

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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125th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2012

Legislative Document

No. 1862

S.P. 647

In Senate, March 12, 2012

An Act To Limit Eligibility under the Municipal General Assistance Program

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

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

Joseph G. Carleton Jr.

JOSEPH G. CARLETON, JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator SAVIELLO of Franklin.
Cosponsored by Representative CASAVANT of Biddeford and
Senator: McCORMICK of Kennebec.

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

3 **Whereas,** in Public Law 2011, chapter 380, the Legislature enacted legislation that
4 as of January 1, 2012 retroactively implements a 60-month lifetime limit on Temporary
5 Assistance for Needy Families, or "TANF," program benefits; and

6 **Whereas,** according to the family independence office of the Department of Health
7 and Human Services, over 3,000 families have met or will soon meet the 60-month
8 lifetime limit; and

9 **Whereas,** the municipal general assistance program, which is administered by
10 municipalities and funded by the State and municipalities, was designed as a program of
11 last resort, available only for a limited period of time "for the immediate aid of persons
12 who are unable to provide the basic necessities essential to maintain themselves or their
13 families"; and

14 **Whereas,** under the municipal general assistance program funding formula, 40% of
15 the approximately \$16,000,000 program is funded with local property tax dollars; and

16 **Whereas,** while over 3,000 families may no longer be eligible for TANF program
17 benefits, those families remain eligible for municipal general assistance program benefits;
18 and

19 **Whereas,** the TANF lifetime limit will place most of the burden on the State's more
20 populated Department of Health and Human Services regional areas, including: Augusta,
21 with 293 families; Bangor, with 267 families; Biddeford, with 122 families; Calais, with
22 44 families; Caribou, with 73 families; Ellsworth, with 50 families; Farmington, with 93
23 families; Fort Kent, with 64 families; Houlton, with 49 families; Lewiston, with 606
24 families; Portland, with 545 families; Rockland, with 328 families; Sanford, with 164
25 families; South Paris, with 235 families; and Skowhegan, with 133 families; and

26 **Whereas,** additional families will reach the 60-month lifetime limit each month; and

27 **Whereas,** the decisions of the Legislature to limit the State's fiscal exposure to
28 assistance programs should not place additional burdens on Maine property taxpayers;
29 and

30 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
31 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
32 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
33 therefore,

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

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

