November 24, 2026

To the Members of the Maine House of Representatives and Maine Senate

Maine State Legislature

State House

Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Legislators:

The Maine judicial branch has forfeited its legitimacy. It has systematically failed to uphold the law, breached the oaths of office its members swear to support the Constitutions of the United States and of Maine and to faithfully discharge their duties, and has become an engine that continues to harm children and families—while operating inside a financial architecture that rewards disruption far more precisely than it rewards preservation. You have the constitutional power and the duty to act. At minimum, initiate impeachment or address proceedings against every judicial officer for misdemeanor in office. Preferable is the abolition of the judicial branch as presently constituted, which will require the constitutional amendment process that only you can begin.

Article VI of the Maine Constitution vests the judicial power in the Supreme Judicial Court and such other courts as you establish. Article VI, Section 4 provides that judicial officers hold office for seven-year terms unless sooner removed by impeachment or by address of both branches of the Legislature to the executive. Article IX, Section 5 makes every civil officer removable by impeachment for "misdemeanor in office"—a standard encompassing willful malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance—and authorizes removal by the Governor upon address of both houses after the causes are stated, the officer is served, and a hearing is afforded. The House holds the sole power of impeachment; the Senate tries the charges and convicts by two-thirds. These mechanisms exist precisely for the circumstances now before you.

The evidence of systemic failure is public and damning. Maine's child-welfare and family-court systems have operated as an outlier against national trends. Federal data and reporting show the state removed children into foster care at rates far higher than most other states while the national foster-care population declined; removal rates driven heavily by allegations of neglect (often poverty-related) rather than clear abuse. A federal audit of Maine Department of Health and Human Services practice found deviations from required policy in 94 of 100 sampled cases. The state's own Child Welfare Ombudsman has repeatedly documented substantial issues in investigations and reunification decisions. Court backlogs and attorney shortages for parents have delayed reunification and prolonged children's time in state custody. Documented failures include investigations closed shortly before a toddler died of hypothermia, and Supreme Judicial Court decisions acknowledging unfair terminations for lack of required services.

These failures do not occur in a vacuum. They occur inside an elaborate federal and state financial architecture that monetizes family disruption with mathematical precision while offering no corresponding reward for successful biological-family preservation.

Under Title IV-D and 42 U.S.C. § 658a, the federal government financially incentivizes the establishment and enforcement of child-support obligations, the collection of arrearages, and the cost-effectiveness of enforcement. Maine's own Legislature expressly incorporated the Judicial Branch into that enforcement apparatus through 19-A M.R.S. § 2108, which requires the judicial branch and the department to provide Title IV-D child-support enforcement services. Under Title IV-E, qualifying foster-care placements generate federal

reimbursement. Under 42 U.S.C. § 673b, additional federal incentive payments are calculated using fixed statutory amounts for outcomes above established baselines: $4,000 for foster-child guardianship, $5,000 for foster-child adoption, $7,500 for qualifying adoption or guardianship of children aged 9 through 13, and $10,000 for those aged 14 and older. On September 25, 2026, Maine DHHS received a federal award of $345,000 under the Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments Program, Award No. 2601MEAIPP.

These are not conjectural arrangements. They are federally codified formulas and publicly documented appropriations. Where, within these particular incentive calculations, is the corresponding monetary reward for successfully preserving a biological family? Where is the financial performance metric for preventing unnecessary parental deprivation? Where is the accounting for generational psychological injury? Federal law separately provides for prevention services and requires reasonable efforts toward safe family preservation and reunification, subject to specified exceptions. The Legislature must ascertain whether Maine's implementation and allocation of resources actually fulfill those obligations—or whether the system has become financially better equipped to administer disruption than to prevent it.

The institutional priorities become clearer still when measured against the treatment of elementary human compassion. On March 14, 2023, under the administrative leadership of Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill, the Maine Judicial Branch formally submitted testimony opposing LD 888, legislation intended to facilitate the use of specially trained courthouse facility dogs to assist vulnerable witnesses, including traumatized children. The legislation died on April 25, 2023. Apparently, the institutions of Maine government can accommodate extraordinarily elaborate financial formulations for child-support enforcement, foster-care reimbursement, adoption, guardianship, compulsory services, and administrative expenditures. Yet establishing a straightforward mechanism by which a traumatized child might receive the comforting presence of a trained dog during judicial proceedings was an undertaking of apparently insurmountable legislative and procedural complexity.

A dog does not submit an invoice for listening to a frightened child. A dog does not demand a retainer. A dog does not require a scheduling conference before demonstrating compassion. A dog does not need a postgraduate doctorate to recognize human suffering. What manner of institution has the Legislature permitted to develop when the financial mechanisms surrounding family disruption are codified with mathematical precision, but the provision of elementary human compassion to traumatized children remains subject to procedural impediments?

Chief Justice Stanfill should be required to publicly explain the Judicial Branch's opposition to that legislation, identify the accommodations subsequently granted or denied, and demonstrate what alternative measures have actually been implemented to mitigate the psychological burdens imposed upon vulnerable children participating in judicial proceedings.

The Legislature must further investigate every applicable funding stream, reimbursement arrangement, cooperative agreement, performance incentive, and expenditure associated with these institutions. Follow the money. Then follow the children. Compare the institutional financial outcomes with the human outcomes. Determine, through independent investigation, whether the institutions entrusted with protecting Maine's children have become financially better equipped to administer family disruption than to prevent it.

Children are human beings. Not revenue-generating administrative units. Stop treating them as such.

Abolition or wholesale removal is the proportionate response. Incremental reforms and internal judicial processes have not stopped the pattern. Begin impeachment inquiries or address proceedings immediately against all judicial officers for their role in this systemic failure—the nonfeasance and malfeasance of operating a system that rewards separation and enforcement more reliably than it rewards family preservation, while

failing the children it claims to protect. Concurrently, introduce and advance a constitutional amendment that would abolish the judicial branch as presently constituted and establish a new structure accountable to the people, with strict limits on intervention in family life, mandatory preference for family preservation where safety permits, full transparency on all related funding streams, and removal mechanisms that do not leave judges judging themselves.

The harm continues daily. You cannot claim ignorance. The reports, audits, incentive formulas, specific awards, and legislative record are public. Failure to exercise your removal and amendment powers now is itself a dereliction.

Demand accountability. Impeach or remove every judicial officer who has participated in or acquiesced to this failure. Or abolish the branch and build one that actually upholds the law and protects, rather than monetizes the disruption of, Maine families and children.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Justin A. Tahai

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