

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
115TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to H.P. 1054, L.D. 1543, Bill, "An Act to Penalize the Department of Human Services for Failing to Make Prompt Child Support Payments to Obligees"

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'An Act to Facilitate Prompt Child Support Payments from the Department of Human Services'

Further amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and before the statement of fact and inserting in its place the following:

'Emergency preamble. Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, late child support payments inflict undue hardship on families throughout the State; and

Whereas, action should be taken immediately to ensure that payments are forwarded from the Department of Human Services in a more timely manner; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

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Sec. 1. 19 MRSA §515-A is enacted to read:

§515-A. Complaint and inquiry unit

The department shall maintain a centralized system to receive and respond to complaints and inquiries from persons who are eligible for support enforcement services. The department shall also use the system to identify and eliminate chronic problems within the department's support enforcement program.

Sec. 2. **Electronic transfer of benefits.** The Department of Human Services shall study the feasibility of transferring benefits electronically to persons receiving child support enforcement services, and shall report its findings to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over human resource matters by January 15, 1993. A copy of the findings must be submitted to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council.

Sec. 3. **Effective date.** This Act takes effect March 1, 1992.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act takes effect when approved, except as otherwise indicated.

FISCAL NOTE

The Department of Human Services will maintain a complaint and inquiry unit for the support enforcement program, study the feasibility of transferring benefits electronically to persons receiving child support enforcement services and submit its findings within existing budgeted resources.'

STATEMENT OF FACT

This amendment replaces the original bill. The original bill penalizes the Department of Human Services if child support payments are not forwarded to recipients within 14 days of receipt by the department. The amendment establishes a complaint and inquiry unit within the Department of Human Services, Division of Support Enforcement, to enable the department to address late payments and other issues in the division. The amendment adds an emergency preamble, emergency clause and fiscal note to the bill. The Legislature takes no position and

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to H.P. 1054, L.D. 1543

2 does not wish to influence in any way the child support
enforcement case currently before the United States District
4 Court for the District of Maine, Albiston, et al. vs. Ives et
al., Docket No. 90-0262-P.

Reported by the Committee on Human Resources
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COMMITTEE AMENDMENT