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LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY / NOVEMBER 2026

STOP FUNDING AVOIDABLE REWORK.

Public-Dollar Cost of Procedural Rework in Maine Family Courts

A strengthened evidence review, reproducible fiscal model, and performance-budget proposal for the incoming 133rd Maine Legislature.

Fund fact-finding. Measure rework. Stop paying twice.

Protect essential court capacity while making process spending accountable.

No statewide audited waste total is asserted in this briefing.

Justin A. Tahai | Father • Engineer • Author

Independent public-interest advocacy. Not a court filing or a request to decide a pending case.

01 / EXECUTIVE FISCAL BRIEF

A backlog is not a blank check.

The Legislature should require a costed account of preventable family-court rework before treating more processing as proof that more money is the only answer. The objective is not to starve courts. It is to redirect paid time from avoidable correction cycles toward safe, timely decisions and workable orders.

What is established	What remains to be established
York County eFiling began March 30, 2026.[4]	The number of distinct post-rollout filing chains, avoidable reviews and associated paid minutes.
Maine reported 10,004 pending cases in its broad family grouping at Q4 2025.[1]	The current stock, age and composition of delayed original and post-judgment family matters.
The source workload model reproduces about 85,741 direct judicial/clerk hours annually for original and post-judgment matters.[2]	The share of that workload actually avoidable, and which saved hours can be redeployed.

Illustration, not an audit: a 5%–20% net reduction in the modeled direct family workload has a labor-capacity value of about $358,000–$1.434 million a year at the stated rate assumptions.

That range uses a $53.17 clerk-hour planning proxy and an **assumed** $150 judicial-hour value. It is not a finding of waste, an enacted savings amount, or a recommendation to cut payroll. The role-by-role calculation and rate sensitivity appear in Sections 04 and 08.

The legislative ask

Require a 90-day administrative baseline; an independent, stratified rework audit; a costed pilot of early triage and scoped neutral fact development; and milestone-based release of **new discretionary process-improvement funds**. Preserve emergency protection, essential staffing, accessibility and adjudicative independence.

Scope: critical revision of the submitted 13-page report, selected project chronology evidence and specified public sources. This is not a completed audit of the full Tyler mailbox or all case records. Original report assumptions are retained only where labeled. Research checked November 9, 2026; the historical mailbox window remains March 30–November 8, 2026.

02 / WHAT WAS STRENGTHENED

Remove the easy objections.

The submitted report makes a useful capacity argument, but several weaknesses would let an appropriations analyst dismiss its headline conclusions. This edition changes the following points openly rather than silently replacing the source analysis.

Source-report issue	Correction in this edition
A combined family backlog is divided by original/post-judgment case capacity.	Require a matched case-type crosswalk before reporting an actual clearance date. The chart includes juvenile, protection and other categories.
Clerk-only time is converted into complete family-case equivalents.	Separate clerk and judicial capacity. A saved clerk hour does not supply a missing judicial hour.
A budget-workbook amount is described as an appropriation.	Call it a planning proxy unless final enactment and payroll records are verified.
1,400 notices drive the main model despite an earlier 1,228-message search.	Show both counts conditionally. Neither is a deduplicated March 30 family-filing audit.
A rejection-amplification formula and its example use different numerators.	Define total-review amplification separately from extra-review intensity; include abandoned and pending chains.
Institutional spending categories can appear additive when they overlap.	Identify GAL/examination and technology expenses as nested operating categories; disclose dollar-level report inconsistencies.
“10%–30% efficiency” can sound like an empirical effect.	Use explicit scenarios, role-specific bottlenecks, implementation cost and measured redeployment. No predetermined success.

Additional leverage: the budget workbook expressly describes centralized eFiling staff as a way to relieve local clerks and promote consistent standards. That stated purpose gives auditors a concrete outcome to test—not merely a general complaint about technology.[3]

This is a revision of the supplied report, not a certification of its historical conclusions. An identified error in a model does not establish misconduct by any person.

03 / FOLLOW THE PUBLIC DOLLARS

Reconcile spending before calling it waste.

