

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE
118TH LEGISLATURE**

**FIRST REGULAR SESSION
AND
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

**BILL SUMMARIES
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
LABOR**

JULY 1997

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Maine State Legislature

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**ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR AND FIRST SPECIAL SESSIONS**

**Summary Of Legislation Before The Joint Standing Committees
August 1997**

We are pleased to provide this summary of bills that were considered by the 15 Joint Standing Committees of the Maine Legislature staffed by this office. The document is a compilation of bill summaries which describe each bill, committee amendments and other relevant amendments, as well as the final action taken on the bill. Also included are statistical summaries of bill activity this Session for the Legislature and each of its joint standing committees.

The document is organized for convenient reference to information on bills handled by the joint standing committees. It is organized alphabetically by committees and within committees by bill (LD) number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor for each bill and the lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are listed by paper number. Two indices, a subject index and a numerical index by LD number are provided for easy reference to bills. They are located at the back of the document. A separate publication, History and Final Disposition of Legislative Documents, may also be helpful in providing information on the disposition of bills. These bill summaries also are available at the Law and Legislative Reference Library and on the Internet (www.state.me.us/legis/opla).

Final action on each bill is noted to the right of the bill title. The abbreviations used for various categories of final action are as follows:

- CARRIED OVER*.....*Bill carried over to Second Regular Session*
- CON RES XXX*.....*Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses*
- CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE*.....*Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died*
- DIED BETWEEN BODIES*.....*House & Senate disagree; bill died*
- DIED IN CONCURRENCE*.....*One body accepts ONTP report; the other indefinitely postpones the bill*
- DIED ON ADJOURNMENT*.....*Action incomplete when session ended; bill died*
- EMERGENCY*.....*Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days*
- FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE*.....*Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote*
- FAILED ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE*.....*Bill failed to get majority vote*
- FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT*.....*Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote*
- INDEF PP*.....*Bill Indefinitely Postponed*
- ONTP*.....*Ought Not To Pass report accepted*
- OTP ND*.....*Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft*
- OTP ND/NT*.....*Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft/New Title*
- P&S XXX*.....*Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law*
- PUBLIC XXX*.....*Chapter # of enacted Public Law*
- RESOLVE XXX*.....*Chapter # of finally passed Resolve*
- UNSIGNED*.....*Bill held by Governor*
- VETO SUSTAINED*.....*Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto*

Please note the effective date for all non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session (unless otherwise specified in a particular law) is June 26, 1997 and September 19, 1997 for the First Special Session.

David E. Boulter, Director

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and bargaining agents, including procedures for appeal of such determinations. The law prohibits specified acts of agricultural employers and agricultural labor organizations and provides for enforcement of those prohibitions by the Maine Labor Relations Board and subsequently through civil action in Superior Court. Among other things, the law prohibits agricultural employers from locking out their employees and prohibits their employees from striking. The rights and obligations established by this chapter only apply to egg processing facilities that have over 500,000 laying birds and that employ more than 100 agricultural employees.

LD 1661

**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon
Commission on Hunger and Food Security**

CARRIED OVER

Sponsor(s)
BENOIT

Committee Report

Amendments Adopted

LD 1661 was jointly referred to the Labor Committee and the Taxation Committee. The bill proposes to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Hunger and Food Security by making the following changes in state law.

1. It proposes to set the state minimum wage at 25¢ more than the federal minimum wage and establish an out-of-poverty wage for state employees and state contractors equal to the amount necessary to produce an income equal to the federal poverty guideline for a family of three.
2. It proposes a state earned income tax credit equal to 25% of the federal earned income tax credit and provides that persons not required to file for federal income tax purposes are not required to file for state income tax purposes and are not required to pay state income tax.
3. It proposes to reestablish state participation in extended unemployment benefits and provides that failure of child care or transportation arrangements necessary for work are not grounds for denying unemployment benefits.
4. The bill maintains transitional child care benefits at a minimum of the level for fiscal year 1996-97.
5. The Department of Human Services is required to apply for a federal waiver to permit Medicaid coverage to families up to 185% of federal poverty guidelines.
6. It proposes to require a school to participate in the school breakfast program if at least 35% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
7. It proposes food security motor vehicle registration plates with revenues distributed to the Maine Food Security Fund and creates a voluntary food security income tax checkoff.
8. The bill proposes to establish the Office of Food Security within the Department of Human Services to coordinate and monitor food assistance programs and administer a food security outreach program and the Maine Food Security Fund.
9. It proposes the Maine Millennium Commission on Hunger and Food Security to evaluate the actions taken under the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Hunger and Food Security and investigate the condition of the State with regard to hunger and food security. The proposed commission will conduct its review in the years 2000

and 2001 and report to the Legislature that convenes in December 2001. This bill was carried over to the Second Regular Session.

LD 1708 **Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study the Issue of Discrimination against Veterans in Workers' Compensation Cases** **CARRIED OVER**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
LANE RUHLIN		

LD 1708 proposes to establish the Commission to Study the Issue of Discrimination against Veterans in Workers' Compensation Cases to determine whether insurance companies are discriminating against veterans in processing workers' compensation claims. The resolve was carried over to the Second Regular Session.

LD 1709 **An Act Regarding Errors and Inconsistencies in the Maine Employment Security Law** **PUBLIC 293**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
PENDLETON R CATHCART	OTP-AM	H-482 S-254 MURRAY

LD 1709 proposed to clarify references to the Commissioner of Labor and make several technical corrections to the employment security laws.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-482) proposed to delete a reference to the "commissioner" and restore the current law reference to the "commission" as the entity with discretion to deduct from future unemployment benefits amounts paid erroneously to a person.

Senate Amendment "A" (S-254) proposed to correct technical errors in the bill on behalf of the Committee on Bills in the Second Reading.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 1997, chapter 293 clarifies references to the Commissioner of Labor and makes several technical corrections to the employment security laws.

LD 1724 **An Act to Amend the Unemployment Insurance Laws** **ONTP**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
DAGGETT	ONTP	

LD 1724 proposed to entitle school bus drivers and part-time faculty members of the University of Maine System to receive unemployment benefits between school years or terms.