

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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117th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1995

Legislative Document

No. 268

H.P. 209

House of Representatives, January 27, 1995

An Act to Create a Learnfare Program in the State.

Reference to the Committee on Human Resources suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph W. Mayo".

JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative PLOWMAN of Hampden.

Cosponsored by Representatives: CAMERON of Rumford, CAMPBELL of Holden, LIBBY of Buxton, MARSHALL of Eliot, NASS of Acton, ROBICHAUD of Caribou, WINSOR of Norway.

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

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Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3741-M is enacted to read:

§3741-M. Learnfare Program

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "AFDC" means the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

B. "Participant" means a recipient of AFDC benefits who participates in the program.

C. "Program" means the Learnfare Program established under this section.

2. Waiver; authorization. By October 1, 1995, the department shall apply for a waiver from the United States Department of Health and Human Services to establish special eligibility requirements for AFDC benefits under the program. The department shall establish the Learnfare Program to provide incentives for recipients of AFDC benefits to attend school regularly so that they obtain the education necessary to break the cycle of poverty and prepare for better jobs in the future.

3. Rulemaking. The department shall adopt rules for exemptions from the requirements of the program, establishing eligibility for AFDC under the program and suspension of benefits for failure to comply with the requirements of the program.

4. Requirements of the program. All children 5 years of age and older who have not completed high school or its equivalent and all heads of household under the age of 24 who have not completed high school or its equivalent must participate in the program unless granted an exemption under rules adopted by the department. In order to receive AFDC benefits all households must establish eligibility under the program by showing that all participants attend school regularly.

5. Services. The department shall provide case management services that include counseling, referral, advocacy and assessment services and progress and compliance monitoring to all participating households.

6. Sanctions. The department shall adopt rules for the suspension of AFDC benefits for households that fail to establish eligibility in accordance with the provisions of subsection 4 and

2 rules adopted in accordance with subsection 3. The suspension of
3 benefits must reflect the efforts and history of compliance of
4 the participants in the household.

5 7. Implementation date. The department shall implement the
6 program 90 days from the date on which the United States
7 Department of Health and Human Services grants a waiver for the
8 Learnfare Program.

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11 **STATEMENT OF FACT**

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13 The bill directs the Department of Human Services to pursue
14 a federal waiver to establish a Learnfare Program. Under the
15 Learnfare Program parents under the age of 24 who are heads of
16 households and children in households receiving aid to families
17 with dependent children who have not completed high school must
18 attend school regularly. Case management services are provided.
19 Benefits are suspended for failure to comply with the program
20 requirements. The department is required to implement the
21 program 90 days after the granting of the waiver by the United
22 States Department of Health and Human Services.