FY2025 presentation	Amount	Treatment
Personal Services	$65,483,190	Component of operations
Other operational expenses	$34,511,509	Component of operations
Judicial Branch operations	$99,994,699	Subtotal, not an additional line
Debt service	$16,022,859	Separate from operations
Civil Legal Services pass-through	$1,300,000	Separate from operations
GALs + psychological examinations	$12,116,558	Already inside operating categories
Technology	$4,556,677	Already inside operating categories

$65,483,190 + $34,511,509 = $99,994,699
$99,994,699 + $16,022,859 + $1,300,000 = $117,317,558

The annual-report cover prints **$117,317,577**; its fiscal graphic prints **$117,317,557**. The displayed component sum is therefore $19 below one total and $1 above the other. Use approximately **$117.318 million** for scale and request a ledger reconciliation. These small differences are not evidence of waste.[1]

Five buckets that must not be mixed

Actual expenditure is money paid. **Authority or appropriation** permits spending. **Avoidable-work value** prices work an audit identifies as preventable. **Recovered capacity** is usable time redirected to other work. **Cash savings** require an actual avoided payment or lawful budget reduction.

Do not multiply the entire Judicial Branch budget by an assumed waste percentage. Criminal courts, facilities, debt, security and unrelated programs are not the denominator for a family-process claim. Do not add a Tyler subset to a statewide rework estimate that already includes it.

Source: annual report, pp. 1 and 3; categories and nesting checked against its expenditure graphic. The published GAL and examination components sum to $12,116,558. [1]

04 / REPRODUCIBLE LABOR INPUTS

Keep judges and clerks separate.

To preserve comparability with the submitted report, this model uses NCSC's **preliminary measured weights** and the filing counts displayed with them. These are historical study inputs—not a current payroll audit, not solely child-related cases, and not the later quality-adjusted staffing standard.[2]

Category	Annual filings	Judicial min.	Clerk min.	Combined h.
Original family	6,507	153	310	7.7167
Post-judgment family	3,890	160	388	9.1333

J = (6,507 × 153 + 3,890 × 160) ÷ 60 = 26,966.183 hours
C = (6,507 × 310 + 3,890 × 388) ÷ 60 = 58,774.833 hours
J + C = 85,741.017 hours across 10,397 modeled filings

Average role requirements are **j = 2.593650 judicial hours** and **c = 5.653057 clerk hours** per modeled filing. Their sum is 8.246707 hours. Using the study's raw annualized minutes instead of rounded weights gives 85,695.783 hours: a 45.233-hour, approximately 0.053% rounding difference.[2]

Clerk-hour value: a transparent proxy, not an invoice

Annual position proxy = $367,488 ÷ 4 = $91,872
Available working time = 216 days × 8 hours = 1,728 hours
rC = $91,872 ÷ 1,728 = $53.166667 per available work hour

The numerator comes from the legislative budget workbook; the working-year assumption comes from NCSC. Neither proves actual compensation paid for any specific transaction. The equivalent division over 2,080 nominal paid hours is $44.17/hour; use a consistent denominator, not whichever produces the larger claim.[2][3]

Judicial rates of $100, $150 and $200/hour below are sensitivity assumptions, not verified Maine compensation rates. The clerk proxy does not add separately counted general overhead.

05 / YORK COUNTY CASE-STUDY AUDIT

March 30 is the starting line.

The official implementation date is **March 30, 2026**. March 30 through November 8 covers 224 calendar dates when both endpoints are included; the elapsed date difference is 223 days. The report date is November 9, but this historical comparison window is not silently extended.[4]

Evidence item	Status and proper use
Earlier Gmail search: 1,228 Tyler messages; 323 rejection-subject, 491 service, 147 entry-confirmation messages.	Prior conversation inventory searched from March 1. Not independently re-counted or envelope-audited in this edition. Subject counts are not unique rejections.
Approximately 1,400 notices in the submitted report.	Author estimate retained as a separate sensitivity input. It is not substituted for the earlier search result or labeled verified.
Envelopes 210756 and 210987: April service-contact rejections.	Project chronology identifies repeated attempts. Native rejection text and the corrected submissions are needed to classify responsibility and avoidability.
Envelope 220333: May 14 FM-218 rejection; 252039 → 252093: July proposed-order correction.	Chronology examples of form/proposed-order rework. They establish audit leads, not that the underlying requirements were unlawful or unnecessary.

Volume calculation: 1,228 ÷ 224 = 5.48 notices/day; 1,400 ÷ 224 = 6.25/day. Those rates apply only if the respective notices all fall inside that exact window. They are not rates of taxpayer labor, court error or child harm.

