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**Final Report of the
PRESIDING OFFICERS' ADVISORY TASK FORCE
ON CREATING A FUTURE FOR
YOUTH IN MAINE**



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**PRESIDING OFFICERS' ADVISORY TASK FORCE
ON CREATING A FUTURE FOR
YOUTH IN MAINE**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The problem of youth out-migration from Maine and other states across the nation, also known as the “brain drain,” has received a lot of scrutiny from researchers and investigative journalists in recent months. Census data and other research have confirmed what many Mainers have claimed to be true for years: Maine’s youth are leaving the state in large numbers. As hard as the effects of this phenomenon are for Maine families, the continued out-migration of the next generation of Maine’s workforce will have extreme negative effects on the Maine economy.

The Presiding Officers’ Advisory Task Force on Creating a Future For Youth in Maine, established by Senator Beverly Daggett, President of the Senate, and Representative Patrick Colwell, Speaker of the House, was created in order to confront the problem of youth out-migration at its roots and to develop concrete and effective solutions to stem the outflow of Maine’s young people. Based on previously conducted studies, its own discussions with scores of Maine high school students, college students, teachers, professors, parents, entrepreneurs, business leaders and government officials the Task Force has arrived at the following findings and recommendations.

Summary of Task Force Findings

- ***Nearly all states are confronted with the challenges created by the outflow of young adults to other states.*** There are many different reasons for youth out-migration, and out-migration by young people often occurs regardless of economic conditions in the home state.
- ***The perceptions of youth regarding education and employment opportunities in Maine often mask reality.*** While many students believe they need to go out of state to obtain a good education and good-paying jobs, in reality, there are excellent higher educational institutions and job opportunities in Maine. Maine colleges and universities offer a top tier education and many excellent job opportunities are available in the fields of health care, high technology, electronics, and other fields.
- ***Maine has many excellent qualities that are attractive to young adults and entrepreneurs.*** Maine’s culture and environment are inviting to many people, as demonstrated by the recent survey results showing that Portland ranks 10th in the nation with respect to the attraction of young adults and professionals.
- ***Maine lacks a structure and a process by which state resources and policies can be coordinated and aligned with private sector resources to address serious problems,*** such as youth out-migration, economic growth, business growth and expansions and workforce development needs of the private sector.
- ***Maine’s higher education system is not a unified system, and there is a serious lack of coordination and communication between the education and business sectors.*** While many employers have trouble finding qualified employees, students and others

seeking career information and job opportunities have trouble connecting with those employers.

In light of these findings, the Task Force concluded that there is much the State of Maine can do in concert with the private sector to combat the net outflow of young adults and to promote economic growth.

Summary of Task Force Recommendations

1. ***Create the “Future For Youth In Maine Swat Team.”*** The Swat Team will coordinate economic development policy, education policy related to workforce development and economic growth, and specific efforts to retain and attract youth to Maine. The Swat Team will be a policy-making group that brings together representatives of government, education, business, and labor in a focused, coordinated effort to realign, streamline and oversee efforts to create opportunities through economic development, education and targeted initiatives to retain and attract young people.
2. ***Implement a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote Maine.*** The campaign will promote Maine as a great place to “live, learn and work,” highlighting the resources and opportunities available for starting a business in Maine and the excellence of Maine colleges and universities.
3. ***Prepare all high school students in Maine for post-secondary education.*** This initiative will include the development of a plan to provide every high school student with the opportunity to complete courses required for college entry and to encourage all students to explore post-secondary education.
4. ***Align higher education with the needs of Maine’s economy and business sector.*** This effort will include reallocation of higher educational resources toward research and development and other fields for which there are great opportunities and advantages for the State and private sector.
5. ***Reduce the student cost of education at the University of Maine System.*** The Board of Trustees will be asked to develop strategies to increase financial aid and scholarships and to develop a policy to waive out-of-state tuition for graduate students who earned an undergraduate degree in Maine.
6. ***Remove barriers to transfer within and between the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System.*** This initiative will include the development of a unified, consistent policy regarding the transfer of credits with respect to academic majors and minors that facilitates degree completion in a timely and affordable manner.
7. ***Train students for entrepreneurship, emerging technologies and critical labor shortages.*** This effort will include entrepreneurship education to teach budding

entrepreneurs about running a business and commercializing their product and service ideas, as well as an internship program to place college students in the state's applied technology development centers, also known as incubators, and in industries and occupations facing labor shortages.

8. ***Increase educational excellence and reduce duplication in the University of Maine System.*** This initiative will include the development and implementation of “Centers of Excellence” throughout the University of Maine System.
9. ***Expand Maine's loan repayment program offerings.*** This initiative will provide loan repayment assistance to attract young people to challenging and good-paying job opportunities and to encourage entrepreneurs to implement their business ideas.
10. ***Provide targeted housing assistance for young professionals and families and encourage pilot housing projects to reduce the cost of housing in high-cost areas of the state.*** This initiative will include the development of recommendations to expand access to affordable housing for young professionals and families.
11. ***Implement universal rural broadband access statewide.*** This initiative will provide for the development and implementation of a plan for rural broadband access statewide.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On July 21, 2003, Senate President Beverly Daggett and Speaker of the House Patrick Colwell announced the formation of the Presiding Officers Advisory Task Force to Create a Future for Youth in Maine (see Appendix A). Concerned that continued out-migration of youth from Maine could have serious implications for Maine's future, the Presiding Officers created this task force to develop solutions to stem the loss of youth from the state. The 13-member Task Force included 3 members of the House, 3 members of the Senate and 7 public members (see Appendix B). House Speaker Patrick Colwell and former Speaker Elizabeth Mitchell chaired the Task Force.

In recent years, Maine has become a net exporter of young adults with more young adults leaving Maine for other states than coming to Maine from other states. Between 1980 and 2000, the state of Maine lost approximately 50,000 young adults between 18 and 31 years of age.¹ The net outflow of youth is particularly evident among college students.² Roughly 50 percent of Maine's college-bound students leave the state to attend college elsewhere.³ Furthermore, for every 10 freshmen that leave Maine for out-of-state colleges, only 7 freshmen come to Maine colleges from other states.⁴

While the state as a whole has been experiencing a net loss of youth in recent years, there has been significant regional variation in population changes within Maine. In terms of the total population, counties in southern and mid-coast Maine have experienced a net influx of residents in recent years, while northern Maine, parts of central Maine and Washington County have experienced a net outflow of residents. Among youth, there has been a net outflow from all counties, but the outflow has been most pronounced in the northern Maine counties of Aroostook and Piscataquis.⁵

Given the links that have been established between population change and economic growth, it became clear to the Presiding Officers that the net outflow of young adults from Maine, in conjunction with the overall aging of the state's population and its low and declining birth rate,⁶ could have devastating impacts on the future of Maine's economy and fiscal integrity.⁷ With this in mind, they established the Task Force to identify and implement concrete strategies to address this problem.

¹ Peter Hoff, President, University of Maine, testimony at a public hearing conducted by the Presiding Officers' Task Force on Creating a Future for Youth in Maine at Brewer High School, November 17, 2003.

² See Philip A. Trostel, "Economic Prosperity in Maine: Held Back by the Lack of Higher Education." *Maine Policy Review*, Winter 2002.

³ Philip A. Trostel, University of Maine, Margaret Chase Smith Center, presentation to the Presiding Officers' Task Force on Creating a Future for Youth in Maine, September 5, 2003.

