MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 873

S.P. 370

In Senate, February 24, 2023

An Act to Continue the Department of Education Diploma Program Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

DAREK M. GRANT Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BALDACCI of Penobscot.

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, the provision allowing a student to apply for a Department of Education diploma if the student experienced a significant interruption in education as a result of the 4 5 COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency is set to expire on September 1, 2023; and 6 Whereas, this legislation is necessary to continue the effect of this provision without interruption; and 7 8 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as 9 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, 10 11 therefore, 12 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows: Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-A, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 61, §1, is 13 14 amended to read: 15 1-A. Eligibility for students impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements in subsection 1, a student is eligible to apply for a Department 16 of Education diploma if that student is a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to 17 satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because the student 18 experienced a significant interruption to the student's education as a result of the COVID-19 19 pandemic and civil emergency during the student's secondary school education history. 20 21 This subsection is repealed on September 1, 2023. 22 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved. 23 **SUMMARY** 24 25 This bill continues the program to allow a student to obtain a Department of Education 26 diploma due to significant interruption to the student's education as a result of the COVID-27 19 pandemic, known as the "Maine Diploma" program.