

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
130TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR AND FIRST SPECIAL SESSIONS



Disposition of bills and summaries of all laws enacted or finally passed

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND HOUSING

December 2021

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HOUSING

LD 1530 An Act To Allow People To Live in Tiny Homes as a Primary or Accessory Dwelling

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2021, chapter 219 requires municipalities to permit tiny homes to be placed or erected on individual lots where single-family dwellings are allowed or as an accessory structure, subject to all applicable land use requirements as single-family dwellings or as an accessory structure.

LD 1546 An Act Directing the Maine State Housing Authority To Report on Emergency Rental Assistance Programs

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2021, chapter 322 requires the Maine State Housing Authority to provide to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters copies of any reports required to be submitted to the United States Department of the Treasury or the Governor regarding the administration of the emergency rental assistance programs recently enacted by Congress.

If no such reports are required, the Maine State Housing Authority is required to annually report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters regarding rental assistance distributed by the authority.

LD 1559 Resolve, To Create the Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Resolve 2021, chapter 122 establishes the Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.

It requires the State Controller to transfer \$200,000 from the available balance in the Adult Use Marijuana Regulatory Coordination Fund Other Special Revenue Services Funds account within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to the Legislature, Study Commissions – Funding Other Special Revenue Funds account.

LD 1564 An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Unemployment Compensation

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2021, chapter 456 makes the following changes to the laws governing unemployment compensation.

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1. It increases the amount of wages a person may receive and still be considered partially unemployed. It also specifies that the amount of wages a person may receive and still be considered partially unemployed is indexed to the increase in the cost of living, if any, beginning the first Sunday of June 2022 and annually thereafter.
2. It provides the Commissioner of Labor or the commissioner's designee discretion to deduct the amount of unemployment benefits erroneously paid to a person from any future benefits payable to that person. Current law vests this discretion in the Unemployment Insurance Commission. It also provides that unemployment benefits erroneously paid may not be recovered from a person who, in the judgment of the commissioner or the commissioner's designee, is without fault and when, in the judgment of the commissioner or the commissioner's designee, such recovery would defeat the purpose of benefits or would be against equity and good conscience. Current law vests this judgment in the commission.
3. It specifies that a benefit overpayment accrues interest at the rate of 1.0% per month or per fraction of a month from the first of the month following the date the determination establishing the benefit overpayment becomes final until payment plus accrued interest is received by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Unemployment Compensation.
4. It transfers rule-making authority pertaining to unemployment insurance from the Unemployment Insurance Commission to the Commissioner of Labor.
5. It requires the bureau, whenever a legislative proposal containing an unemployment compensation benefit change is proposed, to consider the estimated effect of the proposed change on the State's unemployment insurance reciprocity rate.
6. It provides that an individual's earnings disregard in effect on the first Sunday of June 2022 and each first Sunday of June thereafter must increase by the increase, if any, in the cost of living.
7. It increases the allowance for dependents and the cap on the allowance for dependents. It also specifies that only one individual is entitled to a dependency allowance for the same dependent with respect to any week.
8. It provides eligibility for unemployment compensation for a person who leaves employment due to the unexpected loss of child or elder care under certain circumstances.
9. It provides that evidence presented at a fact-finding interview by interested parties who personally participate in the interview by telephone or email or other electronic means is permitted for a determination of eligibility for unemployment compensation.
10. It specifies additional conditions that trigger an extended benefit period.

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11. It increases the total extended benefit amount in a high unemployment period.
12. It establishes a peer workforce navigator pilot program.
13. It requires the Commissioner of Labor to convene an unemployment insurance working group to examine the unemployment insurance program pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26, chapter 13. The commissioner must submit a report of the working group's recommendations and any suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing no later than January 15, 2022. The Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing may submit a bill in response to this report to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature.
14. It requires the Department of Labor, Bureau of Unemployment Compensation to complete an analysis of the State's unemployment insurance reciprocity rate and to report to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing no later than February 1, 2022. The Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing may submit a bill in response to this report to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature.

LD 1613 Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Labor and the Department of Transportation To Develop Partnerships with Businesses, Unions and Educational Programs and Institutions To Provide Training and Transportation for Workers

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Resolve 2021, chapter 92 directs the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Labor and the Department of Transportation to collaborate to develop partnerships with businesses, unions and educational programs and institutions to provide a hub for workers to get transportation to training programs, apprenticeships and jobs and receive information about open positions and training opportunities.

LD 1644 An Act To Improve the Disability Retirement Program of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2021, chapter 277 amends the laws relating to disability retirement under the Maine Public Employees Retirement System and makes other changes relating to the structure of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

The law does the following.