⁴ See Michael K. Thomas, "Student Migration Patterns of Mixed Blessing for Region," *New England Developments*, August 2003.

⁵ See Merritt T. Heminway, "Maine's Disappearing Youth: Implications of a Declining Youth Population." *Maine Leadership Consortium*, May 2002.

⁶ Laurie Lachance, State Economist, Maine State Planning Office, *Projection of population through the year 2020*.

⁷ See Deirdre M. Mageean et al., "Whither Maine's Population." *Maine Policy Review*, Winter 2000.

It is important to note that nearly every state in the nation is concerned about the outflow of young adults to other states. There are many different reasons for this out-migration, and out-migration of youth occurs regardless of the performance level of the economy in the home state. In some cases, youth leave their home state simply out of a desire to obtain a different perspective on life and to participate in new experiences. Nevertheless, many states are diagnosing youth out-migration as a serious problem and developing strategies to stem the loss of young people to other states.

II. TASK FORCE PURPOSE AND FOCUS

In establishing the Task Force, the Presiding Officers recognized that reversing Maine's loss of youth and young adults will require both long-term and short-term initiatives and that facilitating broad-based economic development and the growth of business in the State of Maine are essential to the long-term solution. They also identified an urgent need to address the problem now—to prime the pump immediately with some focused, short-term initiatives that will begin to stem the tide of out-migration and energize the economy. Finally, the Presiding Officers realized that there already exist a wealth of studies and data regarding out-migration of youth from Maine, and youth migration more generally.

In light of the considerations outlined above, the Presiding Officers directed the Task Force to limit its scope exclusively to developing solutions. Specifically, in their Declaration creating the Task Force, the Presiding Officers stated:

The Task Force shall develop a plan and strategies to retain Maine youth in Maine. At a minimum, this plan must include the means by which employment and economic opportunities for Maine youth can be expanded or created, and the steps necessary to achieve this goal. The Task Force shall consider such incentives as student loan forgiveness and other incentives to retain Maine youth and provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully participate in the Maine economy.

At the convening meeting of the Task Force, the Presiding Officers reinforced the group's purpose, as stated above, and urged the group to focus specifically on identifying short-term initiatives that could be implemented relatively quickly and easily. They also clarified that, while the Declaration discusses strategies "to retain Maine youth," the intent is not to discourage Maine youth from pursuing education and other opportunities out of state; rather, the intent is to create opportunities within Maine that are attractive to youth so that they will choose to stay in Maine or to return in the future.

Consistent with the goals stated by the Presiding Officers, the Task Force early on its work expressed its commitment to taking action and to developing strategies that not only will provide attractive opportunities for Maine youth to remain in the state, but also will draw former Maine residents back and attract youth and young adults from other states to Maine. A summary of the Task Force process and meetings is provided in Appendix C.

III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the serious negative consequences for Maine's economy that will result from continued out-migration of youth, the Task Force felt compelled to address the problem with urgency and concrete solutions.

A. Factors in Youth Migration

The Task Force learned that many young adults perceive that there are few or no challenging jobs in Maine that pay good wages with benefits, and this is often an important factor in their decisions about whether or not to remain in Maine. Many young adults also feel that Maine lacks the climate, entertainment and social opportunities that appeal to people their age. Further, the roughly 50% of Maine youth who leave the state to attend college elsewhere clearly perceive they can get a better or less costly education beyond Maine's borders. While they may have some basis in fact, the Task Force learned that the above perceptions often times mask reality. In particular, the Task Force learned that:

- Maine has many qualities that are attractive to young adults and entrepreneurs. Maine's culture, lifestyle, recreational opportunities and environment are inviting to many young people, including Maine residents who attended college and pursued their early careers out of state and now want to return to Maine.
- There are good paying and challenging jobs in Maine. Health care and high technology both offer a high concentration of good jobs. Eastern Maine Healthcare, for example, has 250 vacant positions that could be filled immediately if skilled workers were available.
- Students can get an excellent post-secondary education in Maine. Both the University of Maine System and the Community College System produce graduates who are well prepared for the workforce. Maine colleges and universities are recognized leaders in a number of fields. For example, the University of Maine at Farmington is nationally known for its education curriculum, and the University of Maine at Orono is known for its Forestry School and pulp and paper curriculum. In addition, Maine now has a top-notch community college system. If Maine youth and their families were more knowledgeable about the excellence of higher education in Maine, there might be a significant reduction in the number of youth who leave Maine to pursue educational opportunities out of state.
- The cost of education at University of Maine, however, may indeed be more expensive compared to the cost of public and private colleges out of state. In fact, the task force learned that private colleges in other states have offered more lucrative scholarships and better financial aid packages to students from Maine than the University of Maine has offered these same students. In these situations, the bottom line cost of an out-of-state college education is lower than the cost of a University of Maine education.

- While Maine is a net exporter of youth overall, Portland recently was ranked 10th in the nation with respect to the attraction of young adults and professionals. Clearly, the greater Portland area boasts of many amenities that are attractive to young adults.

B. Action Plan for Creating a Future for Youth in Maine

The Task Force firmly believes that the future for youth in Maine depends on the implementation of strong economic development policies and the coordination of economic development efforts throughout the State. The Task Force understands that broad-based economic development and job creation are critical to the future of our state and to creating sustainable opportunities for youth and young adults to stay in Maine, come to Maine, and return to Maine. Within this context, and in consideration of the charge issued by the Presiding Officers, the Task Force focused its work on identifying specific actions and legislative initiatives that will:

- Coordinate and strengthen the state’s economic development efforts,
- Include the business, labor, and educational sectors in the formulation and implementation of economic development policies and educational policies as they relate to the workforce, the business community, and the Maine economy,
- Create targeted opportunities to retain and attract youth, and
- Address specific barriers identified by the Task Force

C. Specific Recommendations and Related Findings

The Presiding Officers Advisory Task Force on Creating a Future for Youth in Maine presents the following specific recommendations and related findings for the consideration of the 121st Legislature. Appendix D includes draft legislation to implement the recommendations outlined below.

1. Create the “Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team” to Coordinate the State’s Economic Development Policy and Efforts to Retain and Attract Youth

Finding: There is a pressing need to coordinate and expand resources to promote economic development, to retain and attract youth, and to address the fragmentation that currently exists between the state’s education, labor, business, and economic development sectors.

Recommendation: The Task Force proposes to establish in law the “Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team” to bring together representatives of government, education, business and labor in a focused, coordinated effort to realign, streamline and oversee the state’s economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people. The Swat Team is a

policy-making group. The major responsibilities of the Swat Team would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Develop and oversee the implementation of comprehensive, coordinated, and focused economic development policies that optimize the use of the State's resources and investments to promote economic growth and development.
- Develop and oversee the implementation of educational policies that focus on meeting the needs of the labor market, the business community, and economic development priorities.
- Develop and implement short-term and long-term strategies to retain and attract youth by improving coordination and reducing fragmentation within and between labor, education, business and economic development sectors. Specific responsibilities in this area include:
 - Develop a comprehensive plan for economic development and education policies specifically designed to expand opportunities for youth.
 - Create a comprehensive web-based electronic clearinghouse of information regarding higher education, career opportunities and jobs available in Maine, including the fastest growing and highest-paying jobs in the state. Ensure that this resource is well publicized and easily accessible to all residents and all students attending high school or college in Maine. The Task Force directs the Swat Team to provide statewide access to this resource no later than January 15, 2005, and to update the resource at least every two months thereafter.
 - Develop and implement an initiative to provide all high school students in the state with information about higher education and career opportunities in Maine. This must include information regarding public and private post-secondary education programs in the state, career paths, required education and training, and lists of high-growth occupations, highest-paying jobs and occupational shortages. The Task Force directs the Swat Team to implement this initiative statewide no later than January 15, 2005.
 - Develop a program to bring volunteers from business and government to high schools throughout the state to provide students with information about career opportunities and the education required for different careers. The Task Force directs the Swat Team to implement this initiative statewide no later than January 15, 2005.
- Monitor and oversee the implementation of all other initiatives assigned to agencies and organizations by the Task Force and report on the progress of each initiative to the Presiding Officers of the Legislature and the appropriate Joint Standing Committee of the Legislature on an annual basis.

