

Workforce Development Bills

Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee

First Session, 129th Legislature

Enacted Bills

- LD 138, “An Act Regarding the Maine Coworking Development Fund”
- LD 440 “An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine’s Future Scholarship Program”
- LD 681, “An Act to Amend the Maine Dental Loan Education Program”
- LD 1056, “An Act To Update and Amend the Finance Authority of Maine Act”
- LD 1217, “An Act to Clarify the Oversight of the Family Development Account Program”
- LD 1240, “An Act To Provide Career and Technical Training Options for Electricians”
- LD 1519, “An Act Concerning the Establishment of Benefit Corporations”
- LD 1601, “An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Educators for Maine Program”
- LD 1629, “An Act Regarding Future Evaluations of the Pine Tree Development Zone Program”
- LD 1685, “An Act To Facilitate Entry of Immigrants into the Workforce”

Bills Carried Over

- LD 509, “An Act to Increase the Minimum Grant Amount Under the Maine State Grant Program”
- LD 647, “An Act to Attract, Educate and Retain New State Residents to Strengthen the Workforce”
- LD 772, “An Act to Encourage Continued Learning”
- LD 799, “An Act to Create the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program”
- LD 814, “An Act To Strengthen Maine’s Economy through Research and Innovation led by the University of Maine System”
- LD 1051 “An Act to Create the Family First Employer Program”
- LD 1193, “Resolve, Directing the Maine Community College System To Evaluate the Need To Expand Workforce Training Options in Waldo County”
- LD 1481, “An Act to Establish the Big Moose Mountain Regional Development Authority”
- LD 1584, “An Act To Attract, Build and Retain an Early Childhood Education Workforce through Increased Training, Education and Career Pathways”
- LD 1821, “Resolve, To Address the Population Shortage in Rural Maine”
- LD 1841, “Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation To Create a Working Group To Study Barriers to Credentialing”

Bills Held by Governor

- LD 1342, “An Act to Establish the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute”

BILL DETAILS

Enacted Bills

LD 138, “An Act Regarding the Maine Coworking Development Fund”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 507, directs the Maine Coworking Development Fund, the Department of Economic and Community Development to use a competitive bid process to provide funds from the Maine Coworking Development Fund for the development of collaborative workspaces. It directs the department to, beginning February 1, 2020, annually provide a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over innovation, development, economic advancement and business matters regarding the program.

LD 440 “An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine’s Future Scholarship Program”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 510, provides one-time General Fund appropriations of \$400,000 per year in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 for the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Fund within the Finance Authority of Maine. The law also requires the State Controller to transfer \$400,000 at the close of fiscal year 2019-20 and \$400,000 at the close of fiscal year 2020-21 from available balances in Other Special Revenue Funds accounts within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation to the General Fund unappropriated surplus. The law requires the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation to determine from which accounts the funds will be transferred so that the sum equals \$400,000 in fiscal year 2019-20 and \$400,000 in fiscal year 2020-21 and to notify the State Controller and the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs of the amounts to be transferred from each account on or before June 30th of each fiscal year.

LD 681, “An Act to Amend the Maine Dental Loan Education Program”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 102, redefines “underserved population area” to mean “an area in the State that is a dental health professional shortage area or medically underserved area or that contains a medically underserved population as defined by the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration”. It increases the maximum loan amounts available under the program from \$20,000 a year for a period of up to four years to \$25,000 a year for a period of up to four years, beginning January 1, 2020. It also eliminates the advisory committee on dental education. Finally, it enables the Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine to consult key stakeholders in administering the program and evaluating its effectiveness.

LD 1056, “An Act To Update and Amend the Finance Authority of Maine Act”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 160, amends the Finance Authority of Maine Act by removing various references to bond financing for major business expansion projects and eliminating that financing. It reallocates the bonding authority for securing the Finance Authority of Maine's capital reserve funds supporting other programs. It removes definitions pertaining to the Clean Fuel Vehicle

Fund, which was repealed in 2013. Finally It increases the maximum amount of insurance the Finance Authority of Maine may provide to related entities from \$7,000,000 to \$7,500,000.

LD 1217, “An Act to Clarify the Oversight of the Family Development Account Program”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 239, transfers administration of the program from the Finance Authority of Maine to the University of Maine System. It allows the University of Maine System to consult key stakeholders such as program participants, community development organizations and financial institutions, as well as organizations representing the interests of low-income persons in the State, as part of administering the program and assessing its effectiveness. It adds language allowing the University of Maine System to solicit proposals from community development organizations on a schedule established by the system. It changes the makeup of the Advisory Committee on Family Development Accounts from 12 members to 10 members and changes the descriptions of members. Finally, it also makes a number of minor technical changes to the Program.

LD 1240, “An Act To Provide Career and Technical Training Options for Electricians”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 261, credits graduates of a secondary school career and technical education electrical program approved pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 8306-B with 1,000 hours of work experience in electrical installations and allows graduates to sit for the journeyman examination. It provides that the 1,000 hours credited may not be applied to any other pathway to licensure.

