

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 1797

S.P. 616

In Senate, May 10, 2001

Resolve, to Establish the Blue Ribbon Commission on Postsecondary Educational Achievement.

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Joy J. O'Brien'.

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by President MICHAUD of Penobscot.
Cosponsored by Speaker SAXL of Portland and
Senators: MITCHELL of Penobscot, ROTUNDO of Androscoggin, SMALL of Sagadahoc,
TREAT of Kennebec, Representatives: BRUNO of Raymond, COLWELL of Gardiner,
ESTES of Kittery, RICHARD of Madison.

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

4
6 **Whereas,** the State's elementary and secondary students
consistently perform at or near the top nationally in
standardized tests; and

8
10 **Whereas,** the percentage of the State's students who graduate
from high school is at a very high rate of over 85%; and

12 **Whereas,** despite their demonstrated abilities and successes,
Maine students go on to college at a rate far below the national
average; and

16 **Whereas,** according to the "2001 Measures of Growth" issued
by the Maine Development Foundation, the percentage of Maine
18 residents over 25 years of age with at least a four-year degrees
is 24.1%, well below the New England average of 30.8% and the
20 national average of 26.0%; and

22 **Whereas,** over recent years a number of worthwhile efforts
have been undertaken to increase the educational achievement of
24 Maine students, yet Maine continues to lag significantly behind
the rest of New England and the rest of the country in the level
26 of educational attainment; and

28 **Whereas,** these efforts include expansions in scholarship
assistance, creation of the Community College Partnership and
30 increases in base funding for the University of Maine System, the
Maine Maritime Academy and the Maine Technical College System; and

32 **Whereas,** this legislation establishes the Blue Ribbon
34 Commission on Postsecondary Educational Attainment, which is
charged with the duty of assessing the economic impact on the
36 State of increasing levels of educational attainment and
developing a plan to address this problem; and

38 **Whereas,** in order for the appointing authorities to make
40 their appointments and for the commission to have sufficient time
to conclude its work, it is necessary for this legislation to
42 take effect immediately; and

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

2 **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That the Blue Ribbon
Commission on Postsecondary Educational Attainment, referred to
4 in this resolve as the "commission," is established; and be it
further

6 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission
consists of the following 15 members:

8 1. Three members from the Senate, appointed by the
10 President of the Senate;

12 2. Three members from the House of Representatives,
14 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

16 3. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's
designee;

18 4. The President of the Maine Technical College System or
20 the president's designee;

22 5. The Chancellor of the University of Maine system or the
chancellor's designee;

24 6. The President of the Maine Maritime Academy or the
26 president's designee;

28 7. A representative of a foundation dedicated to student
achievement and higher education, appointed by the Governor;

30 8. One member representing private sector higher education,
32 appointed by the Governor;

34 9. One member representing the interest of providers of
college loans or scholarships, appointed by the Governor;

36 10. One representative of a statewide business
38 organization, appointed by the Governor; and

40 11. One representative of a statewide labor organization,
appointed by the Governor; and be it further

42 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first named Senate member
44 is the Senate chair of the commission and the first named House
of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission;
46 and be it further

48 **Sec. 4. Appointments; meetings. Resolved:** That all
appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the
50 effective date of this resolve. The Executive Director of the
Legislative Council must be notified by all appointing

2 authorities once the selections have been made. When the
3 appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs of the
4 commission shall call and convene the first meeting of the
5 commission within 30 days of being notified that all appointments
6 have been made; and be it further

7 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall study the
8 impact of improving postsecondary educational attainment on the
9 State's economy, assess the success of current efforts to improve
10 educational attainment and develop a plan to improve the State's
11 levels of associate's degree and bachelor's degree attainment.
12

13 1. In conducting its study, the commission shall:

14 A. Review current data and research on levels of
15 educational attainment among the New England states and
16 nationally;

17 B. Assess the economic impact of the State's current levels
18 of educational attainment and the benefits likely to accrue
19 from raising that level;

20 C. Assess the role of educational attainment in providing
21 an economic climate that allows the State's young adults to
22 find employment at competitive wages here in the State; and

23 D. assess the current success of the State's higher
24 educational institutions in preparing students for the
25 challenges of the modern economy.
26

27 2. The commission shall develop a plan to:

28 A. Encourage more high school graduates in the State to
29 enroll in postsecondary educational programs;

30 B. Assist adults in the State in pursuing and attaining
31 higher degrees;

32 C. Attain a state educational achievement level, defined as
33 a percentage of adults over the age of 25 years with at
34 least a bachelor's degree, that is equal to the New England
35 average; and

36 D. Build an educational system that will provide the best
37 possible return to students in the State and the State's
38 economy by preparing students for the modern economy.
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40 The plan must, to the extent possible, build upon current efforts
41 and must include an estimate of the costs associated with
42 implementing it; and be it further
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