- Report all findings, accomplishments, future plans and recommendations of the Swat Team, including the comprehensive plan for economic development and education policies specifically designed to expand opportunities for youth, no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter to the Presiding Officers of the Legislature, who shall refer the reports to the appropriate Joint Standing Committees of the Legislature.

The Task Force proposes that the Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team consist of the following 15 policy-making members, including at least 2 members under the age of 35 years and 8 advisory members. The policy-making members shall include:

- 7 representatives of business, appointed by the Presiding Officers of the Legislature; one business representative must be an individual under the age of 30 who has started his or her own business,
- 2 representatives of labor and workforce development, appointed by the Presiding Officers of the Legislature
- The Chancellor of the University of Maine System or the chancellor's designee
- The President of the Maine Community College System or the president's designee
- One representative of the Department of Economic and Community Development, appointed by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
- One representative of the Department of Education, appointed by the Commissioner of Education
- One representative of the Department of Labor, appointed by the Commissioner of Labor, and
- One college student, appointed by the Presiding Officers of the Legislature, alternating between a student representative on the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and a student representative on the Board of Trustees of the Community College System

The Task force proposes that the Swat Team include 8 non-voting, advisory members, as follows:

- 2 members of the Maine Senate appointed by the President of the Senate,
- 2 members of the Maine House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House,
- One representative of the Finance Authority of Maine,
- One representative of the Maine State Housing Authority, and

- 2 representatives of K-12 education, appointed by the Presiding Officers of the Legislature; one K-12 representative must be a high school student, alternately selected by the Dirigo Boys' State and Dirigo Girls' State organizations.

2. Implement a Comprehensive Marketing Campaign to Promote Maine

Finding: The Task Force found that the state of Maine has many qualities and resources that are attractive to young adults. However, many of the state's resources, services, and programs are largely unknown to young people both within and outside of Maine. In addition, some Maine youth have negative perceptions about the educational and employment opportunities available in Maine.

Recommendation: The Task Force directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to coordinate the development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote Maine to youth and young adults as a great place to "live, le This campaign will promote Maine as a great place to "live, learn and work," highlighting the resources and opportunities available for starting a business in Maine and the excellence of Maine colleges and universities. The campaign will target current, former and prospective Maine residents, ages 15 to 35 years. The task force directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to work with the Department of Education, Department of Labor, University of Maine System, Maine Community College System, the Finance Authority of Maine, the Maine State Housing Authority, and other public and private stakeholders in the development of the marketing campaign.

3. Prepare All High School Students for Post-Secondary Education

Finding: While post-secondary education has become necessary for success in today's economy, the Task Force learned that there are students graduating from high school in Maine today without the coursework and skills required for college admission.

Recommendation: The Task Force directs the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education to develop and implement a plan, including specific strategies, to ensure that every high school student in the state: (1) has the opportunity to complete the core courses required for college entry, and (2) is encouraged to explore post-secondary educational opportunities—no student should be discouraged from the pursuit of higher education. The Task Force directs the State Board and the Commissioner to report their progress on this initiative to the Swat Team and the Joint Standing Committee on Education, no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

4. Align Higher Education with the Needs of Maine's Economy and Business Sector

Finding: The Task Force learned that the needs of Maine's economy and business sector are not adequately connected to decisions about the allocation of the state's limited resources for

higher education and workforce development. The Task Force also determined that there is a critical need to educate workers for jobs going unfilled in specific occupations, including radiology technology, nursing, cardiovascular technology, electro-mechanical technology, and several other types of skilled professions and occupations. It is important to note that for a small investment, a significant number of individuals can be educated and trained for high paying and challenging jobs for which there are serious labor shortages. For every \$100,000 invested in the Maine Community College System in programs for one of these key occupations, roughly 20 new workers can be trained.

Recommendation: The Task Force has three specific recommendations for aligning the state's higher education resources with the needs of the economy and business sector.

First, the Task Force directs the Boards of Trustees of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to develop and implement a formal process to work collaboratively with public and private sector representatives of business, industry and economic development to improve the connection between the state's higher education planning and resource allocation decisions and the needs of the Maine economy. The Task Force further directs Maine's public institutions of higher education and the members of the Swat Team to develop a plan that will meet the needs of the business community and the Maine economy with respect to research and development, the commercialization of products and services generated by research and development, business incubation and workforce training. The Task Force directs the Boards of Trustees to report on these efforts to the Swat Team, the Joint Standing Committee on Education, and the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development no later than January 15, 2005 and annually thereafter.

Second, the Task Force proposes that the Legislature appropriate \$100,000 effective July 1, 2005, to the Maine Community College System for the specific purpose of supporting the creation of a two-year associate degree program in radiology technology at Kennebec Valley Community College. In the recent Federal Government budget, \$300,000 is earmarked for this specific program, but the entire cost of this program is \$400,000. The Task Force has chosen to endorse the radiology technology program after consulting with the Maine Community College System and learning of the shortage of radiology technicians and the waiting list of students who have expressed interest in the program. The recommended state appropriation, combined with funding from the federal government and investment from the private sector would meet an immediate need throughout Maine. Six hospitals have already invested \$30,000 in preparation for this new program and are committed to providing on-site equipment and clinical training for students. The program will produce 40 graduates every two years.

Third, the Task Force directs the Swat Team to review the need for funding for the development of nursing programs within the Maine Community College System and specifically consider the needs of York Community College to establish such a program. York Community College currently estimates that a program graduating 35 nurses each year could be initiated at a cost of roughly \$350,000, and has obtained commitments of support from three local hospitals for on-site equipment and clinical training. The Task Force directs the Swat Team to make a proposal to the 122nd Legislature regarding funding for community college nursing programs.

5. Reduce the Student Cost of Education at the University of Maine System

Finding: The Task Force found that the level of scholarships and financial aid packages currently offered by the University of Maine System place the state at a disadvantage in terms of retaining youth in Maine and attracting youth to Maine for undergraduate studies. The Task Force found that the cost of an education at the University of Maine System is greater than the cost at many out-of-state public and private colleges. University of Maine scholarships fail to reduce the cost of higher education to a level that is sufficiently attractive to many Maine and out-of-state students. The Task Force also learned that the University of Maine System's has a restrictive policy regarding in-state/out-of-state residency status that requires many graduate students to pay out-of-state tuition and, as a result, places the state a disadvantage in terms of retaining graduates of Maine colleges in-state for graduate studies.

