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An Act To Enhance the Concept of Representative Democracy by Ensuring Basic Compensation for Elected Representatives

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

Sec. 1. 3 MRSA §2-B, sub-§2, ¶B, as enacted by PL 1997, c. 506, §1, is amended to read:

B. The recommendations of the commission for all regular and special sessions of the next Legislature concerning: compensation for the Attorney General, the Secretary of State, the Treasurer of State and the State Auditor;

~~(1) Compensation of Legislators and representatives of Indian tribes, including, but not limited to, all payments for: salaries, meals, housing, travel, mileage and all other expenses and allowances; additional service as President of the Senate, as Speaker of the House or as a member of leadership; and for constituent services; and~~

~~(2) Compensation for the Attorney General, the Secretary of State, the Treasurer of State and the State Auditor;~~

Sec. 2. 3 MRSA §2-C is enacted to read:

§ 2-C. Salary plan based on basic needs budget

1. Salary. The Executive Department, State Planning Office shall develop a salary plan for members of the House of Representatives and the Senate sufficient to meet a basic needs budget, which must include, but is not limited to, the following expenditure categories: housing, transportation, child care, health care insurance and out-of-pocket health care expenses, clothing, food, personal care and recreation.

2. Eligibility. The Executive Department, State Planning Office shall determine eligibility for the salary plan for all members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The plan must provide that a member whose total income meets the basic needs budget as developed under subsection 1 is not entitled to a salary for being a member of the Legislature and a member whose total household income falls below the basic needs budget is entitled to a salary up to the level of the basic needs budget for the household of the Legislator. The plan must set payment levels between zero and full salary.

3. Legislation. By January 15th of each even-numbered year, the Executive Department, State Planning Office shall submit legislation to implement the salary plan developed under subsections 1 and 2. In accordance with the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part Third, Section 7, legislation increasing the compensation of members of the House of Representatives or the Senate may not take effect during the existence of the Legislature that enacted it.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Executive Department, State Planning Office to develop a plan that sets the salary for members of the House of Representatives and the Senate at a level that meets a basic needs budget. The State Planning Office shall submit legislation to the Legislature in each even-numbered year to implement the salary plan. A salary plan that increases members' compensation may not apply to the Legislature that enacts it.