The unit to reconstruct

Link each logical document to its envelope(s), filing identifier, docket category, first attempt, reviewer action, rejection reason, correction, acceptance and any remaining unresolved status. Preserve the native timestamp, time zone and message ID. A new envelope can be a resubmission of the same document; one envelope can contain several documents.

Case-study source map: submitted report, pp. 2–4; project Master Timeline v11 April/May entries; v12M May 14 supplement; v21 July 25–26 entries. These are secondary chronology anchors, not a completed native-message audit. No private child records are reproduced.

06 / AUDIT METHOD

Count human work—not notification noise.

Classification	What the auditor must test
Necessary safeguard	Service, notice, confidentiality, jurisdiction or safety function genuinely required; no waste presumed.
Preventable filer defect	Could clear instructions, preflight checks or assistance have prevented the error without removing the safeguard?
System/vendor defect	Technical limitation, failed validation, outage or support failure; link to tickets and actual staff actions.
Court-process inconsistency	Serial new requirements or conflicting guidance on unchanged facts; assess against the rule and prior instructions.
Indeterminate / mixed	Preserve disputed attribution. Do not count every contested event as avoidable.

Review amplification = total human processing reviews ÷ logical filings
Extra-review intensity = avoidable extra reviews ÷ logical filings
First-pass acceptance = first-pass accepted documents ÷ eligible first submissions

If 100 logical filings require 250 reviews, total-review amplification is **2.5**. If one review per filing is an appropriate benchmark, the 150 extra reviews produce **1.5** extra reviews per filing. They are different statistics. Some matters legitimately require more than one review; the benchmark must reflect that.

Count automated submission/service/entry messages as **zero additional clerk minutes** unless evidence identifies a corresponding human task. Include abandoned, returned and still-pending filings in the dataset; studying only accepted filings hides the most serious access failures.

Avoid blaming the wrong cause

A pre/post March 30 comparison is descriptive, not automatically causal. Adjust for case type, representation, filing volume, complexity, staff changes and rollout learning. Use matched comparison courts or staggered rollout periods where feasible. One unusually active case cannot establish the statewide error rate.

Audit design: independently code a stratified sample, blind reviewers to advocacy positions where practicable, double-code a subset, report agreement and uncertainty, then apply sampling weights. These are proposed methods, not findings.

07 / TYLER COST SENSITIVITY

Price only the underlying rework.

Clerk rework hours = N × d × a × m ÷ 60
Clerk work value = hours × $53.166667

N = message count used for illustration; **d** = hypothesized processing-event equivalents per message; **a** = hypothesized avoidable share; **m** = hypothesized public clerk minutes per avoidable event. The parameters have not been estimated from a deduplicated corpus. This is an order-of-magnitude exercise, not a measured confidence interval.

Scenario	d / a / m	At N = 1,228	At N = 1,400
Low	30% / 25% / 10	15.35 h $816	17.50 h $930
Middle	50% / 50% / 20	102.33 h $5,441	116.67 h $6,203
High	70% / 75% / 30	322.35 h $17,138	367.50 h $19,539

Middle, 1,228 notices: 1,228 × .50 × .50 × 20 ÷ 60 = 102.333 h
102.333 × $53.166667 = $5,440.72

Do not add the two columns. They are alternative corpus assumptions. Do not multiply 323 rejection-subject messages by a standard review time as though each were an independent rejected envelope. Do not annualize one account's experience and multiply it by statewide case counts.

Why the source report's case-equivalent shortcut is unsafe

The source divides 116.67 clerk hours by 8.247 combined judicial/clerk hours and obtains about 14 case equivalents. That is an accounting comparison, not throughput. The clerk-specific comparison is 116.67 ÷ 5.653057 = **20.64 clerk-work equivalents**; without available judicial time, the resulting additional completed cases may still be zero.

Excluded here: separately measured judicial review, hearings, IT support, vendor invoices and private-party costs. Exclusions do not authorize assuming those costs occurred. Add them only through a non-overlapping event ledger.

08 / STATEWIDE FISCAL SENSITIVITY

A budget question worth measuring.

Let **e** be a hypothetical net reduction in direct work in **each** role after accounting for the work required by the replacement process. This extends the source report with dollar values while preserving the distinction between a scenario and an audit. Use actual measured role-specific effects when available.