LD 1519, “An Act Concerning the Establishment of Benefit Corporations”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 328, creates a statutory framework that allows a corporation to elect to become a benefit corporation by explicitly stating in its articles of incorporation that it has a purpose of creating general public benefit and allows such a corporation to state in its articles of incorporation one or more specific public benefit purposes, which are other than maximizing shareholder value. "General public benefit" means a material positive impact on society and the environment, taken as a whole, assessed against a third-party standard, from the business and operations of the benefit corporation. A specific public benefit can be providing goods and services to underserved individuals and communities, the promotion of economic opportunities, protecting the environment, improving human health or other particular benefits to society or the environment.

A benefit corporation may be subject to a benefit enforcement proceeding for failing to pursue or create general public benefit or a specific public benefit as set forth in its articles of incorporation, or for a violation of any obligation, duty or standard of conduct imposed. A benefit corporation must make its annual benefit report available publicly.

LD 1601, “An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Educators for Maine Program”

This bill, enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 303, amends the laws governing the Educators for Maine Program by expanding the definition of graduating high school senior to include students who graduate from a home instruction program; expanding the definition of return service to include service at a

publicly supported secondary school and special education facility; adding service in an underserved geographic areas as an eligibility criterion, and adding a definition of underserved geographic areas; removing the maximum loan amounts of \$2,000 per year and \$8,000 in total in favor of a minimum annual award of \$3,000 per year for undergraduate study and \$2,000 per year for post-baccalaureate certification; establishing a maximum award period of eight semesters for undergraduate and four semesters for post-baccalaureate students; removing the provision whereby the Governor announces selected recipients annually; removing the preference for loans to undergraduate students enrolled in a course of study related to underserved subject areas; and increasing from five to ten years the amount of time a recipient has to complete the return service requirement.

LD 1629, “An Act Regarding Future Evaluations of the Pine Tree Development Zone Program”

This bill, acted as Public law 2019, chapter 305, strikes a provision regarding the Pine Tree Development Zone program that establishes the specific date of January 15, 2021 by which the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability must complete a review of the program. This provision is unnecessary as current law already provides that the Government Oversight Committee establish a schedule for the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability to conduct reviews of tax expenditure programs based on priority and the grouping of programs with similar goals.

LD 1685, “An Act To Facilitate Entry of Immigrants into the Workforce”

This bill, enacted as Public law 2019, chapter 447, establishes and provides funding for the Foreign Credentialing and Skills Recognition Revolving Loan Program, to be administered by the Finance Authority of Maine. Under the program, the authority may provide interest-free loans to foreign-educated or foreign-trained, experienced immigrants who need assistance while awaiting federal employment authorization to pay the costs of certain actions and activities that will improve their work-readiness once they receive their work permits.

Bills Carried Over

LD 509, “An Act to Increase the Minimum Grant Amount Under the Maine State Grant Program”

This bill, as amended, provides that the minimum grant amount under the Maine State Grant Program may not be less than \$2,500 if sufficient funds are appropriated for this purpose, subject to the current grant amount modifications under the program. This bill provides an ongoing appropriation of \$9,450,000 per year to fund this increase in the minimum grant amount. Of the \$9,450,000 appropriated in each fiscal year, \$1,000,000 in each fiscal year must be dedicated to assistance of adult learners in returning to school and completing their credentials.

This bill was reported out of committee and then carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature on the Special Appropriations Table by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 647, “An Act to Attract, Educate and Retain New State Residents to Strengthen the Workforce”

This bill, as amended, does the following:

1. It establishes and provides funding for the Welcome Center Initiative to support welcome centers within the adult education programs of participating school administrative units in municipalities or regions of the State that have immigrant populations or that have industries that are experiencing a shortage of trained workers. The purpose of welcome centers is to educate, provide career planning, case management and vocational training for foreign-trained workers, including foreign-trained professionals, and match workers with employers.
2. It provides ongoing funding for the New Mainers Resource Center in Portland.
3. It directs the Department of Education to establish a welcome center within the City of Lewiston's adult education program and provides funding for that purpose.
4. It directs and provides funding for the Department of Education's office of adult education and family literacy to administer a two-year program to prepare immigrants for identified workforce needs of employers in the State, with the goal of accelerating entry into livable wage employment and enhancing employer retention of immigrants. The program will offer vocation-specific English language acquisition with training in specific vocational areas. Program awards are to be established through a statewide competitive grant process.
5. It directs and provides funding for the Department of Education office of adult education and family literacy to establish a two-year local community planning support program to assist communities within the State to provide a planning process for communities to provide English language acquisition and training in vocational skills, identify employers or areas that would benefit from immigrant residency or employment and cultivate community support to integrate immigrants into the communities and local workforce.
6. It directs and provides funding for the Department of Education office of adult education and family literacy to develop and implement a grant process to provide funding on a competitive basis for English language acquisition to adult education programs in communities experiencing an increase in immigrant populations or demand to reduce the waiting list for English language acquisition classes and to increase the level of English language acquisition instruction.

