

LD 20 - An Act To Improve Substance Abuse Treatment

CONCEPT DRAFT

SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to improve the delivery of substance abuse treatment.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 59 - An Act To Protect Students' Rights and Privacy Regarding Their School Records

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Commissioner of Education to adopt rules regarding dissemination of student information by schools not covered under current law. These rules are major substantive rules and must include substantially the same prohibitions and standards regarding dissemination of student information as applicable to publicly funded schools. The commissioner is required to recommend an appropriate penalty for a violation of the rules to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than January 15, 2016.

Public hearing was held 2/9/15 and work session was held on 2/23/15.

Voted as Ought to Pass by committee (Education & Cultural Affairs).

LD 150 - An Act To Provide Anger Management Courses or Additional Imprisonment for Domestic Violence Offenders

SUMMARY

This bill provides for anger management courses or specified jail time in addition to the sentences for certain domestic violence offenders. The bill directs the Department of Corrections, in consultation with the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, to develop standards and procedures for certification of anger management programs and to certify those programs. The bill has an effective date of January 1, 2016.

Public hearing was held 3/13/15 and work session was held 3/20/15.

Divided report by committee (Criminal Justice & Public Safety).

LD 199 - An Act To Improve the Reporting of Child Abuse

SUMMARY

This bill amends the law regarding mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect and of the suspicious death of a child by striking language allowing those reporters to cause someone else to make a report. Language requiring the individual mandated reporter to make a report is retained.

Public hearing scheduled for 3/31/15 at 2:00 pm.

Work session scheduled for 4/8/15 at 2:30 pm.

LD 215 - An Act To Improve Student Retention in Maine's Postsecondary Institutions

SUMMARY

This bill directs Jobs for Maine's Graduates, a state-authorized nonprofit corporation, to provide mentoring and counseling services, course guidance and graduation planning, peer support services and financial guidance to up to 200 students and at up to 4 postsecondary institutions in the State for the purpose of significantly increasing the percentage of eligible students who obtain a postsecondary degree. Eligible students must have previously been enrolled in a Jobs for Maine's Graduates high school program, been in or currently be in foster care or have earned a high school equivalency diploma within the 5 years prior to obtaining these services.

Public hearing was held on 3/4/15 and work session was held on 3/23/15.

Voted as Ought to Pass by committee (Education & Cultural Affairs)

LD 391 - Resolve, To Create a State-run Virtual Academy Providing Maine Students with Access to Online Learning through Their Existing School Districts

SUMMARY

This resolve does the following.

1. It directs the Department of Education to convene a stakeholder group to develop plans to establish online and digital learning opportunities, which may include a state³³ administered virtual academy and a state-administered digital learning exchange, that provide all public schools in the State access to online instruction, online courses and digital learning resources for their students.
2. It directs the stakeholder group, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to complete the design of online and digital learning opportunities for Maine students and submit a report, including findings and any necessary implementing legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December 1, 2015.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 417 - An Act Regarding Measures To Ensure Students Can Demonstrate Proficiency in Financial Literacy

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Commissioner of Education to develop methods to measure students' proficiency in financial literacy for those students taking part in financial literacy education pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 254, subsection 13 in order to help ensure they can demonstrate proficiency prior to graduation. The Commissioner of Education shall submit by January 13, 2016 a report on the measures and any suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, which may report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.

Public hearing was 3/2/15 and work session was 3/4/15.

Voted as Ought to Pass by committee (Education & Cultural Affairs)

LD 440 - An Act To Create a Secure, Therapeutic Mental Health Unit

SUMMARY

This bill provides for the establishment of a secure, therapeutic mental health unit for defendants undergoing court-ordered assessments to determine their competency to stand trial or their criminal culpability and to provide therapeutic care for forensic patients. The bill establishes the unit as follows.

1. It directs the Commissioner of Corrections and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to enter into an agreement to establish the unit with the sheriff of either Cumberland County or Somerset County.
2. It directs the Department of Corrections to provide security for the unit. Security staff must be dedicated to the unit and trained to provide security in a mental health hospital environment.
3. It directs the Department of Corrections to provide therapeutic mental health care for the unit. The therapeutic mental health care must meet standards established by a national organization on correctional facilities mental health standards. The Department of Health and Human Services may also provide mental health services to the unit upon agreement with the Department of Corrections and the county jail.
4. It requires that the population in a secure, therapeutic mental health unit be separated by sight and sound from the general jail population.
5. It specifies that a person under a court order to undergo a mental evaluation by the State Forensic Service must be admitted to the unit unless the Department of Health and Human Services determines that the person's mental health condition contraindicates admittance to the unit, the person is an inmate at a state correctional facility or there is not a suitable bed available.

Public hearing set for 4/1/15 at 1:00 pm (Criminal Justice & Public Safety)

Work session scheduled for 4/10/15 at 9:00 am.