Value(e) = e × [(26,966.183 × rJ) + (58,774.833 × rC)]
At rJ = $150 and rC = $53.166667: value(e) = e × $7,169,789.47

Net gain	Judicial h.	Clerk h.	Capacity value at $150 / $53.17
5%	1,348.31	2,938.74	$358,489
10%	2,696.62	5,877.48	$716,979
20%	5,393.24	11,754.97	$1,433,958

Assumed judicial rate	5% net gain	10% net gain	20% net gain
$100/hour	$291,074	$582,148	$1,164,296
$150/hour	$358,489	$716,979	$1,433,958
$200/hour	$425,905	$851,810	$1,703,620

The clerk-only values are $156,243, $312,486 and $624,972. Those are included in—not additional to—the total values above. Wage/benefit verification can replace both proxy rates without changing the formulas.

No measured net efficiency gain means no established savings claim. The tables show what a successful reform could be worth—not what Maine has already wasted.

These totals concern a historical original/post-judgment workload portfolio, including matters without children. A child-focused intervention must use its actual eligible share and effect. Annualized values are not line items that can automatically be removed from the budget.

09 / BACKLOG FACT CHECK

Pending is not the same as overdue.

Maine's family-pending chart groups original and post-judgment matters with juvenile, protective-custody, protection-from-abuse and protection-from-harassment cases. A pending stock includes legitimate work in progress. An "excess above 2019" is an operational benchmark—not a count of every wrongfully delayed case.[1]

Published measure	Calculation / result
Q3 2022 displayed peak	11,353 pending
Q4 2025 displayed stock	10,004 pending
Printed 2019 benchmark	9,263
Excess above printed benchmark	Peak: 2,090; Q4 2025: 741
Displayed 2019 quarters	9,169; 9,221; 9,409; 9,418
Mean of displayed quarters	37,217 ÷ 4 = 9,304.25, not 9,263
Excess above recomputed mean	Peak: 2,048.75; Q4 2025: 699.75

Observed stock decline = 11,353 − 10,004 = 1,349 cases
Descriptive average decline = 1,349 ÷ 3.25 = 415.077 cases/year

The 415 figure is a **net change in a combined pending stock**, not a disposition count, current clearance rate or independently proven productivity improvement. It may reflect incoming volume, closures, reopening, case coding and other changes. It must not be added to a reform effect that already includes the same historical gains.

What the Legislature should require instead

Publish, by case type and region, new filings, reopened matters, dispositions, transfers, corrections and pending age bands. Report median and 90th-percentile time to first substantive action and interim order. Track legally required timelines separately from discretionary administrative delays.

No November 2026 pending-stock figure is verified in this briefing. The original report's Q4 2025 table is retained as a historical baseline, not relabeled as today's backlog. [1]

10 / REPAIRED COUNTERFACTUAL

Show a capacity test—not a promised date.

Extra annual dispositions ≤ min(HJ ÷ j, HC ÷ c, other capacity limits)
Realized extra capacity = redeployment factor ρ × that bottleneck
Next backlog = max(0, current backlog + arrivals − dispositions)

The minimum matters: usable clerk capacity cannot replace missing hearing time, judicial review, evaluator capacity or service. If both roles improve proportionally by e, the historical same-mix illustration supplies at most e × 10,397 additional work-equivalents. A 50% redeployment assumption reduces that ceiling by half.

Net gain in both roles	At ρ = 50%: work-equivalents/year	Years for 1,000 matched excess matters*
5%	259.93	3.85
10%	519.85	1.92
20%	1,039.70	0.96

*Assumes current capacity already keeps pace with new incoming work, a constant excess cohort with the same case mix, immediate full implementation, and no further constraint. These are scenarios, not a measured Maine clearance forecast.

What happened to the original “cleared years ago” dates?

The source formula is reproducible: 2,090 ÷ [415.077 + (10,397 × e)]. At e = 10%, 20% and 30%, it gives 1.437, 0.838 and 0.591 years. Counting from September 30, 2022 yields approximately March 2024, August 2023 and May 2023.

Do not present those dates as findings. The numerator includes categories absent from the workload denominator; savings are assumed; baseline improvement may overlap the intervention; capacity is not instantly fungible; and a rollout has cost and ramp-up time. A 2026 technology change also cannot be credited with eliminating a 2022 backlog.

