

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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*Committee chair for a portion of the session

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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.

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1. It repeals the laws providing for a medical board and permits the executive director to contract with a medical review service provider.
2. It provides that the system's hearing officers are not employees of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System but independent contractors that serve as neutral and independent decision makers.
3. It modifies the definition of "disabled".
4. It provides that an adverse decision by a hearing officer that is appealed to the court must be given de novo review.
5. It restructures the disability retirement application process so that the executive director may grant benefits based on medical records and the member's health care provider's views, may obtain opinions and recommendations from the medical review service provider and may not deny an application for disability retirement benefits without first obtaining an independent medical examination unless waived by the member.
6. It provides that, when reviewing medical evidence before making a determination of disability, the board, executive director and hearing officers must primarily consider medical opinions in the record and whether the opinions are supported by sound medical evidence and are consistent with other medical evidence in the record.
7. It provides that attorney's fees up to a maximum of \$12,000 must be paid by the Maine Public Employees Retirement System for a member who appeals the denial of disability benefits and who subsequently is awarded those benefits.
8. It requires the retirement system to report no later than January 31, 2023 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over retirement matters on the experience of the retirement system and its members under the changes made by the law. The joint standing committee may report out a bill to the 131st Legislature on matters related to the report.
9. It requires formation of a stakeholder group to report no later than January 3, 2023 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over retirement matters on implementing mandatory long-term disability insurance coverage. The joint standing committee may report out a bill to the 131st Legislature on matters related to the report.