

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
119TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to S.P. 298, L.D. 870, Bill, "An Act to Improve School Safety and Learning Environments"

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting in its place the following:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §15607, sub-§3, as repealed and replaced by PL 1999, c. 401, Pt. GG, §3, is amended to read:

3. Appropriation for the state share of adjustments, debt service and foundation; single account. Appropriate the necessary funds for the State's share for general purpose aid for local schools with a separate amount for each of the following components:

A. Adjustments described in section 15602, subsection 13; section 15612; and section 15613, except section 15613, subsection 13, including an appropriation for special education pupils placed directly by the State for:

(1) Tuition and board for pupils placed directly by the State in accordance with rules adopted or amended by the commissioner; and

(2) Special educational tuition and other tuition for residents of state-operated institutions attending programs in school administrative units or private schools in accordance with rules adopted or amended by the commissioner;

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2 B. Debt service subsidies described in section 15611. If
the appropriation for debt service differs from the amount
4 determined in accordance with section 15611, subsection 2,
then the debt service millage limit specified in section
6 15611, subsection 1 may be adjusted up or down as necessary;
and

8 C. Foundation subsidies described in section 15610 and
section 15613, subsection 13 and in chapter 606-A.

10 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §15905, sub-§1, ¶A**, as repealed and replaced
12 by PL 1997, c. 469, §2, is amended to read:

14 A. The state board may approve projects as long as no
project approval will cause debt service costs, as defined
16 in section 15603, subsection 8, paragraph A, to exceed the
maximum limits specified in Table 1 in subsequent fiscal
18 years.

20 Table 1

22 Fiscal year	Maximum Debt Service Limit
24 1990	\$ 48,000,000
1991	\$ 57,000,000
26 1992	\$ 65,000,000
1993	\$ 67,000,000
28 1994	\$ 67,000,000
1995	\$ 67,000,000
30 1996	\$ 67,000,000
1997	\$ 67,000,000
32 1998	\$ 67,000,000
1999	\$ 69,000,000
34 2000	\$ 72,000,000
2001	\$ 74,000,000
36 <u>2002</u>	<u>\$ 74,000,000</u>
<u>2003</u>	<u>\$ 80,000,000</u>
38 <u>2004</u>	<u>\$ 80,000,000</u>
<u>2005</u>	<u>\$ 84,000,000</u>

40 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §15905, sub-§1, ¶A-1**, as repealed and
42 replaced by PL 1987, c. 803, §§2 and 5, is amended to read:

44 A-1. Beginning with the second regular session of the
Legislature in fiscal year 1990 and every other year
46 thereafter, on or before March 1st, the commissioner shall
recommend to the Legislature and the Legislature shall
48 establish maximum debt service limits for the next biennium
2 biennia for which debt service limits have not been set.

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2 **Sec. 4. State Board of Education study of "debt service circuit**
3 **breaker."** The State Board of Education shall study the so-called
4 "debt service circuit breaker" and report back to the joint
5 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
6 education matters by December 14, 2001 with findings and policy
7 recommendations regarding the most equitable manner to calculate
8 the debt service circuit breaker. In studying this matter, the
9 State Board of Education shall address the following issues:

10 1. Whether the current millage limit established for the
11 debt service circuit breaker is a reasonable limit;

12 2. Whether a school administrative unit that is involved
13 with more than one school construction project may have
14 additional school construction projects considered as part of the
15 calculation of the local school administrative unit's debt
16 service for the purpose of the debt service circuit breaker; and
17

18 3. Whether a school administrative unit that is involved in
19 a locally financed school construction project may have the
20 locally financed school construction project and any additional
21 school construction projects that are financed with state support
22 considered as part of the calculation of the local school
23 administrative unit's debt service for the purpose of the debt
24 service circuit breaker.'

25 Further amend the bill by inserting at the end before the
26 summary the following:
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31 **FISCAL NOTE**

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33 Increasing the debt service limit from \$74,000,000 to
34 \$80,000,000 in fiscal year 2002-03 and from \$80,000,000 to
35 \$84,000,000 in fiscal year 2004-05 will result in additional
36 General Fund debt service costs to the Department of Education,
37 General Purpose Aid for Local Schools program beginning in fiscal
38 year 2003-04. Future additional General Fund appropriations,
39 estimated to be \$4,200,000 in fiscal year 2003-04 and \$7,000,000
40 in fiscal year 2004-05, will be required for these additional
41 debt service costs.
42

43 The State Board of Education will incur some minor
44 additional costs to conduct the study and submit the required
45 report. These costs can be absorbed within the board's existing
46 budgeted resources.'

SUMMARY

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This amendment strikes and replaces the bill. The amendment clarifies that the Legislature must make separate decisions regarding the specific amounts of General Fund appropriations that are allocated to the foundation, debt service and adjustment components of the General Purpose Aid to Local Schools account.

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The amendment also increases the school construction debt service limit over the next 2 biennia to \$74,000,000 in fiscal year 2001-02 and to \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2002-03 and fiscal year 2003-04 and further increases the school construction debt service limit to \$84,000,000 in fiscal year 2004-05.

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The amendment directs the State Board of Education to study the so-called "debt service circuit breaker" and to report back to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters with policy recommendations by December 14, 2001.

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The amendment also adds a fiscal note to the bill.