The defensible conclusion: modest verified gains could matter materially. The evidence does not establish when Maine “would have” cleared its backlog.

11 / REPLACEMENT WORKFLOW

Investigate early. Decide fairly. Implement.

“Immediate neutral investigation” should mean prompt, proportionate fact development in eligible disputes—not mandatory full custody evaluations for every family and not pressure to settle where safety requires adjudication. The following is a proposed workflow, not a proven savings intervention.

Stage	Operational change	Protection retained
Intake	Preflight validation and one consolidated notice of all reasonably discoverable defects.	Confidentiality, service, accessibility and a clear cure route.
Early triage	Identify safety concerns, contested material facts, urgent child needs and missing information.	Judicial/specialist escalation for abuse, coercion, neglect and urgent risk.
Scoped neutral work	Written question, qualified independent professional, records requested once, bounded deadline and fee.	Conflict screening; parties can inspect and challenge factual material as legally appropriate.
Focused decision	Early conference, clear interim obligations, specific findings and hearing on material disputes.	Judge decides; neutrals do not replace adjudication or independent review.
Implementation	Named responsibilities, workable dates, provider/logistics protocols and scheduled review where needed.	Enforcement path and safeguards against coerced or unsafe contact.

Separate clinical treatment from forensic evaluation. A reunification provider does not automatically become an independent custody investigator. Avoid blanket rules that treat a child’s statements, either parent’s allegations or a diagnosis as dispositive without appropriate fact-finding.

Design for the repeat case, not just the first order

Track whether unresolved logistics, unclear obligations or inaccessible records generate repeat motions. Measure implementation and re-litigation after 90 days and 12 months. An apparent reduction in filings is not success if families abandon valid claims, cannot obtain a hearing or remain exposed to harm.

This proposal is supported by the logic of differentiated case management; its Maine effect must be evaluated. No claim is made that investigation alone would have changed the outcome of the author’s disputed proceedings.

12 / PILOT ECONOMICS

Make the alternative pass its own test.

Illustrative pilot: **200 eligible matters**; 80 receive a 10-hour scoped specialist assessment. These are planning assumptions, not actual vendor quotes. A limited assessment is not a full custody evaluation. Additional safety, interpretation or expert work must be separately budgeted.

Incremental pilot input	Calculation	Cost
Clerk triage / coordination	200 × 0.25 h × $53.166667	$2,658
Scoped neutral assessment	80 × 10 h × $100	$80,000
Early judicial review	200 × 0.25 h × $150	$7,500
Workflow / evaluation labor	100 h × $100	$10,000
Interpretation / travel reserve	Assumption	$5,000
Data / implementation reserve	Assumption	$5,000
Total planning budget		**$110,158**

One avoided cycle = 0.5 judicial h × $150 + 1.5 clerk h × $53.166667
= $154.75 in modeled public labor capacity
200 matters × $154.75 = $30,950 per average cycle avoided

At those assumptions, $110,158.33 ÷ $30,950 = **3.56 cycles avoided per matter** to match pilot spending with labor-capacity value. That is roughly 712 cycles across the pilot, before valuing other benefits. It is not a cash break-even point if the recovered hours are salaried time rather than avoided payments.

Use a phased or matched comparison design; control for case mix, representation and safety flags. Publish cost, delays, repeat proceedings, adverse events and participant experience. Do not count both the gross avoided cycles here and the “net efficiency” in Section 08 without reconciling them.

Decision rule: continue only if the pilot improves safety/access and produces credible operational value. If full investigation adds more work than it prevents, narrow the eligibility or change the model rather than declaring success.

13 / THE BUDGET LEVER

Attach conditions to process money.

The strongest proposal is not an indiscriminate court cut. It is a funded obligation to measure and repair administrative friction, paired with enforceable conditions on **new discretionary modernization spending**. Essential hearings, protective orders, staffing, accessibility and cybersecurity should not become hostages to a performance dispute.