Recommendation: The Task Force strongly urges the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System to:

- Examine, develop and implement strategies to increase scholarships and financial aid packages, with the ultimate goal of moving Maine into a position of net importer of college students—that is, more students enter Maine from out-of-state to attend college than leave Maine to attend college in other states, and
- Review its policies regarding in-state/out-of-state tuition for graduate students and specifically develop a policy to waive out-of-state tuition for any graduate student who has earned an undergraduate degree from a Maine college (public or private), including at least 3 academic years in residence in the state.

The Task Force requests that the Board of Trustees report on these two efforts to the Swat Team and the Joint Standing Committee on Education no later than January 15, 2005. The Task Force will send a letter to the Board of Trustees to implement this recommendation.

6. Remove Barriers to Transfer Within and Between the University of Maine System and the Community College System

Finding: The Task Force found that current policy and practice of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System regarding the transfer of credits within and between the two systems creates barriers to student transfers and increases both the cost of education and the length of time to obtain a degree. The specific issue of concern relates to students who transfer from one college campus to another and the acceptance of courses for credit toward academic majors and minors by the receiving campus.

For example, students seeking to transfer from one University of Maine System campus to another have been denied credit toward their academic major or minor for courses taken at the sending campus. The courses have been accepted by the receiving campus for credit for the overall number of credit hours required to graduate, but not for academic majors and minors. Consequently, the students have been required to retake the same exact courses at the receiving campus that they already completed and passed. This practice has encouraged some students to

transfer to out-of-state colleges and universities where they can receive credit toward their major or minor.

Recommendation: The Task Force directs the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and the Board of Trustees of the Community College System to develop a consistent policy that applies to all campuses relating to the transfer of credits from one campus to another within each system and between the two systems with respect to academic majors and minors. The Task Force further recommends that this policy not discriminate against any particular campus and that it facilitate completion of the students' education in a timely and affordable manner. The Task Force further urges the University of Maine System and the Community College System proceed in this endeavor to achieve an end result that truly reflects a truly unified "**system**" of higher education in the State of Maine. The Task Force directs the Boards of Trustees to report to the Swat Team and the Joint Standing Committee on Education no later than January 15, 2005.

7. Train Students for Entrepreneurship, Emerging Technologies, and Critical Labor Shortages

Finding: The Task Force found that there is a need to expand opportunities for Maine college students to acquire entrepreneurial skills. Currently, most post-secondary business courses, programs and curricula are geared toward managers rather than entrepreneurs. The Task Force also identified the need to provide opportunities for college students to gain experience in emerging technologies and other industries and occupations in the state that are facing labor shortages.

Recommendation: The Task Force has two specific recommendations related to training students for entrepreneurship, emerging technologies and critical labor shortages:

First, the Task Force directs the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to work together to develop a unified, comprehensive approach to entrepreneurship education through both systems, including specific courses and workshops on starting and operating a small business. The Task Force directs the University of Maine System and the Community College System to report on this initiative to the Swat Team no later than January 15, 2005.

Second, the Task Force directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to create a college internship program to place students in internships in the of the state's applied technology development centers (also known as incubators) and in labor shortage areas identified by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Task Force proposes that the Legislature appropriate \$100,000 to the Department of Economic and Community Development to support the internship program. The Task Force directs the Department to report on the internship program to the Swat Team and the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

8. Increase Quality and Reduce Duplication in the University of Maine System

Finding: The Task Force identified a strong need for Maine to develop a national reputation for excellence in higher education in order to attract more students, both from within Maine and from other states. The Task Force determined that the creation of “centers of excellence” throughout the University of Maine System could help attract young adults to Maine for education and also have positive impacts on the Maine economy and small business creation.

Recommendation: The Task Force directs the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System to develop a plan and strategy to establish centers of excellence throughout the University of Maine System and to reduce duplication of programs and services. This plan, at a minimum, should specify course and curriculum priorities for the system as a whole and for each individual campus, identify specialized fields of learning that would most likely attract young adults to the University of Maine System and that would additionally enhance the Maine economy and growth of the business sector, specify the most strategic locations for the establishment of specialized fields of learning or “Centers of Excellence,” and outline a realistic timetable for developing and implementing a system of Centers of Excellence. The Task Force further directs the Board of Trustees to provide a report to the Presiding Officers of the Maine State Legislature no later than September 15, 2005, including a description of the implementation process, as well as cost analyses and savings initiatives to implement the “Centers of Excellence” initiative in whole or in part, as well as a plan for transforming the current University of Maine System and its component campuses into a truly unified and seamless higher education system.

9. Expand Loan Repayment Program Offerings

Finding: The Task Force found that financial assistance is an essential and urgent incentive to attract students and young adults to live and work in Maine. In addition, loan repayment programs, which have a solid track record in Maine and other states for encouraging employment in specific fields, provide a better incentive and produce faster results than loan forgiveness programs. Loan forgiveness programs, which begin when a student enters college, have a delayed effect on employment and require up-front monitoring costs. Loan repayment programs, which are available to college graduates when they enter the job market, enable the state to immediately and actively recruit trained people to fill critical jobs for which there are labor shortages.

Recommendation: The Task Force proposes to establish in law a new loan repayment program administered by the Finance Authority of Maine to provide assistance to college graduates who work in certain targeted occupations and industries within Maine. Specifically, the program would be available to college graduates who have outstanding student loans and who either:

- Accept and maintain employment in Maine in an occupation that has been identified as a “labor shortage area” by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the business, labor and higher education sectors, or

- Start a new Maine business in conjunction with the state's Applied Technology Development Center System (incubators).

The new loan repayment program would provide a participant with a loan repayment of \$5,000 per year for up to 4 years. To maintain eligibility each year, a participant would be required to continue working in a labor shortage area or a new business in the State of Maine as described above. The Task Force proposes that the Legislature appropriate \$1,000,000 to the Finance Authority of Maine for this new loan repayment program, and directs the Finance Authority of Maine to report to the Swat Team and the Joint Standing Committees on Education and on Business, Research and Economic Development no later than January 15, 2005.

10. Provide Targeted Housing Assistance

Finding: The Task Force found that the cost of housing is an important factor in the decisions of college graduates, young professionals and young families, about whether to stay in Maine and whether to move to Maine to live and work.

Recommendation: The Task Force directs the Maine State Housing Authority to develop recommendations to create or modify programs with the goal of expanding access to housing for young professionals and young families. The Task Force directs the Maine State Housing Authority specifically to consider strategies to assist renters and first-time homebuyers who are under the age of 35 years and to explore options for linking assistance levels to student loan obligations. The Task Force strongly urges the Maine State Housing Authority to work with the Community College System, Maine's vocational high schools, and community action programs to build affordable housing in high housing cost areas of the State. The Task Force also strongly endorses implementation of pilot housing projects as soon as possible.

The Task Force directs the Maine State Housing Authority to report its findings and recommendations regarding targeted housing assistance to the Swat Team and to the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

11. Implement Universal Rural Broadband Access

Finding: The Task Force found that lack of broadband access in rural areas of the state poses a barrier to young professionals wanting to live and work in Maine.

Recommendation: The Task Force directs the Maine Public Utilities Commission to develop a plan to implement universal rural broadband access statewide by January 15, 2006. The Task Force directs the Public Utilities Commission to report on its plan to the Swat Team and to the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy no later than September 8, 2005, and to provide progress reports to both every 6 months thereafter until implementation is complete.

