LAWS

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

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Augusta, Maine
2026

CHAPTER 587
S.P. 674 - L.D. 1728

An Act to Improve Affordability, Stability and Access in the Maine Child Care Affordability Program

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

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3731-A, sub-§3 is enacted to read:

3. Copayments limited. The department shall limit the amount of copayments required to be paid by families receiving subsidies under the Maine Child Care Affordability Program in accordance with this subsection.

A. A family earning up to 85% of the median family income in the State for a family of the same size may not be required to contribute more than 7% of the family's household income as a copayment.

B. Copayments may be further reduced or waived, as determined by the department, for additional populations, including, but not limited to:

(1) Families earning up to 30% of the median family income in the State for a family of the same size;

(2) Children who are in foster care or kinship care;

(3) Families experiencing homelessness; and

(4) Families with a child with a disability.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3731-B is enacted to read:

§3731-B. Copayment schedule

The department shall post on its publicly accessible website information about copayments, as determined by the department pursuant to section 3731-A, subsection 3, that must be paid by families receiving subsidies under the Maine Child Care Affordability Program established in section 3731-A. The information posted must include, but is not limited to, the sliding fee scales used to determine family copayments, estimated amounts of copayments for families based on income and family size and policies related to reduced or waived copayments. The website must use plain language and must be updated when copayment schedules and amounts change.

Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §3737, sub-§7 is enacted to read:

7. Reimbursements for subsidies. The department shall reimburse a provider of child care services provided under this chapter for subsidies provided under the Maine Child Care Affordability Program established in section 3731-A administered by the department pursuant to rules adopted by the department. To the extent allowable under federal law, reimbursement under the program to a child care provider must be based on generally accepted payment practices for private-pay families for child care, including enrollment-based rather than attendance-based practices. Reimbursement based on generally accepted payment practices must support child care provider stability and encourage more child care providers to serve children receiving child care services under the program. In developing the program, the department shall identify the practices common for child care providers serving private-pay families and determine which practices are most important to meet the goals of ensuring that high-quality child care providers participate in the program. The department shall make a plan to align requirements for providers accepting children receiving federal Child Care and Development Fund child care assistance to the practices of child care providers serving private-pay families. The department shall examine generally accepted payment practices regarding paying prospectively based on enrollment and practices related to separating provider closure limits for holidays or vacations or to compensate for inclement weather from child absence allowances. The department shall adopt rules to implement this subsection. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

For the purposes of this subsection, "generally accepted payment practices" are practices that align with the private-pay child care market in order to encourage providers to accept children receiving federal Child Care and Development Fund child care assistance and enable families to retain child care services.

Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §3737, sub-§8 is enacted to read:

8. Subsidy above equivalent private rate. To the extent allowable by federal law, the department may reimburse a provider of child care services for subsidies provided under the Maine Child Care Affordability Program established in section 3731-A at the market rate established pursuant to subsection 4 to better reflect the cost of providing care even if that rate is higher than the rate charged by a provider of child care for a child in a family that is not receiving a subsidy under this chapter.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 588
S.P. 756 - L.D. 1949

An Act Regarding Energy Fairness

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

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §103-B is enacted to read:

§103-B. Affordability impact considerations

In executing its duties, powers and regulatory functions under this Title, the commission, while ensuring system reliability, shall consider the impact on affordability for residential customers.

Sec. 2. Credit and collection data; publication. The Public Utilities Commission shall publish on its publicly accessible website data regarding credit and collection activities of a transmission and distribution utility with more than 50,000 customers that is submitted to the commission by the utility in accordance with rules adopted by the commission pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 704, subsection 1. The commission shall ensure that the data is provided on the commission's publicly accessible website in a clear and transparent manner.

Sec. 3. Comprehensive review of electric delivery rates. The Public Utilities Commission shall conduct a comprehensive review of each component of electric delivery rates. In conducting the review required pursuant to this section, the commission shall consider whether changes to the current design and composition of electric delivery rates could be implemented to, at a minimum:

1. Contain customer costs;

2. Reduce transmission and distribution utility bill volatility; and

3. Increase transmission and distribution utility bill transparency.

The commission shall engage stakeholders in the review process under this section and solicit stakeholder feedback. By January 31, 2027, the commission shall submit an interim report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy matters informing the committee of its work to date on the comprehensive review. By December 15, 2027, the commission shall submit a final report regarding its comprehensive review, including any recommendations or proposed legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy matters. The committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.

Sec. 4. Affordability metric development. The Public Utilities Commission shall develop an affordability metric to be used to assess the impact of electricity bills on the overall energy burden for residential customers of an investor-owned transmission and distribution utility. By January 15, 2027, the commission shall submit an interim report on the commission's progress under this section to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy matters. The commission shall submit a final report by December 15, 2027 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy matters regarding the development of an affordability metric under this section, along with any recommendations or proposed legislation, if necessary. The committee may report out a bill related to the final report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 589

S.P. 806 - L.D. 1993

An Act to Increase the Annual Cap on Funds Assessed for the Safety Education and Training Fund

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

Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §61, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2013, c. 467, §2, is further amended to read:

2. Source of funds. The commissioner or the commissioner's designee shall annually assess a levy based on actual annual workers' compensation paid losses, excluding medical payments, paid in the most recent calendar year for which data is available by employers under former Title 39, the Workers' Compensation Act or Title 39-A, Part 1, the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992. As soon as practicable after July 1st of each year, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee shall assess upon and collect from each insurance carrier licensed to do workers' compensation business in the State, and each group and individual self-insured employer authorized to make workers' compensation payments directly to their employees, a sum equal to that proportion of the current fiscal year's appropriation, exclusive of any federal funds, for the safety education and training program that the total workers' compensation benefits, exclusive of medical payments, paid by each licensed carrier or each group or individual self-insured employer, bear to the total of the benefits paid by all licensed carriers, and group and individual self-insured employers during the most recent calendar year for which data is available, except that the total amount levied annually may not exceed ~~1%~~ 2% of the total of the compensation benefits paid by all licensed carriers, and group and individual self-insured employers during the most recent calendar year for which data is available. A licensed carrier or group or individual self-insured must be assessed based on all benefits paid, exclusive of medical payments, during any year for which the carrier was licensed or the group or individual self-insured employer was authorized to make workers' compensation payments directly to their employees for any portion of the year.