MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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118th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1997

Legislative Document

No. 830

H.P. 605

House of Representatives, February 6, 1997

Resolve, Directing the Workers' Compensation Board to Study the Effect on Injured Workers of Delayed Medical Treatment and Payment of Valid Claims by Insurance Companies.

Reference to the Committee on Labor suggested and ordered printed.

OSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative WINSOR of Norway.

Sec. 1. Study of delayed payment of claims. Resolved: That the Workers' Compensation Board shall design and conduct a study on the frequency and impact of delays in the initial payment of benefits to injured workers when the injury is clearly work-related. The study must be designed so that the data is compiled on the percentage of claims delayed for 3 months or longer for which a benefit is ultimately paid to the worker; the distribution of such delays across insurance providers or employers; and, to the extent possible, the frequency with which such delays lengthen a disability, increase medical costs or rehabilitation. interfere with successful The Workers' Compensation Board may rely on staff to conduct this study and may also request the assistance without payment of any other person or group in providing information for this study; and be it further

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Sec. 2. Report and recommendations. Resolved: That the Workers' Compensation Board shall report by February 15, 1999 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over labor matters on the study conducted pursuant to section 1. The report must contain a discussion of the data compiled, alternative approaches that may be taken to address any problems identified and the board's recommendations, if any. The board may submit with its report legislation necessary to implement it recommendations.

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SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Workers' Compensation Board to design and conduct a study on the frequency and impact of delaying the initial payment of benefits to injured workers. The study must address whether the delays in benefit payment lengthen the period of disability, increase medical costs or interfere with successful rehabilitation of the injured worker. The report of the board must be submitted by February 15, 1999 to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor.