

Political party caucuses are held prior to the convening of the first regular session to:

- Select majority and minority leaders and assistant leaders;
- Nominate officers of each house;
- Nominate candidates of each party for Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Attorney General and every four years, State Auditor. Each house convenes separately for:
- The Governor to administer oaths of office;
- The election of Speaker, Clerk and Assistant Clerk in the House;
- The election of President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary in the Senate;
- Adoption of rules.

The House and Senate convene jointly for:

- Election of Constitutional State Officers on the first day;
- Inauguration of the Governor in January after his/her election;
- Messages of the Governor.

STANDING COMMITTEES

There are currently 17 Joint Standing Committees, each are made up of three Senators appointed by the President of the Senate, and no more than ten Representatives named by the Speaker of the House. The Standing Committees, organized on the basis of subject matter, are:

- Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;
- Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- Business, Research and Economic Development;
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety;
- Education and Cultural Affairs;
- Health and Human Services;
- Inland Fisheries and Wildlife;
- Insurance and Financial Services;

- Judiciary;
- Labor;
- Legal and Veteran Affairs;
- Marine Resources;
- Natural Resources;
- State and Local Government;
- Taxation;
- Transportation;
- Utilities and Energy.

Standing Committees are charged to:

- Consider bills and resolves which they may propose rewriting or amending;
- Hold public hearings on all bills;
- Report recommendations on bills to the Senate and the House;
- Recommend to the Senate confirmation or denial of gubernatorial appointments;
- Conduct studies between sessions;
- Handle special technical matters of their respective houses.

Joint Select Committees are sometimes appointed by leadership to perform special tasks.

BILLS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS is allowed by any Legislator with up to eight cosponsors, who may be either Senators or Representatives, and one lead cosponsor from the other chamber. Bills may also be introduced by a committee charged with a specific study, or by a specified number of initiative petitioners. Bills may be filed on behalf of the Governor or Chief Justice by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House or another Legislator. Departments of government, citizen groups, etc. may suggest legislation.

Under the "cloture rule," all requests for bill drafting must be filed with the Revisor of Statutes by a cloture date designated by the Legislative Council. Bills must have proper title and facts needed for preparation, and a written statement of intent. Bills affecting revenue or needing appropriation must have a fiscal note indicating the amount of money involved.

BILLS are assigned a Legislative Document (LD) number when they are printed and are usually referred to by this number rather than by title. Revenue-raising bills must originate in the House. After the cloture date, a bill's sponsor must get the approval of the Legislative Council to introduce a bill.

PUBLIC HEARINGS are held by Joint Standing Committees on all bills. Notice of the hearings is printed in newspapers under the Legislative Notices section of the classifieds. Any citizen proponent or opponent of the bill may be heard.

VOTING is done electronically in both the Senate and the House. In both houses, a vote may be "under the hammer", which means that approval is assumed unless an objection is raised before the presiding officer pounds the gavel. A "division" vote is one in which only the total number of votes cast for and against the motion is recorded. A roll call vote, in which each member's name and vote is recorded, is ordered by 1/5 of the members present. A roll call vote is required to override or sustain a Governor's veto.

PASSAGE OF BILLS is usually by a majority vote. However, a 2/3 majority of all members of each house is required for emergency measures. Constitutional Amendments require a 2/3 vote of those present in each house, and must then be submitted to referendum. A 2/3 majority of those present in each house is also required to override a Governor's veto.

The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate must sign all bills, which are then sent to the Governor for his/her signature. The Governor may either sign the bill into law, veto it, or allow it to become law without signing it within 10 days. If the Legislature adjourns before the Governor acts, he/she may return the bill to the next session of the same Legislature or the bill dies.

COPIES OF BILLS and amendments may be obtained in person from the Document Room on the first floor of the Capitol or from your Legislator. You also may obtain copies of bills if you know the Legislative Document (LD) number by calling 287-1408. To learn an LD number or the status of a bill, call the Legislative Information Office, 287-1692. Information about the bills, their content and their status, is also reported on the Legislature's website:

www.state.me.us/legis/homepage.htm