Budget control	Concrete demand
A defined administrative cost center	Track family-process intake, rework, scheduling and implementation support by role and program; show funding source and actual outlay.
Milestone-based modernization releases	Release designated incremental funds against a baseline, exportable event data, an independent review and accepted remediation—not raw filing volume.
Vendor deliverable acceptance	Require defect testing, usable support links, rejection-reason reporting, audit-log access and documented performance before accepting applicable new deliverables.
Corrective plan and public hearing	Unmet targets trigger a written explanation, revised milestones and legislative review—not silent rollover or automatic cuts to child-safety services.
No shifting costs onto families	Report private-party time, fees, travel and abandonment separately so reduced public touches cannot hide a larger burden on litigants.

A historical Tyler amendment authorizes up to $525,000 for custom work, with rates capped at $210/hour, plus $75,000 for account-management services. These are ceilings, not proof of actual payment or waste; the shown contract end date was September 30, 2026. Obtain the current agreement and invoices before making a current-contract claim.[5]

The legislative workbook also identifies six centralized eFiling positions and a $615,725 FY2025–26 total. Verify enactment, filled positions and actual expenditures; then test whether the promised relief to local clerks and consistency materialized.[3]

OPEGA/committee-authorized evaluation and contractor review are possible oversight routes under Title 3. Counsel should confirm jurisdiction, scope and separation-of-powers limits. Operational accountability is not appellate review.[6]

14 / MODEL BUDGET LANGUAGE

Give legislators something to introduce.

Drafting concept for legislative counsel—not enacted law, a legal opinion, a valid appropriation by itself or a finding against any judge.

Section A. Family Court Process Cost and Rework Report

The Judicial Branch shall provide the Legislature's committees with jurisdiction over appropriations and judicial administration a de-identified baseline of family-case processing, eFiling rework, time to substantive action, and costs by personnel role. Definitions, exclusions, data quality and reconciliation methods shall accompany the report. No finding on the merits of an individual case is required.

Section B. Independent validation and data access

Within available appropriations or a separately specified appropriation, an independent evaluator selected through a lawful process shall validate transaction counts, sample avoidability, test time estimates and identify opportunities for improvement. Protected information shall remain protected; public results shall be aggregated. Contract terms shall preserve access to relevant administrative data and audit logs.

Section C. Conditions on designated incremental funds

A separately identified portion of new discretionary process-improvement funding shall be released in stages upon certification of specified deliverables: a baseline, consistent defect taxonomy, accessible correction process, accepted remediation and an independently evaluated pilot. The final bill must specify the amount, release authority, review criteria, cure procedure and any lawful reallocation authority.

Section D. Essential-services and independence protection

Nothing in this provision shall condition an individual ruling, alter the burden of proof, restrict emergency judicial relief, require disclosure of protected deliberations or withhold resources essential to safety, access or constitutional functions. A missed administrative target shall not dictate a result in a pending case.

Section E. Corrective review; no automatic success claim

When a milestone is missed, the responsible administrative authority shall explain the shortfall, supply a corrective schedule and participate in a public oversight hearing as lawfully required. Pilot expansion shall depend on validated operational and safety outcomes, not merely fewer filings or greater settlement rates.

> **The appropriation should purchase measurable access and capacity—not an unexamined continuation of the same process.**

15 / DEADLINES AND SCORECARD

Require a date, an owner and a denominator.

After enactment*	Deliverable	Accountable owner
30 days	Preserve event logs; identify data custodian, definitions and extraction gaps.	Judicial administration + vendor
60 days	Publish matched case-type baseline and independent audit protocol.	Judicial administration + evaluator
90 days	Deliver rejection/rework cost baseline and prioritized remediation plan.	Evaluator + designated administrator
180 days	Report pilot implementation, early results and safety/access exceptions.	Pilot lead + independent evaluator
365 days	Publish actual cost, role-hours redeployed, repeat litigation and evaluation.	Administrator + oversight committees

*Proposed administrative milestones; not current legal deadlines and not promises about individual cases.

Metric	Denominator / anti-gaming rule
First-pass acceptance	Eligible first submissions; disclose confidentiality/safety exclusions.
Avoidable reviews per filing	All logical filings, including abandoned and unresolved chains.
Time to docket and substantive action	Median, 90th percentile and age bands; include right-censored pending filings.
Role-hours actually redeployed	Audited work released and usable in the constrained role; do not count nominal hours twice.
Repeat proceedings / implementation	90-day and 12-month follow-up; distinguish new facts from preventable repeat disputes.
Safety, access and burden	Adverse events, abandoned valid claims, accessibility, interpretation and private-party cost.

