# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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### STATE OF MAINE

125<sup>th</sup> Legislature First Regular Session



Summaries of bills, adopted amendments and laws enacted or finally passed

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

July 2011

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### STAFF:

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## STATE OF MAINE

 $125^{\text{TH}}$  LEGISLATURE FIRST REGULAR SESSION



# LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILL SUMMARIES AND ENACTED LAWS

This Legislative Digest of Bill Summaries and Enacted Laws summarizes all LDs and adopted amendments and all laws enacted or finally passed during the First Regular Session of the 125<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature.

The *Digest* is arranged alphabetically by committee and within each committee by Legislative Document (LD) number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor and lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each LD title. All adopted amendments are summarized and listed by paper number. A subject index is included with each committee. The appendices include a summary of relevant session statistics, an index of all bills by LD number and an index of enacted laws by law type and chapter number.

Final action on each LD is noted to the right of the LD title. The following describes the various final actions.

CARRIED OVER	carried over to a subsequent session of the Legislature
CON RES XXX	chapter # of constitutional resolution passed by both houses
CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE	
DIED BETWEEN HOUSES	House & Senate disagreed; legislation died
DIED IN CONCURRENCE	defeated in each house, but on different motions; legislation died
DIED ON ADJOURNMENT	action incomplete when session ended; legislation died
EMERGENCYenac	ted law takes effect sooner than 90 days after session adjournment
FAILED, EMERGENCY ENACTMENT or FINA	AL PASSAGE emergency failed to receive required 2/3 vote
FAILED, ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE	failed to receive final majority vote
FAILED, MANDATE ENACTMENT	legislation proposing local mandate failed required 2/3 vote
HELD BY GOVERNORGovernor has n	not signed; final disposition to be determined at subsequent session
LEAVE TO WITHDRAW	sponsor's request to withdraw legislation granted
	ruled out of order by the presiding officer; legislation died
INDEF PP	indefinitely postponed; legislation died
	r REPORT X ought-not-to-pass report accepted; legislation died
P&S XXX	chapter # of enacted private & special law
	chapter # of enacted public Law
RESOLVE XXX	chapter # of finally passed resolve
	Legislature failed to override Governor's veto

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session of the 125<sup>th</sup> Legislature is September 28, 2011. The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure may be found in the enacted law summary for that legislation.

### Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

#### LD 1341 An Act To Provide Rent Relief to Low-income Maine Residents

**ONTP** 

Sponsor(s)	Committee Report	Amendments Adopted
CHIPMAN	ONTP	

This bill amends the Circuitbreaker Program to increase the percentage of rent paid that may be claimed by an elderly household and a nonelderly household to 100% of the gross rent actually paid; the current claim limits are 25% and 20%, respectively, of the gross rent actually paid.

### **LD 1350** An Act To Provide Income Tax Relief

**ONTP** 

**ONTP** 

Sponsor(s)	Committee Report	Amendments Adopted
STUCKEY ALFOND	ONTP	

This bill reforms the Maine income tax by establishing a rate structure that includes 6 income tax bracket thresholds with top marginal tax rates from 0% to 10%. The income thresholds for each rate would be calculated by the State Tax Assessor every 5 years to maintain the same level of progressivity of the tax by maintaining the same percentage of taxpayers in each top marginal rate category.

# LD 1351 An Act To Improve and Simplify the Application for Benefits under the Circuitbreaker Program

Sponsor(s)	Committee Report	Amendments Adopted
STUCKEY ALFOND	ONTP	

This bill makes the following changes to the Maine Residents Property Tax Program, also known as the Circuitbreaker Program.

- 1. It simplifies the income calculation by excluding from household income the income of dependents and certain miscellaneous income. It also excludes from household income other income, such as nontaxable strike benefits, but only if the total of that income is less than \$5,000.
- 2. It changes the time for filing an application. For calendar year 2011 benefits, the application period is August 1, 2012 through May 31, 2013. For calendar year 2012 benefits, the application period is August 1, 2013 through November 30, 2013. For benefit periods after 2012, the application must be filed during or after January and on or before November 15th of the following calendar year.
- 3. It expands eligibility under the program by increasing maximum income thresholds from \$60,000 to \$80,000 for single-member households and from \$80,000 to \$110,000 for households with 2 or more members. The bill also increases the maximum benefit from \$2,000 to \$3,000.