This bill was reported out of committee and then carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature on the Special Appropriations Table by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 772, "An Act to Encourage Continued Learning"

This bill proposes to enact measures designed to encourage continued learning by Maine residents, including, but not limited to, creating incentives and implementing strategies to enable so-called stranded learners who have some college credit but no degree to complete degree and certificate programs and graduate from college.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 799, “An Act to Create the Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program”

This bill, as amended, creates a new loan repayment program, administered by the Finance Authority of Maine, for health care providers who agree to live and work in the State for a minimum of five years. Under the program, the authority will pay up to \$30,000 per year and the lesser of \$150,000 in aggregate and 50% of the recipient's outstanding loan balance. The amendment establishes a fund for the program, sets parameters for the administration of the program and establishes an advisory committee to guide the work of the Finance Authority of Maine in administering the program.

This bill was reported out of committee and then carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature on the Special Appropriations Table by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 814, “An Act To Strengthen Maine's Economy through Research and Innovation led by the University of Maine System”

This bill would provide funding and enact measures based on recommendations of the President of the University of Maine at Machias in a strategic plan chartered by the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and due to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System in March 2019. The bill would strengthen research and economic development efforts across the University of Maine System to support Maine industries and workforce development and to foster business formation and expansion, specifically in the seven research and development sectors designated in statute: advanced technology for agriculture and forestry; aquaculture and marine technology; biotechnology; composite materials technology; environmental technology; information technology; and precision manufacturing technology.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 1051 “An Act to Create the Family First Employer Program”

This bill creates the Maine Family First Employer Program under the Department of Labor to award employers that create family-friendly workplaces by providing, for all full-time employees, advancement and leadership opportunities; the same pay rates for similar work; stipends or assistance for child care; paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child and medical care for employees or family members of employees; flexible work accommodations for other family obligations; and health insurance and retirement plan options. The awards are presented by the Governor and come with a logo that a designated employer may use for promotional purposes.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 1193, "Resolve, Directing the Maine Community College System To Evaluate the Need To Expand Workforce Training Options in Waldo County"

This resolve directs the Maine Community College System to evaluate the unmet need and capacity for expanding workforce training options in Waldo County with the goal of providing additional capacity for training in industries with identified employee shortages.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 1481, "An Act to Establish the Big Moose Mountain Regional Development Authority"

This bill Establishes the Big Moose Mountain Regional Development Authority as a public municipal corporation with associated rights and responsibilities, including the ability to sue and be sued; adopt bylaws and rules; exercise the general powers of corporations; exercise the power of eminent domain; impose rules relating to the use of the property; charge and collect fees; contract with the federal government, the state and other public and private entities; borrow money; apply for loans, grants and other forms of assistance; provide funds for the maintenance, construction and operation of facilities; and take other lawful actions.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 1584, "An Act To Attract, Build and Retain an Early Childhood Education Workforce through Increased Training, Education and Career Pathways"

This bill, as amended, requires the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Labor jointly to develop and implement an early childhood educators workforce support program to recruit and retain early childhood educators working with children up to five years of age. The bill does the following:

1. Increasing opportunities for course work in early education by expanding the number of career and technical education centers at which early childhood education programs are available, supporting early childhood education courses with funding and course material purchases, and creating articulation agreements for credit transfers for work related to early childhood education and enrollment in courses in furtherance of the issuance of a postsecondary degree;
2. Requires the Commissioners to collaborate with educational entities to provide support for individuals, including immigrants and other populations lacking experience in Maine's workforce, who require foundational skills development to enter and succeed in early childhood education courses;
3. Offering comprehensive scholarships that allow individuals providing child care services who agree to work for at least one year following graduation with an approved employer to attain early childhood education credentials and take classes leading to associate or bachelor's degrees;

4. Expanding the number of Department of Labor registered apprenticeships available in early childhood child care; and
5. Establishing a system of salary supplements, based on education level, experience and other factors, for providers of child care and early childhood educators working with children up to five years of age.

This bill was reported out of committee and then carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature on the Special Appropriations Table.

LD 1821, “Resolve, To Address the Population Shortage in Rural Maine”

This resolve directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to work with the Northern Border Regional Commission in the establishment of a program to recruit working families to relocate to rural areas of the State.

This resolve was carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 1841, “Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation To Create a Working Group To Study Barriers to Credentialing”

This resolve directs the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation to create a working group to study credentialing skilled individuals with foreign credentials and those with licenses in other states. The working group consists of eight to ten persons representing licensing boards and professional organizations served by the licensing boards in professions in the State for which there is a need for and an opportunity to credential skilled individuals with foreign credentials and those with out-of-state licenses. The working group is required to submit its report along with any recommendations and suggested legislation to the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation. The commissioner is required to submit the report with any recommendations and suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business.

Bills Held by Governor

LD 1342, “An Act to Establish the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute”

The bill, as amended, establishes the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute to collect and analyze information related to workforce training, research and development, student debt and economic advancement in the State, to make policy recommendations to the Legislature and to conduct targeted research for the Legislature.