

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE**  
128<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION



Summaries of bills, adopted amendments and laws enacted or finally passed

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

August 2017

**STAFF:**

MARGARET J. REINSCH, SENIOR LEGISLATIVE ANALYST  
JANET STOCCO, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST  
OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS  
13 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333  
(207) 287-1670  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/opla/>

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# STATE OF MAINE

128<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE  
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## LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILL SUMMARIES AND ENACTED LAWS

This *Legislative Digest of Bill Summaries and Enacted Laws* contains summaries of all LDs and adopted amendments and all laws enacted or finally passed during the First Regular Session of the 128<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature.

The *Digest* is arranged alphabetically by committee and within each committee by Legislative Document (LD) number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor and lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each LD title. All adopted amendments are summarized and listed by paper number. A subject index is included with each committee. An appendix provides a summary of relevant session statistics.

Final action on each LD is noted to the right of the LD title. The following describes the various final actions.

*CARRIED OVER*..... carried over to a subsequent session of the Legislature  
*CON RES XXX*..... chapter # of constitutional resolution passed by both houses  
*CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE*..... Committee of Conference unable to agree; legislation died  
*DIED BETWEEN HOUSES*..... House & Senate disagreed; legislation died  
*DIED IN CONCURRENCE*..... defeated in each house, but on different motions; legislation died  
*DIED ON ADJOURNMENT*..... action incomplete when session ended; legislation died  
*EMERGENCY*..... enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days after session adjournment  
*FAILED, EMERGENCY ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE*..... emergency failed to receive required 2/3 vote  
*FAILED, ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE*..... failed to receive final majority vote  
*FAILED, MANDATE ENACTMENT*..... legislation proposing local mandate failed required 2/3 vote  
*HELD BY GOVERNOR*..... Governor has not signed; final disposition to be determined at subsequent session  
*LEAVE TO WITHDRAW*..... sponsor's request to withdraw legislation granted  
*NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY*..... ruled out of order by the presiding officer; legislation died  
*INDEF PP*..... indefinitely postponed; legislation died  
*ONTP, ACCEPTED, MAJORITY, MINORITY or REPORT X*... ought-not-to-pass report accepted; legislation died  
*P&S XXX*..... chapter # of enacted private & special law  
*PUBLIC XXX*..... chapter # of enacted public law  
*RESOLVE XXX*..... chapter # of finally passed resolve  
*VETO SUSTAINED*..... Legislature failed to override Governor's veto

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session of the 128<sup>th</sup> Legislature is Wednesday, November 1, 2017. The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure may be found in the enacted law summary for that legislation.

## *Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary*

4. It requires that the Department of Health and Human Services limit its use of preliminary protection orders to no more than 50% of the total child protection petitions it has filed in a calendar year and to report to the Legislature annually on its use of the preliminary protection order relative to child protection petitions.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session of the 128th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 1187.

**LD 1190      An Act Regarding Driver's License Suspensions for Nondriving-related Violations      CARRIED OVER**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
MOONEN M KEIM L	OTP-AM ONTP	H-532 H-550 MOONEN M

This bill removes the provisions of law that allow driver's license suspensions for failure to pay a fine in offenses not related to driving. This bill provides that the statutory exemptions from attachment and execution for certain property apply to the enforcement of fines owed to the State.

**Committee Amendment "A" (H-532)**

This amendment adds a sunset to the bill of October 1, 2021, thus prohibiting driver's license suspensions for failure to pay a fine in offenses not related to driving until October 1, 2021 and allowing two full fiscal years of information about the fiscal effect of eliminating driver's license suspension as a tool to collect fines. Without further legislative action, the law in effect prior to this Act takes effect on October 1, 2021, reinstating the ability of the court to suspend driver's licenses for nonpayment of fines.

**House Amendment "A" To Committee Amendment "A" (H-550)**

The bill eliminates the ability of the court to suspend a person's driver's license for failure to pay a court-ordered fine for an offense not related to driving. This amendment amends the committee amendment to give the court the option of restricting a person's driver's license to work, work-search or education purposes if the person has the ability to pay a fine and fails to do so.

This bill was reported out of committee and then carried over to any special or regular session of the 128th Legislature on the Special Appropriations Table by joint order, S.P. 601.

**LD 1216      An Act To Clarify the Law Regarding Arbitration Privacy with Respect to Executive and Legislative Branch Employees      Died Between Houses**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
SYLVESTER M BELLOWS S	OTP-AM ONTP	

Current law requires that the final written decision of a state executive branch or legislative branch employer relating to disciplinary action of an employee that is appealed to an arbitrator be made public when the arbitrator issues a final written decision on the matter or within 120 days after a written request for the decision is made to the employer, whichever is earlier. This bill changes the law to making the employer's final written decision relating to disciplinary action of the employee public upon the issuance and release of the arbitrator's written decision on the matter, regardless of the time frame in which the arbitrator's decision is issued and released.

**Committee Amendment "A" (H-433)**

## *Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary*

This amendment is the majority report. The bill addresses confidentiality of disciplinary actions appealed to arbitration affecting state employees. The amendment extends the same confidentiality to county and municipal employees. Disciplinary actions concerning state, county and municipal employees remain confidential if an action is appealed to arbitration until the arbitration decision is final and released.

This amendment was not adopted.

**LD 1239     An Act To Increase Efficiency in Enforcement of the Maine Human Rights Act**

**Died Between Houses**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
TUELL W KATZ R	OTP-AM ONTP	

This bill implements several recommendations of a review panel created by the Governor to review operations of the Maine Human Rights Commission.

Under the bill, if both parties are in agreement, the commission is authorized to make binding determinations pertaining to violations of the Maine Human Rights Act. The commission is authorized to order remedies that the court is currently authorized to impose. Final decisions of the commission are appealable under the Maine Administrative Procedure Act as final agency actions.

The bill provides for the commission to suspend an investigation if a complainant files an affidavit with the commission stating that the complainant will seek a right-to-sue letter when permitted under law. Current law allows a complainant to ask for a right-to-sue letter, bypassing the commission findings, after 180 days have elapsed since the complaint was filed. Because the commission will suspend the investigation once the affidavit stating that the complainant will seek a right-to-sue letter is filed, the complainant may not withdraw the affidavit.

The bill provides for the commission to issue a right-to-sue letter to a complainant if 180 days have elapsed since the complaint was filed and the commission has not filed a civil action in the case and has not entered into a conciliation agreement in the case.

The bill authorizes the commission to impose sanctions and seek penalties for perjury, false swearing, making a false statement, providing false information or violating the nondisclosure requirements. Sanctions may include the imposition of adverse inference, liability or other remedies.

The bill authorizes the commission to establish by rule procedures to discourage abuse of the complaint and investigation process. These procedures may include, but are not limited to, refusing to accept more than five complaints from the same complainant in a 12-month period and other requirements designed to eliminate the filing of frivolous complaints.

The bill provides funding for two new paralegal positions and one new consumer outreach position.

The bill directs the commission to purchase a computer system to provide for electronic data management that allows parties and their attorneys to access the status of their cases electronically.

**Committee Amendment "A" (H-434)**

This amendment is the majority report. It strikes the bill but retains the provisions providing funding for the two paralegal positions and one consumer outreach position and the requirement that the Maine Human Rights Commission purchase a computer system. It adds a \$10,000 appropriation for the initial step in evaluating the commission's computer system needs.