APPENDIX A

Authorizing Joint Order

**The Presiding Officers' Advisory Task Force on
Creating A Future For Youth in Maine**

Whereas, the average annual population growth in Maine through 2020 is expected to be 0.5 percent compared to the national annual average of 1 percent, which is double the rate of population growth for Maine, and

Whereas, Maine's population currently ranks fourth oldest in the nation, and

Whereas, the number of seniors is expected to increase from 14 percent in the year 2000 to 21 percent in the year 2020, and

Whereas, Maine's senior population will grow by 50 percent over the next two decades compared to its overall population growth of 10 percent over the same time period, and

Whereas, in the 1980s and 1990s, Maine experienced a net out-migration of youth between the ages of 20 and 29 years, and

Whereas, the aging of the workforce and the loss of Maine's youth is creating a "brain drain" and a significantly under-educated and unskilled labor force that contributes to detrimental effects on Maine's economy, and

Whereas, it is necessary to immediately address this issue and take remedial action as soon as possible; now, therefore,

1. Task Force established. We, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House establish the "Presiding Officers' Advisory Task Force on Creating A Future for Youth in Maine" as provided in this enabling Declaration of the Presiding Officers as the "Task Force."

2. Membership. The Task Force consists of 13 members appointed as follows. The President of the Senate shall appoint 6 members and the Speaker of the House shall appoint 7 members.

3. Task Force chairs. The President and Speaker shall each name a co-chair of the Task Force.

4. Appointments; convening of Task Force; number of meetings. All appointments shall be made no later than August 22, 2003. When the appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs of the Task Force shall call and convene the first meeting of the Task Force, which may be no later than September 5, 2003. The Task Force may not meet more than 4 times.

5. Duties. The Task Force shall develop a plan and strategies to retain and attract youth. At a minimum, this plan must include the means by which employment and economic opportunities for youth in Maine can be expanded or created, and the steps necessary to achieve this goal. The Task Force shall consider student loan forgiveness, as well as other incentives to retain and attract youth in Maine and provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully participate in the Maine economy.

6. Staff assistance. The Presiding Officers shall provide for the necessary staffing services to the Task Force.

7. Compensation. The members of the Task Force who are Legislators are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses for attendance at authorized meetings of the Task Force.

8. Report. The Task Force shall submit its report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Presiding Officers no later than December 8, 2003. The Presiding Officers may submit the legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 121st Legislature.

9. Extension. If the Task Force requires a limited extension of time to complete its study and make its report, it may apply to the Presiding Officers, who may grant an extension. Upon submission of its required report, the Task Force terminates.

10. Task Force work plan. The chairs of the Task Force, within 10 days after its first meeting, shall present a work plan to the Presiding Officers for their joint approval. The Task Force may not incur expenses that have not been previously approved by the Presiding Officers.

APPENDIX B

Task Force Membership List

**THE PRESIDING OFFICERS' ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON CREATING
A FUTURE FOR YOUTH IN MAINE**

Appointment(s) by the President

Honorable Elizabeth Mitchell **Chair**
277 Cushnoc Road
Vassalboro, ME 04989
(207)-228-8261

Sen. Christopher G.L. Hall
P.O. Box 218
Bristol, ME 04539
(207)-563-8604

Sen. Christine R. Savage
504 Barrett Hill Road
Union, ME. 04862
(207)-785-4632

Sen. Stephen S. Stanley
HCR 69, Box 466
Medway, ME 04460
(207)-746-5371

Jeremy Pare
21 Second Avenue
Augusta, ME 04330

John Simko
Greenville Town Manager
P.O. Box 1109
Greenville, ME 04441-1109
(207)-695-2261

Appointment(s) by the Speaker

Rep. Patrick Colwell **Chair**
34 Danforth Street
Gardiner, ME 04345
(207)-582-5231

Rep. Jeremy Fischer
12 Dudley Street
Presque Isle, ME 04769
(207)-764-3030

Rep. Jonathan Thomas
P.O. Box 446
Orono, ME. 04473
(207)-356-1479

Megan Gean
36 Saco Road
P. O. Box 278
Alfred, ME 04002
(207)-490-1267

Joe Perry
P. O. Box 353
104 E. Main Street
Searsport, ME 04974
(207)-548-6194

Linda Petrie
78 Middle Avenue
Mexico, ME 04257
(207)-364-8812

Patrice Putman
92 Greenwood Avenue
Winthrop, ME 04364
(207)-377-2324

APPENDIX C

Summary of Task Force Process and Meetings

TASK FORCE PROCESS AND MEETINGS

The Presiding Officers announced their appointments to the Task Force on August 1, 2003 and the Task Force convened on September 5, 2003. The task force held three additional meetings on October 2, October 17, and November 14, 2003. The two October meetings were dedicated to public hearings.

First Meeting

The Task Force held its first meeting on September 5, 2003, in Augusta. The Task Force used its first meeting to gather background information and develop a framework for the remainder of the group's work. The first meeting included several guest presentations. Deirdre Magean, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, and Philip Trostel, Associate Professor, University of Maine, provided the Task Force with a statistical profile of Maine's changing population, including demographic trends and factors in out migration. Molly Donovan, Director of Enrollment Management, The Council on International Education Exchange, discussed how and why her employer recently relocated from New York City to Portland. Finally, Ken Bridges, Senior Economic Research Analyst, and Vanessa Duquette, Assistant to the Commissioner, Maine Department of Labor, provided the task force with an overview of the labor market information published by DOL. In addition, Task Force staff members provided: an overview of existing research related to the migration of college students and recent college graduates; a review of potential strategies to retain and attract youth based on prior studies and initiatives in other states; and case studies of several Maine youth who have left the state for college and employment opportunities.

From the outset of the first meeting, the Task Force chairs highlighted their commitment to taking action and generating solutions. They also emphasized the importance of focusing the group's work and developing concrete, specific and practical recommendations to propose to the Legislature in January. In the course of discussion, the Task Force identified three key decision points in the lives of young people of particular relevance to its work: (1) whether and where to go to college; (2) where to take a first job following college graduation, and (3) where to settle, buy a house and raise a family. These decision points proved to be a useful framework for the Task Force and its consideration of potential interventions to retain and attract youth.

Second and Third Meetings

The Task Force devoted the second and third meetings to public hearings in Portland and Brewer, respectively. The Task Force wanted to hear directly from Maine youth--including high school students, college students and young professionals—and from the state's education and business communities and other interested parties about their recommendations to retain and attract youth.

To help focus the public comment and discussion at the two hearings, the Task Force specifically invited speakers to offer recommendations to retain and attract youth and to provide feedback on the potential effectiveness a student loan forgiveness program. The Task Force also invited high school and college students to speak about whether and how they receive information about higher education and job opportunities in Maine and what might be done to ensure this information is delivered to all students.

The first of two public hearings was held on October 2, 2003, at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. Approximately 17 people testified at the public hearing, including students, faculty and staff from the University of Southern Maine, young (and older) professionals who have left Maine and subsequently returned, and young adults who are considering leaving the state. In addition, the following representatives of the University of Southern Maine each briefly addressed the Task Force: Richard Pattenaude, President; Karl Braithwaite, Dean, Muskie School of Public Service; and Representative Larry Bliss, Director of Career Services and Professional Life Development.

