

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
129TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION



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

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND HOUSING**

August 2019

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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 129th 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 129th Legislature is Thursday, September 19, 2019. 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 Labor and Housing

LD 1177 An Act To Improve Public Sector Labor Relations

Veto Sustained

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
JACKSON T MCCREAD	OTP-AM ONTP	S-308

This bill:

1. Amends the labor relations laws governing municipal public employees and University of Maine System employees to provide that determinations by arbitrators with respect to controversies over all subjects, including salaries, pensions and insurance, are final and binding on the parties;
2. Amends the labor relations laws governing state employees to provide that, with respect to controversies over salaries, an arbitrator's determinations are final and binding on the parties; and
3. Amends the labor relations laws governing judicial employees to provide that an arbitrator's determinations with respect to controversies over all subjects, including salaries, pensions and insurance, are final and binding on the parties and that, with respect to controversies over salaries, determinations by mediator-arbitrators are final and binding on the parties.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-308)

This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, adds specific factors an arbitrator must consider when a controversy is not resolved between a public employer and bargaining agent under the municipal public employees labor relations law. This amendment delays the effective date of the changes made in the bill until July 1, 2020.

LD 1184 An Act Regarding Penalties for Early Retirement for Certain Members of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System

CARRIED OVER

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
DOORE D BELLOWS S	ONTP OTP-AM	H-244

Under changes made to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System in 1993, employees who were members of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System as of July 1, 1993 but did not have 10 years of creditable service as of July 1, 1993, are required to have 25 years of creditable service and attain 62 years of age in order to avoid incurring a penalty of six percent of earned benefits for each year the person retires before attaining 62 years of age. Prior to that change, the penalty was 2.25 percent for each year below 60 years of age the person retired.

This bill changes the rate of the penalty for those state employees who retired between July 1, 2011 and January 1, 2012, and for teachers who retired between July 1, 2011, and July 1, 2012, who had at least 25 years of service on July 1, 2011, but had not attained 62 years of age to 2.25 percent for each year the person was below 62 years of age upon retirement from service.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-244)

This amendment is the minority report of the committee. It makes clear that the change in the rate of the early retirement penalty for qualified members applies prospectively beginning October 1, 2019. The amendment also adds an appropriations and allocations section to fund the one-time cost of the unfunded actuarial liability created as

Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing

a result of the change in the rate of penalty for qualified members.

This bill was reported out of committee and then carried over to any special or regular session, or both, of the 129th Legislature on the Special Appropriations Table by joint order, H.P. 1322.

LD 1203 An Act To Clarify the Retirement Presumption under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992 ONTP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
SYLVESTER M	ONTP	

Once an individual receiving workers' compensation benefits retires and is receiving retirement benefits, there is a presumption that the individual is no longer eligible for workers' compensation benefits related to loss of earnings or earning capacity. Under current law, this presumption may be rebutted by evidence that the individual is unable to perform suitable work because of the work-related disability.

This bill lowers the evidentiary burden on the retired individual collecting workers' compensation benefits by providing that evidence that the individual's retirement was due at least in part to a work-related disability is sufficient to continue eligibility for workers' compensation benefits related to loss of earnings or earning capacity.

LD 1204 An Act To Eliminate the Cap on Weekly Benefits in Workers' Compensation Cases ONTP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
SYLVESTER M	ONTP	

Current law caps the weekly benefit payable under the laws governing workers' compensation to a maximum amount set in statute or a percentage of the state average weekly wage, whichever is higher. This bill eliminates the cap on the weekly benefits.

While LD 1204 was voted "Ought Not to Pass," a provision increasing the cap for weekly benefits to a maximum of 125 percent of the state average weekly wage for an injury occurring on or after January 1, 2020, was included in LD 756, An Act To Improve the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992. See LD 756, which was enacted as Public Law 2019, chapter 344.

LD 1205 An Act To Allow Full Retirement Benefits under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992 ONTP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
SYLVESTER M	ONTP	

This bill strikes the provisions of law that require an employer to offset an individual's workers' compensation benefits based on retirement or pension benefits being received by that individual. It also clarifies the law to avoid the interpretation of the Maine Supreme Court in *Urrutia v. Interstate Brands International*, 2018 ME 24, 179 A.3d 312, which allowed an employer to take a credit for past overpayments, due to the employer's failure to take an allowable offset of benefits, by reducing the employer's ongoing payments of workers' compensation benefits.