

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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121st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2003

Legislative Document

No. 993

S.P. 334

In Senate, February 25, 2003

An Act To Promote Economic Growth by Retaining Engineers in Maine

Reference to the Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development 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 Senator CATHCART of Penobscot.

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

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§18-E is enacted to read:

<u>18-E.</u>	<u>Maine</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>20-A MRSA</u>
<u>Education:</u>	<u>Engineers</u>	<u>Only</u>	<u>§12523</u>
<u>Financial</u>	<u>Recruitment</u>		
<u>Aid</u>	<u>and Retention</u>		
	<u>Advisory</u>		
	<u>Committee</u>		

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA c. 428-A is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 428-A

MAINE ENGINEERS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM

§12521. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

1. Authority. "Authority" means the Finance Authority of Maine.

2. Chief executive officer. "Chief executive officer" means the Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine.

3. Eligible degree. "Eligible degree" means a bachelor's degree from a college of engineering within the University of Maine System.

4. Eligible employer. "Eligible employer" means a business in the State that employs engineers and that demonstrates a need to fill an eligible employment position.

5. Eligible employment position. "Eligible employment position" means a full-time position of employment with an employer located in this State, a requirement of which is a bachelor's degree in an engineering discipline.

6. Program. "Program" means the Maine Engineers Recruitment and Retention Program established in section 12522.

§12522. Maine Engineers Recruitment and Retention Program

1. Program; established. The Maine Engineers Recruitment and Retention Program is established to provide assistance to eligible employers seeking to recruit individuals with eligible degrees to fill eligible employment positions by providing

2 financial assistance to employees who fill such positions and to
3 encourage engineering graduates to remain in the State.

4 2. Applicable years; repayment. The program applies to
5 engineering students who are enrolled in a state postsecondary
6 educational institution beginning with the school year starting
7 September 2003 who will be eligible for repayment of student
8 loans pursuant to this chapter after graduation in 2007.

10 **§12523. Maine Engineers Recruitment and Retention Advisory**
11 **Committee established**

12 The Maine Engineers Recruitment and Retention Advisory
13 Committee, referred to in this section as "the committee," is
14 established. The committee shall assist the chief executive
15 officer in determining program loan repayment recipients under
16 section 12524 annually. The committee consists of the following
17 5 members appointed by the chief executive officer:

18 1. University of Maine System. One member representing the
19 University of Maine System recommended by the Chancellor of the
20 University of Maine System;

21 2. Maine engineers. Two members, each representing a
22 statewide organization representing engineers in the State; and

23 3. Public members. Two members of the public representing
24 businesses that employ engineers to perform a substantial part of
25 their business.

26 Members serve for terms of 3 years and may be reappointed.

27 Members of the committee are compensated in accordance with
28 Title 5, chapter 379.

29 **§12524. Loan repayment agreement recipients**

30 Each year eligible employers seeking to fill eligible
31 employment positions may apply on behalf of individuals with an
32 eligible degree seeking eligible employment positions who have
33 outstanding student loans from financial institutions to obtain
34 one or more program loan repayment agreements. Applications must
35 be submitted to the authority at a time and in a format to be
36 determined by the authority.

37 **§12525. Maximum loan repayment; participation**

38 The maximum program loan repayment amount available to each
39 employee is \$2,500 per year, for a maximum of 4 years. No more
40 than 10 program loan repayment agreements may be awarded in any
41 year.

2 **§12526. Eligibility requirements**

4 **1. Program loan repayment agreement.** A program loan
6 repayment agreement may be given only to an individual who is
8 employed in this State in an eligible employment position and who
 has met other eligibility criteria established by rules of the
 authority.

10 **2. Matching funds.** An eligible employer must provide
12 matching funds to be used for program loan repayment in an amount
14 equal to the amount of the program loan repayment to be provided
 by the authority.

16 **§12527. Payment provisions**

18 The authority shall enter into program loan repayment
20 agreements with individuals with eligible degrees, on terms and
22 conditions acceptable to the authority, that at a minimum must
24 require the individual and the individual's employer to certify
26 annually, before payment of any installment by the authority
 under the program loan agreement, that the individual has been
 employed in an eligible employment position for the preceding
 12-month period. Payment of any installment by the authority
 must be made directly for credit to the individual's account at
 the financial institution certified by the individual as
 responsible for administration of that person's student loans.

28 **§12528. Nonlapsing revolving fund**

30 **1. Creation of fund.** The Maine Engineers Recruitment and
32 Retention Program Fund, referred to in this section as "the
34 fund," is created as a nonlapsing, interest-earning, revolving
36 fund to carry out the purposes of this chapter. The fund must be
38 deposited with, maintained and administered by the authority.
40 Any unexpended balance in the fund carries over for continued use
42 under this chapter. The authority may receive, invest and expend
44 on behalf of the fund money from gifts, grants, bequests, loans
 and donations in addition to money appropriated or allocated by
 the State. Money received by the authority on behalf of the
 fund, except interest income, must be used for the purposes of
 this chapter; interest income may be used for the purposes of
 this chapter or to pay administrative costs incurred by the
 authority, as determined appropriate by the authority.

46 **2. Administrative expenses.** Costs and expenses of
48 maintaining, servicing and administering the fund and
 administering the program may be paid out of amounts in the fund.

2 **§12529. Rules**

4 The authority shall adopt rules to implement this chapter.
6 Rules adopted by the authority pursuant to this chapter are
 routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375,
 subchapter 2-A.

8 **SUMMARY**

10 This bill establishes the Maine Engineers Recruitment and
12 Retention Program to provide financial assistance and incentives
14 to any graduate of a college of engineering within the University
 of Maine System to become an employee in an engineering position
16 in the State. The program provides loan repayment to up to 10
 eligible engineers working in Maine businesses. The employers
 who apply for the loan repayment funds must match all funds
18 received by their employees. The program is administered by the
 Finance Authority of Maine with assistance in determining
20 recipients from an advisory committee.