The second of the two public hearings was held on October 17, 2003, at Brewer High School in Brewer. Approximately 45 people testified at the public hearing, including students from Brewer high school, students from the University of Maine, students from Eastern Maine Community College, several University of Maine staff members, a former Deputy Commissioner of Education, a representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a high school teacher from East Millinocket. In addition, the following invited guests addressed the Task Force: James Frost, Principal, Brewer High School; Peter Hoff, President, University of Maine; Joyce Hedlund, President, Eastern Maine Community College; Chris Frank, President, Intelligent Spatial Technologies; and Nathaniel Yellis of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Fourth Meeting

The Task Force held its fourth and final meeting on November 14, 2003, in Augusta. The primary focus of the fourth meeting was the development of the final recommendations based on a review, consideration and discussion of the recommendations that had emerged in the course of the Task Force process. At the fourth meeting, the Task Force chairs also asked two individuals to address the group: Gary Crocker, Director of State and Federal Programs, Maine Community College System, addressed the issue of bottlenecks in the community college system—that is, program areas in which there are insufficient slots to meet student interest and employer demand for trained workers; Laura Fortman, Commissioner, Department of Labor, spoke about collaborative efforts underway within state government to link economic development and workforce development and about her department's web-based Employment Information Guide. In addition, several students from Kennebec Valley Community College in attendance at the meeting were invited to speak briefly about their education and career decisions.

APPENDIX D

Proposed Legislation

An Act to Expand and Coordinate Efforts to Retain and Attract Youth

An Act to Expand Access to Higher Education and Employment for Youth

Resolve, Directing the Maine Public Utilities Commission to
Implement Universal Rural Broadband Access Statewide

An Act to Recruit and Retain College Graduates Through Loan Repayment

Letter to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System
Regarding Cost of Education

An Act to Expand and Coordinate Efforts to Retain and Attract Youth

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

Sec 1. 5 MRSA c. 383, subchapter 1-B is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER 1-B

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

§ 13060-G. Comprehensive marketing strategy

The department shall develop and administer a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Maine to youth and young adults as an attractive location to pursue education, employment and business development opportunities. The department shall consult with the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System, the Finance Authority of Maine, the Maine State Housing Authority and other public and private stakeholders in the development of the marketing strategy. The strategy must highlight the State’s public and private institutions of higher education and the resources available for starting a business in the State. The strategy must be designed to target current, former and prospective residents ages 15 to 35 years.

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA c. 389 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 389

FUTURE FOR YOUTH IN MAINE SWAT TEAM

. Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team established

The Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team referred to in this chapter as “the Swat _____ s established as a policy-making body to bring together representatives of government, education, business and labor in a focused, coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state’s economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people.

1. Policy-making members; appointment. The Swat Team consists of the following 15 policy-making members, including at least 2 members under the age of 35 years, appointed as follows:

A. Five members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

(1) Three members representing business; one business representative must be an individual under the age of 35 who has started his or her own business;

(2) One member representing labor and workforce development;

(3) One member who is a college student, alternating between a student representative on the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and a student representative on the Board of Trustees of the Community College System;

B. Five members appointed by the Speaker of the House as follows:

(1) Four members representing business;

(2) One member representing labor and workforce development;

C. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System or the chancellor's designee;

D. The President of the Maine Community College System or the president's designee;

E. One representative of the Department of Economic and Community Development, appointed by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development;

F. One representative of the Department of Education, appointed by the Commissioner of Education; and

G. One representative of the Department of Labor, appointed by the Commissioner of Labor.

2. Advisory members; appointment. The Swat Team includes 8 non-voting advisory members, appointed as follows:

A. Two members of the Maine Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;

B. Two members of the Maine House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

C. Two representatives of K-12 education, appointed by the Presiding Officers of the Legislature; one K-12 representative must be a high school student, alternately selected by the Dirigo Boys' State and Dirigo Girls' State organizations;

D. One representative of the Finance Authority of Maine, appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine; and

E. One representative of the Maine State Housing Authority, appointed by the Director of the Maine State Housing Authority; and

3. Terms. Members appointed to the Swat Team serve 3-year terms, except for the high school student and college student who each serve 1-year terms. The terms of the initially appointed members, aside from the student appointees, must be staggered as follows: four of the initial policy-making appointees serve for one year, 5 serve for 2 years, and 5 serve for 3 years; 2 of the initial advisory members serve for one year, 2 serve for 2 years and 3 serve for 3 years.

4. Compensation. Members of the Swat Team are not entitled to compensation for their services except for those members of the Legislature appointed to the Swat Team who receive the legislative per diem.

§13152. Duties

1. Policy development and implementation. The Swat Team shall:

A. Develop and oversee the implementation of comprehensive, coordinated, and focused economic development policies that optimize the use of the State's resources and investments to promote economic growth and development;

B. Develop and oversee the implementation of educational policies that focus on meeting the needs of the labor market, the business community, and economic development priorities;

C. Develop and implement short-term and long-term strategies to retain and attract youth by improving coordination and reducing fragmentation within and between labor, education, business and economic development sectors. Specific responsibilities in this area include:

(1) Develop and issue a comprehensive action plan for economic development and education policy initiatives specifically designed to expand opportunities for youth.

(2) Create a comprehensive web-based electronic clearinghouse of information regarding higher education, career opportunities and jobs available in Maine, including the fastest growing and highest-paying jobs in the state. The Swat Team shall ensure that this resource is well publicized and easily accessible to all residents and all students attending high school or college in Maine. The Swat Team shall provide statewide access to this resource provided no later than January 15, 2005, and shall update the information at least every two months thereafter.

(3) Develop and implement an initiative to provide all high school students in the state with information about higher education and career opportunities in Maine. This must include information regarding public and private post-secondary education programs in the state, career paths, required education and training, and lists of high-growth occupations, highest-paying jobs and occupational shortages.

The Swat Team shall implement this initiative statewide no later than January 15, 2005.

(4) Develop and implement a program to bring volunteers from business and government to high schools throughout the state to provide students with information about career opportunities and the education required for different careers. The Swat Team shall implement this program statewide no later than January 15, 2005.

2. Higher education planning. The Swat Team shall:

A. Work with the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to develop a plan for higher education that will meet the needs of the Maine economy and business community for research and development, commercialization of products and services, emerging technologies and workforce training.

B. Review the need for funding for the development of nursing programs within the Maine Community College System and specifically consider the needs of York Community College to establish such a program. The Swat Team shall make a proposal to the 122nd Legislature regarding funding for community college nursing programs.

3. Oversight. The Swat Team shall monitor and oversee the development and implementation of initiatives undertaken by state agencies and organizations to create opportunities for youth through economic development, education, employment and other strategies, and shall report on these initiatives as part of the reporting requirements under subsection 4.

4. Report. The Swat Team shall report all findings, accomplishments, future plans and policy recommendations, including its comprehensive action plan for economic and educational policy initiatives, to the Presiding Officers of the Legislature, who shall refer the reports to the appropriate joint standing committees of the Legislature for review. The Swat Team shall make its report to the Presiding Officers no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

Sec. 3. 20-A MRS §10902-A is enacted to read:

§10902-A. Coordination of higher education planning and business sector needs

1. Collaborative process. The trustees shall, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System, develop and implement a formal process to work collaboratively with public and private sector representatives of business, industry and economic development to coordinate higher education planning and resource allocation decisions with the needs of the Maine economy and business sector.

2. Comprehensive plan. The trustees, in conjunction with the Trustees of the Maine Community College System, shall develop a comprehensive plan that coordinates higher

education planning with the needs of the business sector. The trustees shall consult with the Future for Youth in Maine Task Force in development of the plan. The plan must, at a minimum, address the needs of the business sector with respect to research and development, the commercialization of new products and services, business development and workforce training.

