

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 840

S.P. 373

In Senate, March 4, 2025

**An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental
Security Income by Removing Marriage Disincentives**

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator TIPPING of Penobscot.
Cosponsored by Representative OSHER of Orono and
Senators: INGWERSEN of York, MOORE of Washington, Representative: ROEDER of
Bangor.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3271, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §65, is
3 further amended to read:

4 **2.** The department, to the extent allowed by Title XVI of the United States Social
5 Security Act, as amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder, shall establish standard
6 levels of state supplemental income benefits for blind, disabled and elderly people. The
7 benefits must be provided under a modified flat benefit system, and may vary by ~~marital~~
8 ~~status, and by~~ living arrangements to the extent allowed by Title XVI of the United States
9 Social Security Act, as amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder. The benefits
10 may not be based on individual budgeted need and may not vary by category or
11 geographical area. Benefits for a couple, ~~except as provided under section 3273, subsection~~
12 ~~1, paragraph B,~~ must be equal to the sum of the amount of benefit for ~~an~~ each individual
13 ~~and 50% of the benefit for an individual in the couple.~~

14 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3272, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 790, §3, is amended to
15 read:

16 **1. Standard.** The standard utilized to determine need ~~shall~~ must be the current annual
17 budget at the lower level of living for ~~a retired couple~~ an individual as most recently
18 determined by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for
19 Portland, Maine, or budgets ~~which that~~ are consistent with such a budget at the lower level
20 of living, taking into account budget variances by ~~marital status and~~ living arrangements
21 ~~permitted~~ permitted pursuant to Title XVI of the United States Social Security Act, as
22 amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder.

23 **Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §3273, sub-§1, ¶A**, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 790, §3, is
24 amended to read:

25 A. Increase the minimum monthly federal payment standard, in addition to that
26 established pursuant to federal law, by an amount of at least \$8 per month for an
27 individual ~~and \$12 per month for a couple;~~

28 **Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §3273, sub-§1, ¶C**, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 790, §3, is
29 amended to read:

30 C. For a beneficiary who resides in a living arrangement ~~which that~~ meets a living
31 arrangement classification established by the department, but who does not reside in
32 an adult foster home or boarding home, in addition to the minimum federal payment
33 level as adjusted pursuant to paragraph A, provide, based on such living arrangement
34 classification, an amount not to exceed \$42 per month for an individual ~~and \$63 per~~
35 ~~month for a couple.~~

36 **Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §3273, sub-§6, ¶B-1**, as enacted by PL 1991, c. 528, Pt. E, §25
37 and affected by Pt. RRR and enacted by c. 591, Pt. E, §25, is amended to read:

38 B-1. On July 1st of every year, the sum of the monthly amount of any state
39 supplemental income benefit authorized by subsection 1, paragraphs A and C, plus the
40 amount of the minimum monthly federal supplemental security income in effect at that
41 time must be increased by a percentage amount equal to the percentage rise in the
42 United States Consumer Price Index for April 1st of that year over the level of the
43 Index for April 1st of the previous year plus any additional percentage amount as is

1 recommended annually by the department. Such an increase may be made only insofar
2 as appropriations are available. In determining the additional percentage amount,
3 consideration must be given to the goal of reaching, within a reasonable time, a benefit
4 level equal to or consistent with the current budget at the lower level of living for a
5 ~~retired couple~~ an individual established by the United States Department of Labor,
6 Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland, Maine.

7 If, on April 1st of any year, the sum of the monthly amount of any state supplemental
8 payment authorized by subsection 1, paragraphs A and C, plus the amount of the
9 minimum monthly federal supplemental security income in effect at that time, is equal
10 to or exceeds the amount resulting from 12 divided into the current annual budget at
11 the lower level of living for a ~~retired couple~~ an individual as most recently established
12 by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland,
13 Maine, or taking into account variances by ~~marital status and~~ living arrangements as
14 established by the department, a budget that is not inconsistent with that annual budget
15 divided by 12, the increase provided on July 1st next following is limited to the
16 percentage rise in the Consumer Price Index.

17 ~~This paragraph takes effect July 1, 1993.~~

18 **SUMMARY**

19 This bill amends the 1974 State Supplemental Income Act in the following ways.

20 1. It replaces provisions of law that currently provide that payments to couples, both
21 of whom receive the supplement, are 150% of the benefit for an individual with provisions
22 of law providing that payments to the couples are 200% of the benefit for an individual.

23 2. It requires that the standard used to determine need is the current annual budget at
24 the lower level of living for an individual as most recently determined by the United States
25 Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland, Maine, or budgets consistent
26 with such a budget taking into account budget variances by living arrangements permitted
27 pursuant to Title XVI of the United States Social Security Act.

28 3. It establishes that, in determining any increase according to the United States
29 Consumer Price Index, consideration must be given to the goal of reaching, within a
30 reasonable time, a benefit level equal to or consistent with the current budget at the lower
31 level of living for an individual, rather than a retired couple, established by the United
32 States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland, Maine.