

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE  
129<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SPECIAL AND SECOND REGULAR SESSIONS



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

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

November 2020

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\*Committee member for a portion of the session

# STATE OF MAINE

129<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION



## 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 129<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 129<sup>th</sup> 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.

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foreign national.

This bill, which had not yet been voted by the committee, was carried over in committee to any special session of the 129th Legislature by joint order, S.P. 788.

**LD 2145 An Act To Help Veterans Access Jobs, Education, Health Care and Housing and Provide General Support to Veterans**

**CARRIED OVER**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
CARPENTER M MAXMIN C		

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208 that proposes to establish a bill of rights to help veterans access jobs, education, health care and housing and provide general support to veterans.

1. The bill would help veterans access jobs by:

- A. Requiring the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation to waive licensing fees for veterans;
- B. Requiring licensing boards affiliated with the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation to waive licensing fees for veterans;
- C. Expanding eligibility of veterans and their spouses for the program that helps veterans and their spouses obtain occupational licenses;
- D. Requiring each board, commission, office and agency within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation or affiliated with the department to permit a veteran or spouse who holds a comparable license in another state to acquire a license by endorsement in this State for the remainder of the term of the license from the other state or until a license is obtained in this State or obtain a temporary license in this State for the period of time necessary to obtain a license in this State;
- E. Requiring each board, commission, office and agency within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation or affiliated with the department to grant a full or partial exemption from continuing education requirements for a veteran or spouse;
- F. Obtaining information regarding the implementation of the process established to help qualified veterans and their spouses to obtain occupational licenses, including data concerning how many veterans and their spouses have received assistance;
- G. Extending renewal dates for occupational licenses for veterans and their spouses;
- H. Waiving fees for licensing veterans as emergency medical services persons and security guards;
- I. Extending the period of time allowed between the completion of military service and the favorable treatment of that military service for purposes of occupational licensing; and
- J. Allowing all veterans to purchase credit for time served in the military for purposes of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

2. The bill would help veterans access education by:

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- A. Extending the amount of time given to veterans to transition from military service to school;
  - B. Requiring each campus of the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System to have a dedicated space for veterans with at least one computer where veterans may meet and have the tools available to them that they need to access benefits;
  - C. Providing loans to veterans for books that are required for classes;
  - D. Providing services for veterans who receive other than an honorable discharge from military service;
  - E. Providing easier readmittance to school for veterans who leave school for health-related issues; and
  - F. Providing graduate school assistance to veterans.
3. The bill would help veterans access health care by:
- A. Continuing and improving the pilot program established in Resolve 2017, chapter 24 that provides mental health case management services to veterans;
  - B. Providing mental health treatment in all counties for veterans;
  - C. Waiving the fee for medical marijuana identification cards for veterans;
  - D. Providing that the time limit for veterans who are otherwise eligible for assistance under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is twice the time limit that would otherwise apply to the veterans; and
  - E. Supporting programs that provide transportation to medical appointments for veterans.
4. The bill would help veterans access housing by:
- A. Providing funding to seek long-term solutions to reduce barriers, such as criminal convictions, substance use, mental illness and physical disabilities, to veterans securing housing;
  - B. Increasing the number of housing vouchers provided to homeless veterans;
  - C. Providing funding to assist landlords to improve substandard apartments and give incentives to landlords to rent to veterans;
  - D. Changing the "Salute ME" mortgage program administered by the Maine State Housing Authority to provide veterans with a greater discount on home mortgage rates;
  - E. Changing the property tax exemption for certain veterans to apply to all veterans;
  - F. Surveying public land, unused public buildings and available private buildings, including closed mills, for opportunities to provide housing or temporary shelter for veterans;
  - G. Providing preference to veterans in the Bridging Rental Assistance Program, which assists persons with mental illness to secure temporary housing; and
  - H. Providing funding for organizations and facilities that provide housing for homeless veterans.

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5. The bill would provide general support to veterans by:

- A. Raising the amount of pension income paid under an employee retirement plan that is exempt from the income tax;
- B. Extending the time for which a driver's license is valid for active duty military members; and
- C. Increasing the maximum amount of a grant of temporary assistance that may be provided to a veteran from the Veterans Temporary Assistance Fund from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

This bill, which had been referred to committee but not yet heard, was carried over in committee to any special session of the 129th Legislature by joint order, S.P. 788.

**LD 2162     An Act To Restore Honor to Certain Service Members**

**CARRIED OVER**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
GIDEON S JACKSONT		

This bill requires the Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management to establish a process for a veteran who separated from service without an honorable discharge due solely to the veteran's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression or to statements, consensual sexual conduct or consensual acts relating to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression to have that discharge treated as an honorable discharge for purposes of determining the veteran's eligibility for rights, privileges and benefits under state law.

The bill further requires the director to explore whether other states have established processes for reviewing and potentially upgrading the discharge status, for state law purposes, of veterans who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury or who have been diagnosed with psychological trauma resulting from sexual assault or sexual harassment during military service as described in 38 United States Code, Section 1720D and who separated from service without an honorable discharge. The director is required to report, no later than January 15, 2021, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over veterans affairs on both the potential for implementing such a process in the State and the resources that would be required to implement the process. The committee may report out legislation to the First Regular Session of the 130th Legislature based on the director's report.

This bill, which had been referred to committee but not yet heard, was carried over in committee to any special session of the 129th Legislature by joint order, S.P. 788.