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Public Law
124th Legislature
First Regular Session

Chapter 166
H.P. 372 - L.D. 527

**An Act To Require a Referee of a Land
Dispute To Render a Decision within One Year**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 4 MRSA §501, as amended by PL 1977, c. 114, §§10 to 12, is further amended to read:

§ 501. Appointment; fees

In all cases in the Supreme Judicial or in the Superior Court in which the court appoints one or more persons, not exceeding 3, as referees, masters or auditors, to hear the same, their fees and necessary expenses, including stenographic services as determined by the Chief Justice or his the Chief Justice's designee, shall must be paid by the State on presentation of the proper certificate of the clerk of courts for the county in which such case is pending, or by such of the parties, or out of any fund or subject matter of the action, which is in the custody and control of the court, or by apportionment among such sources of payment, as the court shall may direct. The amount thereof shall must be fixed by the court upon the coming in of the report. These referees, masters and auditors shall notify the parties of the time and place of hearing and shall have power to adjourn. Witnesses may be summoned and compelled to attend and may be sworn by the referees, masters or auditors. When there is more than one referee, master or auditor, all must hear, but a majority may report, stating whether all did hear. Their report may be recommitted. They may be discharged and others appointed.

No fee or compensation other than his necessary expenses shall may be paid any Justice of the Supreme Judicial or of the Superior Court for his services as referee, master or auditor, but this provision shall does not apply to an Active Retired Justice.

No per diem fee, other than necessary expenses, shall may be paid any Official Court Reporter for his services in these cases.

A referee appointed to hear a dispute concerning real property must report the referee's decision within one year of appointment by the court unless good cause for extending this period is shown.

Sec. 2. 14 MRSA §1153 is amended to read:

§ 1153. Authority of referees

All the referees must meet and hear the parties; but a majority may make the report, which ~~shall be~~ is as valid as if signed by all, if it appears by the report or certificate of the dissenting referee that all attended and heard the parties. They may allow costs or not to either party, unless special provision is made therefor in the submission, but the court may reduce their compensation. Any referee may swear witnesses.

A referee appointed to hear a dispute concerning real property must report the referee's decision within one year of appointment by the court unless good cause for extending this period is shown.

Effective September 12, 2009