

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
123RD LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION



Summaries of bills and adopted amendments and laws enacted or finally passed during the First Regular Session of the 123rd Maine Legislature coming from the

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

July 2007

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STATE OF MAINE

123RD LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILL SUMMARIES AND ENACTED LAWS



This *Legislative Digest of Bill Summaries and Enacted Laws* summarizes all bills and adopted amendments and all laws enacted or finally passed during the First Regular Session of the 123rd Maine Legislature, which was in session from December 6, 2006 to June 21, 2007.

The *Digest* is arranged alphabetically by committee, and within each committee by LD number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor and lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are summarized and listed by paper number. A subject index is included with each committee. The appendices include a summary of relevant session statistics, an index of all bills by LD number and an index of enacted laws by law type and chapter number.

Final action on each bill is noted to the right of the bill title. The abbreviations used for various categories of final action are as follows:

CON RES XXX.....	Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses
CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE.....	Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died
DIED BETWEEN BODIES.....	House & Senate disagree; bill died
DIED IN CONCURRENCE.....	One body accepts ONTP report; the other indefinitely postpones the bill
DIED ON ADJOURNMENT.....	Action incomplete when session ended; bill died
EMERGENCY.....	Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days
FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE.....	Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote
FAILED ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE.....	Bill failed to get majority vote
FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT.....	Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote
NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY.....	Ruled out of order by the presiding officers; bill died
INDEF PP.....	Bill Indefinitely Postponed
ONTP (or Accepted ONTP report).....	Ought Not To Pass report accepted
OTP-ND.....	Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft
P&S XXX.....	Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law
PASSED.....	Joint Order passed in both bodies
PUBLIC XXX.....	Chapter # of enacted Public Law
RESOLVE XXX.....	Chapter # of finally passed Resolve
UNSIGNED.....	Bill held by Governor
VETO SUSTAINED.....	Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto

Please note that the effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session is **September 20, 2007**. The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure is specified in the enacted law summary for those bills.

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

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6. By July 1, 2008, every municipality must become part of a unit containing at least 1,200 students. Isolated small units, not contiguous to another, may retain their present governance. School unions are abolished. All segments of the unorganized territories will be assigned to a nearby or adjoining unit.

7. By August 1, 2007, the Commissioner of Education shall present to each co-op a suggested unit merger plan for local approval. Approved merger plans must be presented to the Legislature in January of 2008. For good cause shown, a merger may be delayed beyond July 1, 2008, although the merger plan must by then be in place.

8. This bill lengthens the school year beginning in September 2008 from 180 to 190 days, of which 185 are for instruction.

9. This bill amends the unit budget format by aligning it into segments aligned with co-op cost categories beginning July 1, 2008. This bill provides that, for units that must merge, no new employment contracts extending beyond June 30, 2008 may be agreed to until the restructuring provisions of this bill are in place.

LD 884 An Act To Provide Funding to Postsecondary Marine Training Programs

**ACCEPTED ONTP
REPORT**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
EMERY	ONTP MAJ OTP-AM MIN	

This bill requires the Department of Education, working with the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and the President of the Maine Community College System, to develop marine training and education programs, to be available within the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System. The programs are funded by a diversion of revenue from the sales and use tax imposed on watercraft. The current sales and use tax on watercraft is 5%. This bill maintains that rate but allocates 30% of the revenue from the sales and use tax imposed on watercraft, which is equivalent to 1.5% of the taxable sales that are subject to the 5% tax.

LD 898 An Act To Increase Educational Opportunities in the Kennebec Valley Region

**DIED ON
ADJOURNMENT**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
MITCHELL	OTP-AM	S-44

This bill makes one-time General Fund appropriations of \$700,000 in fiscal year 2007-08 and \$200,000 in fiscal year 2008-09 to the University of Maine System to accelerate the transition of the University of Maine at Augusta from an institution focused on two-year degrees to an institution focused on granting four-year baccalaureate degrees that meets the educational, economic, cultural and professional needs of the Kennebec Valley region.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-44)

This amendment increases from \$200,000 to \$900,000 the appropriation in fiscal year 2008-09 and specifies that such funds are intended to be ongoing rather than one-time funds.