

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2020

Legislative Document

No. 2145

S.P. 772

In Senate, March 10, 2020

An Act To Help Veterans Access Jobs, Education, Health Care and Housing and Provide General Support to Veterans

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator CARPENTER of Aroostook.
Cosponsored by Representative MAXMIN of Nobleboro and
Senators: BELLOWS of Kennebec, CLAXTON of Androscoggin, President JACKSON of
Aroostook, LUCHINI of Hancock, VITELLI of Sagadahoc, Representative: Speaker GIDEON
of Freeport.

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

2 **CONCEPT DRAFT**

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

5 This bill proposes to establish a bill of rights to help veterans access jobs, education,
6 health care and housing and provide general support to veterans.

7 1. The bill would help veterans access jobs by:

8 A. Requiring the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation to waive
9 licensing fees for veterans;

10 B. Requiring licensing boards affiliated with the Department of Professional and
11 Financial Regulation to waive licensing fees for veterans;

12 C. Expanding eligibility of veterans and their spouses for the program that helps
13 veterans and their spouses obtain occupational licenses;

14 D. Requiring each board, commission, office and agency within the Department of
15 Professional and Financial Regulation or affiliated with the department to permit a
16 veteran or spouse who holds a comparable license in another state to acquire a license
17 by endorsement in this State for the remainder of the term of the license from the
18 other state or until a license is obtained in this State or obtain a temporary license in
19 this State for the period of time necessary to obtain a license in this State;

20 E. Requiring each board, commission, office and agency within the Department of
21 Professional and Financial Regulation or affiliated with the department to grant a full
22 or partial exemption from continuing education requirements for a veteran or spouse;

23 F. Obtaining information regarding the implementation of the process established to
24 help qualified veterans and their spouses to obtain occupational licenses, including
25 data concerning how many veterans and their spouses have received assistance;

26 G. Extending renewal dates for occupational licenses for veterans and their spouses;

27 H. Waiving fees for licensing veterans as emergency medical services persons and
28 security guards;

29 I. Extending the period of time allowed between the completion of military service
30 and the favorable treatment of that military service for purposes of occupational
31 licensing; and

32 J. Allowing all veterans to purchase credit for time served in the military for
33 purposes of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

34 2. The bill would help veterans access education by:

35 A. Extending the amount of time given to veterans to transition from military service
36 to school;

- 1 B. Requiring each campus of the University of Maine System and the Maine
2 Community College System to have a dedicated space for veterans with at least one
3 computer where veterans may meet and have the tools available to them that they
4 need to access benefits;
- 5 C. Providing loans to veterans for books that are required for classes;
- 6 D. Providing services for veterans who receive other than an honorable discharge
7 from military service;
- 8 E. Providing easier readmittance to school for veterans who leave school for health-
9 related issues; and
- 10 F. Providing graduate school assistance to veterans.
- 11 3. The bill would help veterans access health care by:
- 12 A. Continuing and improving the pilot program established in Resolve 2017, chapter
13 24 that provides mental health case management services to veterans;
- 14 B. Providing mental health treatment in all counties for veterans;
- 15 C. Waiving the fee for medical marijuana identification cards for veterans;
- 16 D. Providing that the time limit for veterans who are otherwise eligible for assistance
17 under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is twice the time limit
18 that would otherwise apply to the veterans; and
- 19 E. Supporting programs that provide transportation to medical appointments for
20 veterans.
- 21 4. The bill would help veterans access housing by:
- 22 A. Providing funding to seek long-term solutions to reduce barriers, such as criminal
23 convictions, substance use, mental illness and physical disabilities, to veterans
24 securing housing;
- 25 B. Increasing the number of housing vouchers provided to homeless veterans;
- 26 C. Providing funding to assist landlords to improve substandard apartments and give
27 incentives to landlords to rent to veterans;
- 28 D. Changing the "Salute ME" mortgage program administered by the Maine State
29 Housing Authority to provide veterans with a greater discount on home mortgage
30 rates;
- 31 E. Changing the property tax exemption for certain veterans to apply to all veterans;
- 32 F. Surveying public land, unused public buildings and available private buildings,
33 including closed mills, for opportunities to provide housing or temporary shelter for
34 veterans;
- 35 G. Providing preference to veterans in the Bridging Rental Assistance Program,
36 which assists persons with mental illness to secure temporary housing; and
- 37 H. Providing funding for organizations and facilities that provide housing for
38 homeless veterans.

- 1 5. The bill would provide general support to veterans by:
- 2 A. Raising the amount of pension income paid under an employee retirement plan
- 3 that is exempt from the income tax;
- 4 B. Extending the time for which a driver's license is valid for active duty military
- 5 members; and
- 6 C. Increasing the maximum amount of a grant of temporary assistance that may be
- 7 provided to a veteran from the Veterans Temporary Assistance Fund from \$2,000 to
- 8 \$2,500.