

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>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)



120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 1209

S.P. 371

In Senate, February 28, 2001

An Act to Assist Families in Meeting their Basic Needs.

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator RAND of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative DUDLEY of Portland and
President MICHAUD of Penobscot, Representatives: BERRY of Livermore, LAVERRIERE-
BOUCHER of Biddeford, CHICK of Lebanon, JONES of Greenville, KANE of Saco,
MURPHY of Berwick, O'BRIEN of Augusta.

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

Whereas, the first incremental increase in levels of assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families will occur before the expiration of the 90-day period; 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:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3769-B, as amended by PL 1999, c. 401, Pt. S, §4, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§3769-B. Assistance in meeting basic needs

1-A. Levels of assistance. The department shall increase the TANF maximum payment levels for a family of 3 by 10% on July 1, 2001 and incrementally on each July 1st thereafter by an amount necessary to reach, by no later than July 1, 2005, at least the average maximum payment for a family of 3 on January 1, 2004 in the other New England states. If another New England state had more than one maximum payment in effect for a family of 3 on January 1, 2004, the department shall use the maximum payment applied to the largest number of recipients in that state. Whenever the maximum payment is increased for a family of 3, it must be increased proportionately for families of other sizes. Whenever the maximum payment is increased, the department shall also increase the standard of need by an amount necessary to maintain the difference between the payment standard and standard of need that was in effect on January 1, 2001. This subsection does not require a particular amount of increase in any fiscal year as long as the increase is at least equal to the increase in the consumer price index for the prior year, using the same consumer price index that is used to adjust the federal poverty level.

3-A. Coordination with special housing allowance. The assistance increase required by subsection 1-A does not decrease the special housing allowance payment under section 3762, subsection 3, paragraph B, subparagraph (6) to assistance units that have received the special housing allowance without interruption since January 2001.

Sec. 2. Evaluation; basic needs. By February 15, 2005, the
2 Department of Human Services shall report to the joint standing
committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and
4 human services matters on the adequacy of Temporary Assistance
for Needy Families benefit levels in the State as compared to the
6 other New England states as of January 2005 and the extent to
which Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefit levels
8 provide eligible families with income sufficient to meet their
basic needs. In determining the adequacy of Temporary Assistance
10 for Needy Families benefit levels under the Maine Revised
Statutes, Title 22, section 3769-B, subsection 1-A, the
12 department shall consult with the Maine Temporary Assistance for
Needy Families Advisory Council and consider generally accepted
14 standards, market data and other reliable literature showing the
costs of living for low-income families in the State.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the
18 preamble, this Act takes effect when approved.

20
22

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to
24 increase the maximum Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
payments by 10% effective on July 1, 2001 and thereafter to
26 annually increase benefits so that Maine reaches benefit levels
equivalent to the average benefit level for a family of 3 in the
28 other New England states in 2004 by July 1, 2005. Those families
receiving the housing special need payment without interruption
30 since January 1, 2001 will not lose that housing special need
payment as a result of the increase. The bill requires that on
32 February 15, 2005, the department report to the joint standing
committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and
34 human services matters on the adequacy of the Temporary
Assistance for Needy Families benefit levels.