

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
117TH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

BILL SUMMARIES
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
HUMAN RESOURCES

AUGUST 1995

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**ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

**SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION BEFORE
THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES**

AUGUST 1995

This document is a compilation of the bill summaries prepared by this office for the Joint Standing Committees of the Maine Legislature. The volume is organized alphabetically by committee; within each committee, the summaries are arranged by LD number. A subject index is provided at the beginning of each committee's summaries. The publication, History and Final Disposition of Legislative Documents, is helpful in determining to which committee any particular bill was referred.

In this document, the committee report or reports, the prime sponsor for each bill and the lead co-sponsor in each house if one has been designated are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are listed, by paper number, together with the sponsor for floor amendments. Final action on each bill is listed to the right of the title. Various categories of final action are abbreviated as follows:

<i>CARRIED OVER</i>	<i>Bill carried over to Second Session</i>
<i>CON RES XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses</i>
<i>CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE</i>	<i>Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED BETWEEN BODIES</i>	<i>House & Senate disagree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED ON ADJOURNMENT</i>	<i>Action incomplete when session ended; bill died</i>
<i>EMERGENCY</i>	<i>Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days</i>
<i>FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>FAILED ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill failed to get majority vote</i>
<i>FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>INDEF PP</i>	<i>Bill Indefinitely Postponed</i>
<i>ONTP</i>	<i>Ought Not to Pass report accepted</i>
<i>P&S XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law</i>
<i>PUBLIC XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Public Law</i>
<i>RESOLVE XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Resolve</i>
<i>UNSIGNED</i>	<i>Not signed by Governor within 10 days</i>
<i>VETO SUSTAINED</i>	<i>Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto</i>

These summaries were prepared by the analyst or analysts assigned to the committee. If more detailed information is needed on a bill, contact the committee analyst.

5581LHS

LD 1388 An Act to Increase Employment and Training Opportunities for Welfare Recipients

ONTP

SPONSOR(S)
MITCHELL JE
BUSTIN

COMMITTEE REPORT
ONTP

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED

SUMMARY

The purpose of this bill is to move people into the work force and toward self-sufficiency and away from government assistance. It requires people to get the training necessary for successful employment and supports the entry of people into the workplace.

This bill provides incentives for employment while removing barriers welfare recipients commonly face. It protects child care benefits, child support payments and medical coverage while maintaining income. Specifically, the bill contains the following provisions.

1. It uses short-term, subsidized employment by requiring most Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients to participate and cooperate with job placement.
2. It shifts the participant's dependence on AFDC to a reliance on earned income.
3. It provides program recipients with work skills, education, work site training, mentoring and individual education account credits to support continuing education.
4. It provides all necessary support services including child care, workers' compensation and job placement, as well as a guarantee to participants that their net income will not be reduced.
5. It tailors individual employment plans by matching job skills and interests of the participant to the needs of employers.
6. It develops a partnership between the public and private sectors for job creation.
7. It pays wages for participants from funds that otherwise would have gone into welfare benefits. Employers will issue paychecks and be reimbursed by the State up to the amount of the minimum wage.
8. It is intended to reduce the caseload for AFDC and food stamps by 50% in the 4th year of the program and to reduce overall caseload costs by 25%.
9. It allows participants receiving child support payments to receive the entire amount of child support paid.
10. It provides requirements and authorization for the Department of Human Services to expeditiously seek and obtain any federal permission necessary to implement the program.

See also LD 1496.

LD 1389 An Act to Promote Work, Family and Dignity

ONTP

SPONSOR(S)
TREAT

COMMITTEE REPORT
ONTP

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED

SUMMARY

The purpose of this bill is to promote the strengthening of family units by reforming welfare programs and providing other steps to help reduce poverty among families with children and limit their need for public assistance.

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to seek a federal waiver to establish a 3-year demonstration program known as the Working Parents' Assistance Program. This demonstration program would operate in 4 counties of the State. It is intended to show that if work provides a realistic opportunity for Aid to Families with Dependent Children parents to support their families, they are more likely to stay employed. The program includes the following elements.

