



Maine SHRM Government Affairs 125th Legislature Special Session Notice

September 16, 2011

It's time (already!) to plan for the upcoming special session of the legislature. As you likely recall, the second session of the 125th Maine Legislature is not set to convene until January, but as you have also likely noticed, there is a whole lot of Government Affairs going on in between via the executive and judicial branches as well as with special sessions and ongoing legislative work even when we are not in "regular" session. Here are some links to get you thinking along these lines.

Special Session – Reapportionment/Appointments

Tuesday, September 27th is the special session of the 125th Maine legislature, proclamation here:

<http://www.maine.gov/legis/senate/Special%20Session%20Proc.pdf> . Special session notice:

http://www.maine.gov/legis/house/sch_sess.htm The session is to vote on the recommendation of the re-apportionment committee from last month as well as to deal with a number of appointment confirmations:

<http://www.maine.gov/governor/lepage/cabinet/appointments/announced.shtml> (including our own Deb Whitworth to MHRC!).

As you may know, Maine is required to rejigger the US congressional districts by the end of September because our old method of reapportionment would cause it to happen too late for the 2012 election. Maine happens to also be a special state when it comes to the electoral college – we are one of 2 states that can award by district and are not always a winner take all state. A suit led to this court order and thus the haste and special session. If we don't re-apportion, the courts will do it for us. While the democrat-proposed plan is being officially recommended to the Legislature by the committee, the republican-backed plan will also be presented as an alternative. So, a nail-biter until the very end I am sure! Some footnotes:

- There is also a bill in the Maine legislature to change the law;
- We have not yet tackled the re-apportionment of the state leg districts; and
- All this comes as a result of the 2010 census.

Here is a blurb on the recent hearing outcome:

The 8-7 vote was along party lines, with the commission Chair Michael Friedman, an independent, supporting a compromise plan proposed by Democrats.

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) - A bipartisan panel charged with drawing up new boundaries for Maine's two congressional districts has voted in favor of a Democratic plan that makes minimal changes to the present line.

Today's 8-7 vote came after the commission chairman, political independent Michael Friedman, sided with a compromise plan advanced by Democrats.

That plan leaves Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, York and part of Kennebec counties in the 1st District and the rest of Maine in the 2nd.

The Reapportionment Commission faced a Wednesday deadline to submit a plan. The full Legislature will meet Sept. 27 to take up the recommendation.

Lawmakers can accept it or advance a plan of their own, but any plan would need a two-thirds approval. If it fails to do so, the state Supreme Court must act.

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State of Maine information on apportionment: <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/apport/detailed.htm> And WAY more information on the redistricting process in Maine: http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Redistricting_in_Maine

Cloture

If that's not enough, Cloture for the ME legislature is on Sept 30th. This means that all bill requests must be submitted by then for the second session. These will be considered by the Legislative Council to see if they will join those already approved for carry over to be considered in this session. The number of bills considered in second session is much smaller than in first and the requirements for consideration are stricter. You might want to check out the Legislative Council: <http://www.maine.gov/legis/exccdir/Legislative%20Council.htm> . This is where we will first see bills approved for consideration in the second session. I am sure I will be lurking about there as the time approaches!

Effective Date of Bills Passed in the First Session

Just a reminder that *Pursuant to the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part Third, Section 16, the general effective date for nonemergency laws passed in the First Regular Session of the 125th Legislature is **Wednesday, September 28, 2011.*** Emergency bills already took effect. So, don't forget to look at your weapons in the workplace policies pursuant to the passage of PL 393 (formerly LD 35) http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_125th/chappdfs/PUBLIC393.pdf

In related news, Representative Wintle, who was arrested for criminal threatening and related charges, has resigned: <http://www.pressherald.com/news/Wintle-resigns-House-seat.html> . No word on the fate of his seat yet.

Thanks to the Governor for his recent announcement on support for HR to combat domestic violence in the workplace: <http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=Gov+News&id=300272&v=article2011>

I hope you will engage your chapters and fellow HR professionals on all these matters. I really can't overstate the importance of HR voices in the process. Reapportionment will have wide-ranging ramifications that will impact you both personally and professionally for years to come.

Thanks for your ongoing interest and all suggestions are welcome!

We will do our best to continue to update you and support you in having your say.

So it's handy, here is all relevant contact information:

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