



# 125th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2012

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Legislative Document

No. 1705

H.P. 1257

House of Representatives, December 23, 2011

### **Resolve, To Create the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children**

(EMERGENCY)

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Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Clerk of the House on December 21, 2011. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Heather J.R. Priest'.

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST  
Clerk

Presented by Representative MAKER of Calais.  
Cosponsored by President RAYE of Washington and  
Representatives: BURNS of Whiting, ESPLING of New Gloucester, OLSEN of Phippsburg,  
VOLK of Scarborough, Senators: ALFOND of Cumberland, DIAMOND of Cumberland,  
MASON of Androscoggin, PLOWMAN of Penobscot.

1           **Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not  
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3           **Whereas,** the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children is  
4 established to create and adopt a policy addressing sexual abuse of children; and

5           **Whereas,** the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that  
6 the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next  
7 legislative session; and

8           **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within  
9 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as  
10 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,  
11 therefore, be it

12           **Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved:** That the Task Force on the  
13 Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is  
14 established; and be it further

15           **Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved:** That the task force consists of 12  
16 members appointed as follows:

17           1. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;

18           2. A representative of an organization representing law enforcement, appointed by  
19 the President of the Senate;

20           3. A representative of a statewide professional teachers organization, appointed by  
21 the President of the Senate;

22           4. Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the  
23 House;

24           5. A representative of an organization involved in the prevention of child abuse,  
25 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

26           6. A person who is a victim of sexual abuse, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

27           7. A representative of an organization representing school management, appointed  
28 by the Speaker of the House;

29           8. The Director of the Bureau of Child and Family Services within the Department of  
30 Health and Human Services, or the director's designee;

31           9. The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee; and

32           10. The Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention within the  
33 Department of Health and Human Services, or the director's designee; and be it further

1           **Sec. 3. Compensation. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353,  
2 members of the task force shall serve without compensation and may not be reimbursed  
3 for their expenses; and be it further

4           **Sec. 4. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate  
5 chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the task  
6 force; and be it further

7           **Sec. 5. Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved:** That all  
8 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this  
9 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative  
10 Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members,  
11 the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force. If 30 days or more  
12 after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been  
13 made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority  
14 for the task force to meet and conduct its business; and be it further

15           **Sec. 6. Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall make recommendations for  
16 preventing child sexual abuse. In making those recommendations, the task force shall:

- 17           1. Gather information concerning child sexual abuse throughout the State;
- 18           2. Receive reports and testimony from individuals, state and local agencies,  
19 community-based organizations and other public and private organizations;
- 20           3. Create goals for state policy to prevent child sexual abuse; and
- 21           4. Adopt a policy addressing sexual abuse of children. The policy adopted may  
22 include age-appropriate curricula for students in prekindergarten to grade 5; methods for  
23 increasing teacher, student and parent awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of  
24 children, including warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse;  
25 actions that a child who is a victim of sexual abuse may take to obtain assistance and  
26 intervention; and available counseling options for children affected by sexual abuse; and  
27 be it further

28           **Sec. 7. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the  
29 Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force; and be it  
30 further

31           **Sec. 8. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than November 7, 2012, the task force  
32 shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested  
33 legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over  
34 health and human services matters. That joint standing committee is authorized to  
35 introduce a bill to the First Regular Session of the 126th Legislature related to the subject  
36 matter of the report.

37           **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this  
38 legislation takes effect when approved.

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**SUMMARY**

2           This resolve establishes the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of  
3 Children, which is directed to research issues regarding child sexual abuse in Maine and  
4 to adopt policies to address those issues. The policies may include age-appropriate  
5 curricula for schoolchildren from prekindergarten to grade 5 and methods to increase  
6 teacher, student and parent awareness of the issues regarding child sexual abuse. The  
7 task force is also directed to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the  
8 Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters, and the joint  
9 standing committee is authorized to submit legislation to the First Regular Session of the  
10 126th Legislature based on that report.