

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
JANUARY 7, 2026 to APRIL 29, 2026

THE GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE FOR
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
NONEMERGENCY LAWS IS
JULY 29, 2026

PUBLISHED BY THE REVISOR OF STATUTES
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MAINE REVISED STATUTES,
TITLE 3, SECTION 163-A, SUBSECTION 4.

Augusta, Maine
2026

cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect April 1, 2026.

Effective April 1, 2026.

CHAPTER 581

S.P. 852 - L.D. 2059

An Act to Provide Required Funding for the Reimbursement of Assigned Counsel

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the State's constitutional and statutory obligations include ensuring that each person facing a potential loss of liberty in a criminal or juvenile proceeding and each parent facing a potential loss of parental rights in a child protection proceeding is provided with effective representation; and

Whereas, on January 3, 2025, in *Robbins v. Billings, et al.* No. CV-22-054 (Me. Super. Ct., Ken. Cty., Jan. 3, 2025) (Combined Order on Partially Dispositive Motions), the Maine Superior Court concluded that the State has violated its constitutional obligations under the United States Constitution, Amendment VI to provide continuous representation to certain criminal defendants in the State; and

Whereas, the State's primary method for fulfilling its constitutional and statutory obligations is through the appointment of qualified attorneys to provide indigent legal services to eligible persons and reimbursement of these attorneys by the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services in accordance with the hourly rate established by law and the restrictions on eligible expenses established by the commission by rule; and

Whereas, due to a shortfall in funding, the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services is anticipated to exhaust available appropriations to reimburse assigned counsel in April 2026; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

**PUBLIC DEFENSE SERVICES, MAINE
COMMISSION ON**

Maine Commission on Public Defense Services Z112

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to address the shortfall in funding available to compensate constitutionally and statutorily required assigned counsel in fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$13,000,000	\$9,000,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$13,000,000	\$9,000,000

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

Effective March 19, 2026.

CHAPTER 582

H.P. 1411 - L.D. 2096

An Act Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs and Pulling Events

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, agricultural fairs and the harness racing season will begin soon and this legislation needs to take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period to allow the change in the conditions of an agricultural fair license to occur as soon as possible; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §84, sub-§4 is enacted to read:

4. Prohibition. Except as provided under subsection 5, a licensee may not:

A. Operate an agricultural fair outside of the fair dates assigned by the commissioner under this section; or

B. Advertise or market an agricultural fair as taking place outside of the fair dates assigned by the commissioner under this section.

For purposes of this subsection, a licensee holding an event within one week of a fair's assigned fair dates is considered to be operating a fair outside of the fair dates assigned by the commissioner.

Sec. 2. 7 MRSA §84, sub-§5 is enacted to read:

5. Exception. A licensee may host an exhibition up to 48 hours prior to the assigned fair dates for the purposes of displaying and awarding premiums as provided under section 86, subsection 5.

Sec. 3. 7 MRSA §84, sub-§6 is enacted to read:

6. License suspension. The commissioner may suspend the license of a licensee that violates this section.

Sec. 4. 7 MRSA §86, sub-§5, as amended by PL 2025, c. 161, §3, is further amended by amending the first blocked paragraph to read:

In determining distribution under this subsection, an allowance may ~~not~~ be made on premiums offered and paid by a licensee at any competition or event held ~~other than~~ during the period in which its annual fair is held and at any competition or event judged up to 48 hours prior to the licensed fair dates, except that an allowance may not be made on premiums offered and paid by a licensee at any competition or event under paragraphs A, F-1, I, J and K judged up to 48 hours prior to the licensed fair dates. Allowance may not be made or consideration given for lump sums, payments or premiums previously arranged and agreed upon for the presentation and display of any animals or products without regard to competition or event. The department may provide an allowance to licensees for payments made for educational agricultural talks, workshops and demonstrations pursuant to paragraph K without regard to premiums paid for competitions or events in this category.

Sec. 5. 7 MRSA §86, sub-§5, as amended by PL 2025, c. 161, §3, is further amended by amending the 2nd blocked paragraph to read:

Premiums and payments used to determine apportionment under this subsection are limited to those paid for:

Sec. 6. Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and State Harness Racing Commission to review rules. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, in consultation with the State Harness Racing Commission, shall review rules adopted pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, section 82, subsection 5 to determine if changes are necessary regarding standards for setting harness racing dates and shall initiate rulemaking as necessary to ensure consistency with Title 7, chapter 4. Upon completion of the review, the commissioner shall report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agricultural matters with the commissioner's findings no later than January 15, 2027.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

Effective March 23, 2026.

CHAPTER 583

H.P. 1417 - L.D. 2102

An Act to Clarify and Strengthen the Government Shutdown Loan Guarantee Program

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, this legislation needs to take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period in order to provide protection as soon as possible to employees who are not being paid during a government shutdown; and

Whereas, this protection for these employees is necessary to prevent missed rent and mortgage payments, food insecurity and the loss of health care coverage; and

Whereas, agencies responsible for administering the Government Shutdown Loan Guarantee Program need immediate authority to adjust staffing and communicate with participating credit unions and financial institutions in order to prevent confusion and inefficiency; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. 10 MRSA §1100-JJ, sub-§1, ¶C is enacted to read:

C. The eligibility of an affected employee is not dependent on:

(1) The affected employee applying for unemployment compensation benefits;

(2) A credit check;

(3) The membership of the affected employee at a credit union or the status of the affected employee as a customer of a financial institution to which the affected employee is applying for a loan; or

(4) The ability of the affected employee to appear in person, as long as the affected employee can prove that the affected employee is a resident of this State and a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or National Guard who is stationed outside of this State.

Sec. 2. 10 MRSA §1100-JJ, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 2025, c. 494, §2, is amended to read: