# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the

**LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**

at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib

# STATE OF MAINE
## 125TH LEGISLATURE
### FIRST REGULAR SESSION

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

# JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

July 2011

**MEMBERS:**

SEN. A. DAVID TRAHAN, CHAIR
SEN. DAVID R. HASTINGS, III
SEN. RICHARD G. WOODBURY

REP. L. GARY KNIGHT, CHAIR
REP. G. PAUL WATERHOUSE
REP. BRUCE A. BICKFORD
REP. PAUL EDWARD BENNETT
REP. DAVID R. BURNS
REP. R. RYAN HARMON
REP. SETH A. BERRY
REP. DONALD E. PILON
REP. MARK E. BRYANT
REP. ELSPETH M. FLEMINGS

**STAFF:**

ELIZABETH F. COOPER, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
SCOTT MILLER, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND PROGRAM REVIEW
5 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333
(207) 287-1635

# STATE OF MAINE

## 125TH 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 125th 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* ..............................*Committee of Conference unable to agree; legislation died*
*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*
*EMERGENCY* ...........................................*enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days after session adjournment*
*FAILED, EMERGENCY ENACTMENT or FINAL 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 GOVERNOR* .............*Governor has not signed; final disposition to be determined at subsequent session*
*LEAVE TO WITHDRAW* ...................................................................*sponsor's request to withdraw legislation granted*
*NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY* .......................*ruled out of order by the presiding officer; legislation died*
*INDEF PP* .......................................................................................... *indefinitely postponed; legislation died*
*ONTP, ACCEPTED, MAJORITY, MINORITY or REPORT X* .... *ought-not-to-pass report accepted; legislation died*
*P&S XXX* ............................................................................................. *chapter # of enacted private & special law*
*PUBLIC XXX* ............................................................................................. *chapter # of enacted public Law*
*RESOLVE XXX* ............................................................................................. *chapter # of finally passed resolve*
*VETO SUSTAINED* ............................................................................. *Legislature failed to override Governor's veto*

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session of the 125th 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.

**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**

| Sponsor(s) | Committee Report | Amendments Adopted |
|---|---|---|
| STUCKEY | ONTP | |
| ALFOND | | |

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**                    **ONTP**
**Circuitbreaker Program**

| Sponsor(s) | Committee Report | Amendments Adopted |
|---|---|---|
| STUCKEY | ONTP | |
| ALFOND | | |

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.