3. Report. The trustees, in conjunction with the Trustees of the Maine Community College System, shall report on the collaborative process and comprehensive plan outlined in this section to the Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team, the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters and the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over business matters no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA 12703-A is enacted to read:

12703-A. Coordination of higher education planning and business sector needs

1. Collaborative process. The board of trustees shall, in collaboration with the Trustees of the University of Maine System, develop and implement a formal process to work collaboratively with public and private sector representatives of business, industry and economic development to coordinate higher education planning and resource allocation decisions with the needs of the Maine economy and business sector.

2. Comprehensive plan. The board of trustees shall, in collaboration with the Trustees of the University of Maine System, shall develop a comprehensive plan that coordinates higher education planning with the needs of the business sector. The board of trustees shall consult with the Future for Youth in Maine Task Force in development of the plan. The plan must, at a minimum, address the needs of the business sector with respect to research and development, the commercialization of new products and services, business development and workforce training.

3. Report. The board of trustees, in conjunction with the Trustees of the University of Maine System, shall report on the collaborative process and comprehensive plan outlined in this section to the Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team, the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters and the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over business matters no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

Sec. 5. 30-A MRSA §4722, sub-§ 1, ¶ E-1 is enacted to read:

E. Expand access to housing for young professionals and families. The Maine State Housing Authority shall develop recommendations to create or modify programs with the goal of expanding access to housing for young professionals and young families. The Maine State Housing Authority shall specifically consider strategies to assist renters and first-time homebuyers who are under the age of 35 years and explore options for linking assistance levels to student loan obligations. The Maine State Housing Authority shall collaborate with the Maine Community College System, vocational high schools and

community action programs to encourage the development of affordable housing in high housing cost areas of the State.

(1) The Maine State Housing Authority shall report its findings and recommendations regarding expanded access to housing for young professionals and families to the Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team and to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this bill is to create and expand opportunities to retain and attract youth. This bill does the following:

1. It directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Maine to youth and young adults, ages 15 to 35 years, as an attractive location to pursue education, employment and business development opportunities.

2. It establishes the “Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team” to bring together representatives of government, education, business and labor in a focused, coordinated effort to realign, streamline and oversee the state’s economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people. The Swat Team consists of following 15 policy-making members, including at least 2 members under the age of 35 years, and 8 advisory members.

3. It directs the trustees of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to develop and implement a formal process to work collaboratively with public and private sector representatives of business, industry and economic development to coordinate higher education planning and resource allocation decisions with the needs of the Maine economy and business sector. The bill also directs the trustees to develop a comprehensive plan to coordinate higher education with the needs of the business sector and requires the plan to address the needs of the business sector with respect to research and development, the commercialization of new products and services, business development and workforce training.

4. It directs the Maine State Housing Authority to develop recommendations to create or modify programs with the goal of expanding access to housing for young professionals and young families and specifically to consider strategies to assist renters and first-time homebuyers who are under the age of 35 years and explore options for linking assistance levels to student loan obligations.

An Act to Expand Access to Higher Education and Employment for Youth

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

PART A

Sec. A-1. 5 MRSA c. 383, subchapter 1-C is enacted to read

SUBCHAPTER 1-C

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

13060-H. Internship program

1. Program established. An internship program is established to provide students attending college in Maine with opportunities to obtain work experience in technology-based businesses within the Applied Technology Development Center System, established in section 15321, and in occupations and industries experiencing labor shortages. The department shall administer the program. The department shall consult with the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System, the Department of Labor and the Applied Technology Development Center System in the development of the program. The department shall consult with the Department of Labor to define labor shortage areas for the purposes of this program and shall identify annually those industries and occupations that meet the definition.

2. Report. The department shall report on the progress and status of the program to any policy-making body established in state law to direct a coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state's economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters and to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over business matters, no later than January 15, 2005, and annually thereafter.

Sec. A-2. Appropriation. The following funds are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Part of this Act:

(\$100,000 to Department of Economic and Community Development in 2004-2005.)

PART B

Sec. B-1. Boards of Trustees of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System directed to remove barriers to student transfer within and between systems. The Boards of Trustees of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System shall develop and implement a consistent policy regarding the transfer of credits between campuses within each system and between the two systems. The

policy must apply to all campuses and must not discriminate against any particular campus. The policy must specifically address transfer of credits with respect to academic majors and minors and must be designed to remove barriers to student transfer within and between campuses and facilitate completion of the students' education in a timely and affordable manner. At a minimum, the policies developed by the Boards must provide for the approval of credits in courses that a student has satisfactorily completed in that student's academic major and minor areas of study and is transferring to a different college campus of the University System or the Community College System or between the University and Community College Systems. The courses accepted for credit in a student's academic major or minor must be relevant to the areas of study in which the student is seeking a degree. The Boards of Trustees are urged to develop and implement a policy that reflects a truly unified system of higher education in the State of Maine.

Sec. B-2. Reporting date established. The Boards of Trustees of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College system shall report on the development and implementation of transfer credit policy to any policy-making body established in state law to direct a coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state's economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people and to the joint standing committee of the legislature having jurisdiction over education matters, no later than January 15, 2005.

PART C

Sec. C-1. University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System directed to develop entrepreneurship education. The University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System shall work together to develop a unified, comprehensive approach to entrepreneurship education. This initiative must include specific courses and workshops on starting and operating a small business and must be available to students throughout the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System.

Sec. C-2. Reporting date established. The University of Maine System and the Maine Community College system shall make an initial report on the development and implementation of entrepreneurship education to any policy-making body established in state law to direct a coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state's economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people and to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters, no later than January 15, 2005, and make a final report no later than January 15, 2007.

PART D

Sec. D-1. Authorizing the Maine Legislature to provide funding toward the establishment of a radiology technology program at Kennebec Valley Community College. The Maine Legislature shall provide funding to support the establishment of a two-year associate

degree program in radiology technology at Kennebec Valley Community College to address the shortage of radiology technicians in the State of Maine.

Sec. D-2. Appropriation. The following funds are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Part of this Act:

(\$100,000 effective July 1, 2005 to Maine Community College System)

PART E

Sec. E-1. Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System to develop “Centers of Excellence” throughout the University of Maine System. The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System develop a plan and strategy to establish centers of excellence throughout the University of Maine System and to reduce duplication of programs and services. This plan, at a minimum, should specify course and curriculum priorities for the system as a whole and for each individual campus, identify specialized fields of learning that would most likely attract young adults to the University of Maine System and that would additionally enhance the Maine economy and growth of the business sector, and specify the most strategic locations for these specialized fields of learning or “Centers of Excellence.” In addition, the plan should outline a realistic timetable for developing and implementing a unified system of Centers of Excellence.

Sec. E-2. Board of Trustees to issue a report to include cost analyses and savings initiatives to implement “Centers of Excellence.” The Board of Trustees shall issue a report to the Presiding Officers of the Legislature no later than September 15, 2005, that includes a description of the implementation plan, estimated costs, and savings associated with the reduction in duplication of courses and curriculums and any other cost reductions that can be attained by eliminating low priorities and attracting more students to the University of Maine System. This report must also include a plan for transforming the current System current University of Maine System and its component campuses into a truly unified and seamless higher education system.

PART F

Sec. F-1. State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education to implement plan to prepare all high school students for post-secondary education. The State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education shall develop and implement a plan, including specific strategies, to ensure that every high school student in the state has the opportunity to complete the core courses required for college entry and is encouraged to explore post-secondary educational opportunities.

