

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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123rd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2007

Legislative Document

No. 957

H.P. 717

House of Representatives, March 1, 2007

An Act To Enact a Five-point Welfare Reform Plan

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

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative LANSLEY of Sabattus.
Cosponsored by Representative SAVIELLO of Wilton, Senator SNOWE-MELLO of
Androscoggin and Representatives: CEBRA of Naples, HAMPER of Oxford, HOTHAM of
Dixfield, PRESCOTT of Topsham, SAMSON of Auburn, TARDY of Newport, VAUGHAN
of Durham, WOODBURY of Yarmouth.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3788, sub-§10, ¶C**, as amended by PL 2005, c. 480, §1, is
3 further amended to read:

4 C. Except for participants who are accepted into the Parents as Scholars Program
5 established under section 3790, education, training and treatment is limited to a
6 maximum of 24 months, starting with the first day of participation in any allowable
7 and approved job skills or occupational skills training activity. The 24-month period
8 may be extended by the commissioner or the designee of the commissioner for good
9 cause shown.

10 ~~The~~ Prior to January 1, 2008, the department may approve a job skills or occupational
11 training activity longer than 24 months ~~provided as long as~~ the participant agrees to
12 perform a minimum of 20 hours a week of work site experience by no later than the
13 end of the 24-month period. Qualifying work site experience may include, but is not
14 limited to, paid employment, workforce-MaineServe, ASPIRE-Plus, work study,
15 training-related practicums or any other such work site approved by the department.
16 The 24-month period does not include periods of nonactivity in which good cause has
17 been determined.

18 Beginning January 1, 2008, the department may approve a job skills or occupational
19 training activity longer than 24 months as long as the participant agrees to perform by
20 no later than the end of the 24-month period a minimum of 40 hours per week of
21 work site experience or, if 40 hours of experience is not available, then as many hours
22 over 20 and under 40 as are available to the participant. The number of hours or
23 gross wages of participation, up to one and a half times the normal dollar amount of
24 the benefits received, may not affect the benefits available to the participant. The
25 hourly rate of pay may be used in determining the benefit amount for the participant.

26 For individuals who are satisfactorily participating in an education or training
27 program prior to the work evaluation, the department must determine the
28 acceptability of the activity for purposes of meeting the participation requirements of
29 this chapter using the same criteria as is used for any individual in the ASPIRE-
30 TANF program.

31 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3788, sub-§15** is enacted to read:

32 **15. Limitation.** Benefits under the ASPIRE-TANF program for an adult are subject
33 to a lifetime limitation of 60 months.

34 **Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §4301, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 1983, c. 577, §1, is amended
35 to read:

36 **3. Eligible person.** "Eligible person" means a person who shows evidence of having
37 lived in a municipality for 90 days continuously prior to the date of application and who
38 is qualified to receive general assistance from a municipality according to standards of
39 eligibility determined by the municipal officers ~~whether or not that person has applied for~~
40 general assistance.

1 **Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §4307, sub-§2, ¶A**, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15,
2 is amended to read:

3 A. A resident of the municipality. For the purposes of this section, a "resident"
4 means a person who is physically present in a municipality ~~with the intention of~~
5 ~~remaining in that municipality to maintain or establish~~ for at least 90 days prior to the
6 date of application and who maintains or establishes a home and who has no other
7 residence; ~~and.~~

8 **Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §4307, sub-§2, ¶B**, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15,
9 is repealed.

10 **Sec. 6. 22 MRSA §4307, sub-§3**, as repealed and replaced by PL 1987, c. 349,
11 Pt. H, §15, is repealed.

12 **Sec. 7. 36 MRSA §5219-BB** is enacted to read:

13 **§5219-BB. New Hire credit**

14 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
15 following terms have the following meanings.

16 A. "Employing unit" has the same meaning as in Title 26, section 1043, subsection
17 10.

18 B. "Qualifying person" means a person who, immediately prior to employment with
19 the employing unit, was a recipient of benefits under the ASPIRE-TANF program
20 under Title 22, chapter 1053-B.

21 **2. Credit allowed.** Beginning with tax year 2008, a taxpayer who is an employing
22 unit is allowed a credit for participation in the Step Up program described in subsection 3.

23 **3. New Hire program.** An employing unit participates in the New Hire program if
24 that employing unit hires as an employee a qualifying person for at least 20 hours per
25 week.

26 **4. Amount of credit.** An employing unit is allowed a tax credit under the New Hire
27 program against the tax otherwise due under this Part in the amount of 50% of the gross
28 wages paid to a qualifying person during the eligible period under subsection 5,
29 paragraph B.

30 **5. Limitation.** The credit allowed under this section is subject to the following
31 limitations.

32 A. The total combined credit for a taxpayer under this section may not exceed
33 \$10,000 annually and may not reduce the tax otherwise due under this Part to less
34 than zero. A taxpayer entitled to a credit under this section for any taxable year may
35 carry over and apply to the tax liability for any one or more of the succeeding 2 years
36 the portion, as reduced from year to year, of any unused credits.

37 B. The eligible period for a qualifying person under the New Hire program is 12
38 continuous months.

