

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 1467

S.P. 513

In Senate, April 18, 2017

**An Act To Expand Competitive Skills Scholarships and Strengthen
Maine's Workforce Development Programs**

Reference to the Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator VITELLI of Sagadahoc.
Cosponsored by Representative VACHON of Scarborough and
Senators: KATZ of Kennebec, LIBBY of Androscoggin, Representatives: AUSTIN of Gray,
FAY of Raymond, JORGENSEN of Portland, TALBOT ROSS of Portland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §1166, sub-§1, ¶B,** as amended by PL 2007, c. 506, §1, is
3 further amended to read:

4 B. "Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund planned yield" means the percentage of
5 wages, as defined in section 1043, subsection 19, equal to ~~02%~~ .04% of the total
6 wages for each contributing employer subject to this chapter.

7 **Sec. 2. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§3,** as enacted by PL 2007, c. 352, Pt. A, §3, is
8 amended to read:

9 **3. Notice.** The department shall provide notice, including individual written notice,
10 signs and other effective outreach methods, to inform people of the program and the
11 education, training and support available from or through the program to individuals
12 seeking work, education or training in the department's career centers. Outreach efforts
13 must be tailored to focus on, but may not be limited to, the following target
14 demographics: unemployed and underemployed workers, veterans, immigrants, recipients
15 of benefits under the statewide food supplement program pursuant to Title 22, section
16 3104, low-skilled manufacturing workers and students enrolled in postsecondary
17 education. The department shall also collaborate with education and training partners,
18 employers, trade associations and other entities to improve outreach to target populations
19 in industry sectors identified as having a significant demand for a more highly skilled
20 workforce. Additionally, the department shall conduct outreach efforts with employers in
21 industries with significant demand for skilled labor that have been approved for
22 participation in the program pursuant to subsection 4 when those industries are at risk,
23 diversifying or growing and whose employees may be eligible for the program.

24 **Sec. 3. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§4, ¶A,** as amended by PL 2011, c. 627, §4, is
25 further amended to read:

26 A. The education or training provided through the program must be for employment
27 in industries with significant demand for skilled labor that have been:

- 28 (1) Identified by the Center for Workforce Research and Information as
29 providing opportunity for employment in jobs with high compensation;
30 (2) Recommended by the State Workforce Investment Board; and
31 (3) Approved by the Governor or the Governor's designee.

32 The identification, recommendation and approval of industries pursuant to this
33 paragraph must take into account direct employer input in identifying the inventory
34 and growth of highly skilled jobs that are currently or soon to be present in the State's
35 economy, with an emphasis on jobs in industries that are expanding, jobs that have
36 recently emerged in significant numbers and jobs that may be anticipated based on
37 business trends. This identification, recommendation and approval must also take
38 into account changing demographics, emerging trends and innovations and must
39 include traditional industries in the State in which innovations and new technologies
40 are creating demand for skilled workers, including, but not limited to, food
41 production, farming, fisheries, wood products and manufacturing.

1 **Sec. 4. 26 MRSA §2033, sub-§8, ¶B**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 352, Pt. A, §3, is
2 amended to read:

3 B. Prior to the establishment of a plan, a participant must be given:

4 (1) A description of the program, including a list of services and supports
5 available through the program and nontraditional employment opportunities, so
6 that the participant may identify a suitable employment goal and the services
7 needed to participate in the program;

8 (2) The opportunity to learn about and examine relevant labor market
9 information related to identified industries and the participant's employment
10 preference;

11 (3) If the participant's employment goal is an occupation for which an
12 apprenticeship may be available, information about the department's
13 apprenticeship program under chapter 33; ~~and~~

14 (4) Information about and assistance in applying for other services that will
15 assist the participant in succeeding in the plan and prevent any unnecessary
16 expenditure of resources by the program, including federal financial aid provided
17 under the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 United States Code, Chapter
18 28; the family development account program under Title 10, chapter 110,
19 subchapter 4-A; the state and federal earned income tax credit; health care
20 resources; unemployment compensation; dislocated worker benefits; trade
21 adjustment assistance; and other services available from other departments of
22 State Government including the Department of Health and Human Services; and

23 (5) Comprehensive career planning services that will enable the participant to
24 identify a career goal and understand the financial costs and benefits of the
25 education or training needed to meet that goal. The department may partner with
26 other entities in providing comprehensive career planning services under a
27 memorandum of understanding that specifies the requirements for career goals
28 under the program.

29 **Sec. 5. Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund expenditures.** The Department
30 of Labor shall allocate an additional \$3,000,000 for use in the Competitive Skills
31 Scholarship Program to increase enrollment in the program for fiscal year 2017-18 to a
32 level that is approximately double the number of individuals enrolled in fiscal year 2016-
33 17. At least 25% of these additional allocated funds per fiscal year must be reserved for
34 the use of program participants who are also participants in the statewide food
35 supplement program administered by the State pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes,
36 Title 22, section 3104.

37 **Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
38 allocations are made.

39 **LABOR, DEPARTMENT OF**
40 **Employment Services Activity 0852**

1 Initiative: Allocates an additional \$3,000,000 for use in the Competitive Skills
2 Scholarship Program on an ongoing basis. This allocation will be offset by increased
3 revenue to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund from an increase in the rate of the
4 employer contribution to the fund in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26, section 1166,
5 subsection 1, paragraph B.

6

7	COMPETITIVE SKILLS SCHOLARSHIP FUND	2017-18	2018-19
8	All Other	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
9			
10	COMPETITIVE SKILLS SCHOLARSHIP FUND	<u>\$3,000,000</u>	<u>\$3,000,000</u>
11	TOTAL		

12

SUMMARY

13 This bill makes a number of changes to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program
14 administered by the Department of Labor, including the following.

15 1. It doubles the current employer contribution rate to the Competitive Skills
16 Scholarship Fund.

17 2. It allocates an additional \$3,000,000 on an ongoing basis from the Competitive
18 Skills Scholarship Fund for the purpose of doubling the number of participants enrolled
19 from the number of currently enrolled participants.

20 3. It dedicates 25% of the additional allocated funds per fiscal year for the use of
21 program participants who are also participants in the federal supplemental nutrition
22 assistance program administered by the State pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes,
23 Title 22, section 3104.

24 4. It makes changes to the criteria used to determine approved education and training
25 under the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program, including consideration of employer
26 input, changing demographics and traditional industries in the State in which innovations
27 and new technologies are creating a demand for skilled workers.

28 5. It requires that a participant be given information about and assistance in applying
29 for the family development account program under Title 10, chapter 110, subchapter 4-A.

30 6. It also adds a requirement that a participant be offered comprehensive career
31 planning services prior to the program's development of an individual career plan with
32 the participant.