1. Working recipients in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program would be given the opportunity to receive "working parents' assistance" instead of Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Participating families would be eligible to receive cash assistance under this program in a declining amount as their income increases until their family income, less child care expenses, exceeds the federal poverty level of \$12,590 for a family of 3.
2. This bill requires the department to provide health care through a system of managed care for working parents and their children in the demonstration area whose income is below 150% of the federal poverty level.
3. This bill ensures access to affordable child care for parents participating in the Working Parents' Assistance Program would be reimbursed for their child care costs.
4. This bill eliminates work-hour restrictions for program participants.
5. This bill establishes individual development accounts that allow participants to save an amount not exceeding \$10,000 to be used only for qualified expenses, such as reasonable educational expenses for a parent or child, the purchase of a residence, the purchase of a car necessary to get back and forth to work and business capitalization.
6. Under the program, a family is allowed to keep the first \$2,000 of collected arrears that otherwise would have been kept by the department if they place it in their individual development account to be used for certain qualified expenses.
7. This bill allows a family that receives a lump-sum settlement to place funds in the individual development account instead of having benefits reduced for the period of time that results from dividing the amount of the lump sum by the Aid to Families with Dependent Children standard of need.

This bill also gives the custodial parent the right to participate in administrative child support enforcement proceedings.

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to seek a waiver of the federal vehicle asset limit to exempt one vehicle per family if that vehicle is used for transportation to work, medical appointments or other essential uses determined by the department and directs the department to establish a revolving loan fund to make low-interest car loans available to persons below 200% of the federal poverty level seeking to purchase or repair a vehicle necessary for employment.

This bill provides access to child care assistance in advance and requires the department to give working Aid to Families with Dependent Children parents the choice of using either the present system, or having their child care provider paid directly by the department through a voucher or purchase of service contract.

This bill expands the emergency assistance program to increase the state expenditure and to provide assistance to families with children who are at risk of losing a job or of being unable to accept a job offer due to a temporary crisis. Assistance would include, but would not be limited to, emergency automobile repairs, insurance, or mandatory fees necessary to allow a person transportation to and from the job, one-time child care costs necessary to work, or assistance for items such as tools of the trade, uniforms, clothing or nonreimbursable medical care, including eye care or dental care, necessary to perform the job.

This bill ensures that children are properly provided with health insurance.

This bill increases incrementally the minimum wage to an amount necessary to equal the federal poverty level for a family of 3.

This bill requires that employers must provide unpaid sick time, accrued at the rate of 8 hours per month of full-time employment, for employees who need to take time off from work because either they are sick or they need to take care of a child or dependent who is sick. Workers would also be able to use the time for preventative care.

This bill provides for the public recognition of employers who have adopted family-friendly practices in their workplaces by means of certification by the Department of Economic and Community Development.

This bill requires the Maine Technical College System, the University of Maine System and the Department of Education, Division of Adult and Community Education to inventory the unmet child care needs of their students and develop a plan for meeting those needs and to report back to the Legislature.

This bill establishes a demonstration project in one office of the Department of Human Services to provide comprehensive assistance to working families.

This bill establishes the Commission to Prevent Poverty among Working Parents that must make its report to the First Regular Session of the 118th Legislature. This bill provides funding for the commission.

This bill also provides the state appropriation of \$2,050,000 for fiscal years 1995-96 and 1996-97 and the federal allocation of \$3,250,000 for fiscal years 1995-96 and 1996-97 to allow the Department of Human Services to draw down the full amount of the federal money available for the ASPIRE program.

See also LD 1496.

**LD 1392 An Act to Allow Smoking in One-room Establishments with
Lunch Counters That Post Smoking Signs**

**DIED BETWEEN
BODIES**

SPONSOR(S)

DORE

COMMITTEE REPORT

ONTP MAJ
OTP-AM MIN

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED

SUMMARY

This bill allows restaurants and establishments with lunch counters that seat 25 patrons or less to designate the entire restaurant for smoking use if they post a sign at or near the entrance stating that smoking is allowed in all of the restaurant.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-324) is the minority report of the committee. It exempts from the restaurant no-smoking law variety stores that serve food, are 1 room only, seat up to 36 persons and post signs. The amendment was accepted in the House. The Senate accepted the "ought-not-to-pass" report. The House accepted the Committee of Conference report. The Senate did not. The bill died between bodies.