Sec. F-2. Reporting date established. The State Board and the Commissioner make an initial report on this initiative to any policy-making body established in state law to direct a coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state’s economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people and to the joint standing committee

of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters, no later than January 15, 2005, and make a final report no later than January 15, 2007.

SUMMARY

Part A directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to develop and administer an internship program to provide college students in Maine with opportunities to work in technology-based businesses in the Applied Technology Development System and in occupations and industries experiencing labor shortages.

Part B directs the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and the Board of Trustees of the Community College System to develop and implement a consistent policy regarding the transfer of credits between campuses within each system and between the two systems, in order to remove barriers to student transfer within and between campuses and facilitate completion of the students' education in a timely and affordable manner.

Part C directs the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to work together to develop a unified, comprehensive approach to entrepreneurship education throughout both systems, including specific courses and workshops on starting and operating a small business.

Part D authorizes the Legislature to appropriate \$100,000 effective July 1, 2005 to provide funding for the creation of a two-year associate degree program in radiology technology at Kennebec Valley Community College.

Part E directs the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System develop a plan and strategy to establish centers of excellence throughout the University of Maine System and to reduce duplication of programs and services.

Part F directs the State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education to develop and implement plan to ensure that every high school student in Maine has the opportunity to complete the core courses required for college entry and is encouraged to explore post-secondary educational opportunities.

**Resolve, Directing the Maine Public Utilities Commission to Implement Universal Rural
Broadband Access Statewide**

Preamble. Whereas, the State of Maine does not have universal broadband access and the lack of broadband access in rural areas of the state poses a barrier to young professionals wanting to live and work in Maine; now, therefore be it:

Sec. 1. Directing the Maine Public Utilities Commission to Implement Universal Rural Broadband Access Statewide. Resolved: That the Maine Public Utilities Commission shall develop and implement a plan to provide universal rural broadband access statewide by January 15, 2006.

Sec. 2. Reporting date established. Resolved: That the Maine Public Utilities Commission shall report on its plan and the status of implementation to any policy-making body established in state law to direct a coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state's economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people and to the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over telecommunications matters no later than September 8, 2005, and every 6 months thereafter until implementation is complete.

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Maine Public Utilities Commission to develop a plan to implement universal rural broadband access statewide by January 15, 2006. The Public Utilities Commission is directed to report on this initiative no later than September 8, 2005, and every 6 months thereafter until implementation is complete.

An Act to Recruit and Retain College Graduates Through Loan Repayment

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

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 428-A is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 428-A

FUTURE FOR YOUTH IN MAINE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

§12521. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

1. Authority. "Authority" means the Finance Authority of Maine.

2. Eligible employment position. "Eligible employment position" means a full-time position within the State as the founder or employee of a technology-based business developed within the Applied Technology Development Center System, as established in Title 5, section 15321, or a full-time position within an occupation or industry that is defined as a labor shortage area, in accordance with subsection 3, at the time of hire.

3. Labor shortage area. "Labor shortage area" means an occupation or industry in the state identified by the Department of Labor, in consultation with the Department of Economic and Community Development, as facing a shortage of qualified workers.

4. Program. "Program" means the Future for Youth Loan Repayment Program.

§12522. Future for Youth in Maine Loan Repayment Program

1. Establishment; administration. The program is established to recruit and retain college graduates in the State to start new technology-based businesses and to work in occupations and industries facing labor shortages. The authority shall administer the program.

2. Eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements must be established by rule of the authority and, at a minimum, must require:

A. That the applicant have received a bachelor's degree or graduate degree within 2 years of the date of application;

B. That the applicant have outstanding education loans; and

- Recommended Legislation

An Act to Recruit and Retain College Graduates Through Loan Repayment

C. That the applicant be willing to accept and maintain employment in an eligible employment position.

3. Application. Application must be made directly to the authority at a time and in a format to be determined by the authority.

4. Maximum loan repayment. The maximum loan repayment amount available to a participant in the program is \$5,000 per year, for a maximum of 4 years.

5. Loan repayment agreement; provisions. The authority shall enter into program loan repayment agreements with participants, on terms and conditions acceptable to the authority, which at a minimum must require the participant and the participant's employer to certify annually, before payment of any installment by the authority under the program loan repayment agreement, that the participant has been employed in an eligible employment position for the preceding 12-month period. Payment of any installment by the authority must be made directly for credit to the participant's account at the financial institution certified by the participant as responsible for administration of that person's student loans.

§12523. Nonlapsing fund

A nonlapsing, interest-earning, revolving fund under the jurisdiction of the authority is created to carry out the purposes of this chapter. Any unexpended balance in the fund carries over for continued use under this chapter. The authority may receive, invest and expend, on behalf of the fund, money from gifts, grants, bequests and donations in addition to money appropriated or allocated by the State. Loan repayments under this chapter must be invested by the authority, as provided by law, with the earned income to be added to the fund. Money received by the authority on behalf of the fund, except interest income, must be used for the designated purpose; interest income may be used for the designated purpose or to pay administrative costs incurred by the authority for the operation of the program.

§12524. Rules

The authority shall establish rules necessary to implement this chapter. The rules authorized by this section must be adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

12525. Report

The authority shall report on the program to the any policy-making body established in state law to direct a coordinated effort to develop, realign, streamline and oversee the state's economic development policy and specific efforts to retain and attract young people, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters and to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over business matters no later than January 15, 2005 and annually thereafter.

Sec. 2. Appropriation. The following funds are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act:

(\$1,000,000 to Finance Authority of Maine)

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Future for Youth in Maine Loan Repayment Program to recruit and retain college graduates to start new technology-based businesses and to work in occupations and industries facing labor shortages in the State. The program provides loan repayment of up to \$5,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years for graduates who are employed in new technology-based businesses, within the Applied Technology Development Center System, or in occupations or industries that are facing labor shortages. The bill directs the Finance Authority of Maine to administer the program.

January 6, 2004

Board of Trustees
University of Maine System
107 Maine Avenue
Bangor, ME 04401

Dear _____:

We are writing as chairs of the Presiding Officers' Advisory Task Force on Creating a Future for Youth in Maine. During the course of its work, the Task Force became concerned that the level of scholarships and financial aid packages currently offered by the University of Maine System place the state at a disadvantage in terms of retaining youth in Maine and attracting youth to Maine for undergraduate studies. The Task Force heard repeated testimony that the cost of an education at the University of Maine System is greater than the cost at many out-of-state public and private colleges. The Task Force also learned that the University of Maine System's policy regarding in-state/out-of-state residency status places the state a disadvantage in terms of retaining college graduates in Maine for graduate studies.

The Task Force strongly urges the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System to:

1. Examine, develop and implement strategies to increase scholarships and financial aid packages, with the ultimate goal of moving Maine into a position of net importer of college students—that is, more students enter Maine from out-of-state to attend college than leave Maine to attend college in other states, and
2. Review its policies regarding in-state/out-of-state tuition for graduate students and specifically develop a policy to waive out-of-state tuition for any graduate student who has earned an undergraduate degree from a Maine college (public or private), including at least 3 academic years in residence in the state.

The Task Force respectfully requests that the Board of Trustees report on these two efforts to the Future for Youth in Maine Swat Team and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters no later than January 15, 2005.

Sincerely,

Patrick C. Colwell, Speaker of the House
House Chair

Honorable Elizabeth Mitchell
Senate Chair