Set numerical improvement targets **after** the baseline, with a public rationale. Report numerator, denominator, case mix, exclusions and uncertainty for every rate. A target that can be met by refusing more filings or discouraging protective applications is a defective target.

16 / RECORDS REQUEST PACKAGE

Ask for the records that price the problem.

To Judicial Branch administration and the relevant procurement/data custodians: Please preserve and provide the following existing administrative records, or identify their custodian and an available export. For any information requiring a new compilation, identify feasibility, cost and the approval process. No confidential child records or judicial deliberations are requested.[7]

Record group	Requested fields / documents
York rollout transactions	March 30–November 8, 2026, with a comparable pre-rollout window: envelope and document IDs, masked docket/case type, timestamps, action, reviewer role, rejection codes, resubmission links, acceptance and unresolved status.
Human effort	Existing processing-time studies, task logs, staffing rosters, reviewer/support assignments, help-desk tickets and available workload estimates. Distinguish touch time from queue time.
Budget and payroll	Enacted appropriations, position funding, filled/vacant status, actual Personal Services and benefit costs, overtime and contractor payments for the relevant cost centers.
Vendor accountability	Master contract, current extensions/amendments, work orders, hourly rates, actual invoices, deliverable acceptance, service levels, incident logs, credits and remediation.
Family-case flow	By region and exact case category: new/reopened filings, dispositions, transfers, pending stock, age bands, continuances, hearing durations and interim-order timing.
Policy and changes	Intake checklists, mandatory forms, preflight validation, rejection instructions, support-link maintenance, training and rule/policy change dates.

Please provide machine-readable CSV/JSON where available; preserve original field definitions and time zones. If a field is not collected, say so rather than substituting an undocumented estimate. Segregate exempt material, state the applicable basis and release any disclosable remainder under the governing process.

Send public-information and legislative-routing requests through the appropriate administrative channel. Do not assume a general FOAA request overrides court confidentiality rules or that the agency must create a nonexistent analysis.[7][8]

17 / ANSWERS TO PREDICTABLE OBJECTIONS

Make the case difficult to dismiss.

Objection	Evidence-based response
“The courts are understaffed.”	That is consistent with the NCSC study. Scarcity strengthens the case for eliminating preventable work; it does not justify cutting the core capacity needed to protect families.
“Rejections enforce necessary rules.”	Some do. Audit the safeguard separately from the mechanism. A valid requirement can still be implemented through better validation or one complete correction notice.
“These are only automated emails.”	Correct. The claim must concern underlying human actions, not the marginal cost of generating messages. The proposed audit expressly excludes notification-only labor.
“One litigant is not representative.”	Correct. The York chronology is a traceable case study and source of hypotheses. Statewide estimates require an independent, stratified sample and relevant denominators.
“The model invents savings.”	Its scenarios are labeled. No audited statewide waste total is asserted. Actual compensation, net work reduction and redeployment must be measured before claiming savings.
“Early neutral work will cost more.”	It may. The pilot budget and break-even test expose that risk. Narrow eligibility, compare outcomes and stop or redesign an unsuccessful intervention.
“Legislators cannot dictate judgments.”	This proposal does not ask them to. It addresses appropriations, administrative records, vendor delivery and process performance; case merits remain with the courts.

A staffing shortage is a reason to protect productive court time. It is not a reason to stop asking what consumes it.

Do not use this public brief to assert that disputed allegations in the author’s cases were adjudicated in his favor. Adverse findings and party-caused delays must be considered in any case-level causal audit. No present court order is reinterpreted here.

18 / CALCULATION AND VERIFICATION REGISTER

Every headline has an audit trail.

Calculation	Reproducible result
Original combined weight	(153 + 310) ÷ 60 = 7.716667 h
Post-judgment combined weight	(160 + 388) ÷ 60 = 9.133333 h
Historical weighted average	85,741.016667 ÷ 10,397 = 8.246707 h
10% judicial capacity value	2,696.618333 × $150 = $404,492.75
10% clerk capacity value	5,877.483333 × $53.166667 = $312,486.20
10% combined capacity value	$404,492.75 + $312,486.20 = $716,978.95
10% at 50% redeployment	min(2,696.618 ÷ 2.593650, 5,877.483 ÷ 5.653057) × .5 = 519.85 work-equivalents/year
Historical printed-baseline excess	10,004 − 9,263 = 741; 741 ÷ 9,263 = 8.00%
Recomputed-baseline excess	10,004 − 9,304.25 = 699.75; 699.75 ÷ 9,304.25 = 7.52%

Unverified inputs that must not disappear in publication

The exact post-March-30 notice universe; distinct envelopes and logical filings; avoidability rates; actual handling time; current compensation; the current family backlog by matching case category; enacted status of cited budget initiatives; current Tyler contract terms and payments; and the measured effect of the proposed workflow.

Source-derived / new analysis / proposed policy

Public expenditure and workload inputs are source-derived. Recalculations, bottleneck corrections, dollar sensitivity and the pilot budget are this edition's analysis. Milestones, draft budget language, sampling design and operational targets are proposals. None is presented as an existing legal obligation or a completed audit.

Rounding: computations use unrounded values; displayed totals generally round to the nearest dollar or two decimals. Scenarios are not statistical confidence bounds. Public-source checks: November 9, 2026.

19 / SOURCES AND EVIDENCE STATUS

Source notes • public data

[1] Maine Judicial Branch, 2025 Annual Report

pp. 1, 3–4: expenditure presentation and 2019–2025 pending-case series. The series is a broad family grouping, not exclusively original/post-judgment matters. Figures describe FY2025 or Q4 2025, not a verified November 2026 stock.

Open authoritative source

[2] NCSC, Maine Judge and Clerk's Office Staff Workload Assessment, May 2023

pp. 4–5, 12–16: incoming-work staffing need, 2020–2022 filing averages, working-year assumptions, and preliminary measured case weights. The report also contains later quality adjustments; this briefing explicitly uses the preliminary weights to reproduce the submitted analysis.

Open authoritative source

[3] Maine legislative Judicial Department budget workbook, document 11658

PDF pp. 51–52, printed pp. 40–41: initiatives 2380 and 2381. Four assistant clerks: FY2025–26 Personal Services $367,488. Five eFiling specialists and one supervisor: $608,525 Personal Services and $7,200 All Other. This workbook is not treated here as proof of final enactment or actual payroll expenditure.

Open authoritative source

[4] Maine Judicial Branch, York County eCourts implementation notice, March 23, 2026

Confirms March 30, 2026 implementation for all Region 1 case types and the distinction between mandatory filers and certain self-represented litigants.

Open authoritative source

[U1] Submitted report

Public-Dollar Cost of Procedural Rework in Maine Family Courts, supplied PDF, 13 pages. Its structure, historical numerical inputs and scenarios were reviewed. Section 02 identifies substantive changes; the original report is not described as an independent audit.

20 / SOURCES AND EVIDENCE STATUS

Source notes • oversight

[5] Maine procurement justification, Tyler Technologies amendment, 2024

pp. 1–2: $600,000 amendment; custom-development ceiling $525,000; rate cap $210/hour; technical-account-manager component $75,000. Authority/ceiling is not proof of payment. The displayed previous/new end date is September 30, 2026; this is historical evidence, not a verified current contract.

Open authoritative source

[6] Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, sections 991–992

OPEGA's program-evaluation and authorized contractor-examination framework. Any proposed judicial-administration review must be scoped with legislative counsel and judicial independence/confidentiality protections; this briefing does not assert unlimited power to inspect adjudicative deliberations.

Open authoritative source

[7] Maine Judicial Branch Administrative Order JB-05-20 (A. 8-25)

Effective August 14, 2025. Public-information/confidentiality framework, including aggregate information and protected judicial working papers. Requests below seek administrative transactions and de-identified data, not protected deliberations.

Open authoritative source

[8] Maine Judicial Branch official contact page

Identifies info@courts.maine.gov for general inquiries and barbara.cardone@courts.maine.gov for media and legislative-related requests. Used for policy routing, not docket filing.

Open authoritative source

[E1] Project chronology anchors

Master Timeline v11 (May 12, 2026), April 25/27 service-contact entries; v12M (May 14, 2026), envelope 220333 and FM-218 correction; Master Timeline v21 (July 27, 2026), entries V21-015/016 concerning envelopes 252039/252093. These are source-navigation records; underlying notices, filings and official docket records control.

Public distribution note

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