LD 534 - An Act To Increase Crisis Intervention Training in the State

SUMMARY

This bill requires that, beginning January 2017, at least 20% of law enforcement officers in a municipal police department and in a county sheriff department must complete the so-called Memphis model of crisis intervention team training. Beginning June 2017, officers who have not completed this training must be certified in mental health first aid.

Public hearing set for 4/1/15 at 1:00 pm (Criminal Justice & Public Safety)

Work session scheduled for 4/10/15 at 9:00 am.

LD 601- An Act To Clarify the Authority of Individualized Education Plans in Relation to Proficiency-based Diplomas

SUMMARY

This bill allows a child with a disability who demonstrates proficiency through the use of evidence and alternative measures specified in the child's individualized education plan to be awarded a high school diploma.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 627 - An Act To Make College More Affordable for Maine Residents

SUMMARY

This bill changes the Maine State Grant Program by providing that grants awarded to students attending the University of Maine System, the Maine Maritime Academy or the Maine Community College System may not be less than \$2,500 for students attending their first year, \$3,500 for students attending their 2nd year, \$4,500 for students attending their 3rd year and \$5,500 for students attending their 4th year.

Public hearing scheduled for 4/6/15 at 1:00 pm.

LD 657 - An Act To Provide Enhanced Mental Health Services to the County Prison Population

CONCEPT DRAFT

SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to increase funding for mental health care services for the county prison population, including educating and training prison employees in behavioral health assessment and protocols on an annual basis. It would also require that every county jail have a mental health worker on site at least 8 hours a day.

Public hearing set for 4/1/15 at 1:00 pm (Criminal Justice & Public Safety)

Work session scheduled for 4/10/15 at 9:00 am.

LD 695 - An Act To Empower Parents in the Education of Their Children by Allowing an Opt-out from Standardized Assessments

SUMMARY

This bill requires a school administrative unit to excuse a student from standardized assessments at the written request of the student's parent or guardian and establishes requirements for school administrative units and the Department of Education related to excusing a student.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 725 - An Act To Increase Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Maine Public Schools

SUMMARY

This bill requires a school administrative unit to complete and file proof of completion of suicide prevention awareness education and suicide prevention and intervention training for school personnel with the Department of Education. It also requires health education provided by a school administrative unit to students in grades 8 to 12 to include a comprehensive suicide prevention program.

Public hearing set for 4/16/15 at 1:00 pm.

LD 840 - An Act To Support the Implementation of Proficiency-based Diplomas and Standards-based Student Learning

SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to require the State to advance implementation of proficiency based diplomas and a standards-based system of education by using strategic planning, monitoring and economies of scale to accelerate implementation of the diplomas and system at the local level. The bill proposes to meet these goals by:

1. Requiring the Department of Education to develop a 5-year plan and budget to outline strategic supports for the implementation of proficiency-based diplomas under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4722-A and submit the plan and budget to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by January 31, 2016;
2. Requiring the Department of Education annually to collect and report progress towards the implementation of proficiency-based diplomas in public schools, public charter schools and private schools under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 2951, subsection 5, including the number of students graduating with proficiency-based diplomas and the number of students awarded proficiency in each of the content areas of the system of learning results established under Title 20-A, section 6209 and the guiding principles set forth in department rules governing implementation of the system of learning results established pursuant to Title 20-A, section 6209;
3. Maintaining school administrative unit per-pupil subsidies at the current rate;
4. Providing competitive grants to regional district partnerships and nonprofit organizations to address statewide priorities and involve the State's business and higher education communities in delivering consistent messages about standards and proficiency, create a statewide research and development process to solve complex implementation problems and provide on-site consultation in curriculum, instruction, assessment and organizational change, increase local knowledge in key implementation areas and build local support systems and services; and
5. Requiring the Department of Education to contract with an external organization through a request for proposals process to develop, administer and track the competitive grant process and report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs, the Commissioner of Education and the public on the progress of the implementation of a standards-based system of education and emerging needs as the needs arise.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 853 - An Act To Allow Secondary Schools To Grant Certificates of Academic Proficiency

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes school administrative units to award certificates of content area proficiency to students who demonstrate proficiency in each content area of the system of learning results.

No public hearing set yet.

LD 861 - An Act To Protect Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking

SUMMARY

This bill amends the laws governing residential leases in instances where a tenant is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. The bill prohibits a landlord from evicting a tenant because of an instance of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. It also renders the perpetrator liable for certain damages.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

**LD 878 - An Act To Support College Affordability in Maine
Concept Draft**

SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to enact measures designed to reduce the costs associated with higher education in order to encourage resident students to remain in the State to attend school, and nonresident students to come to the State to attend school.

Public hearing is 4/6/15 at 1:00 pm.

Work session is 4/9/15 at 1:00 pm.

LD 898 - An Act To Reduce Student Loan Debt through an Expansion of the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit

SUMMARY

This bill allows students who are pursuing or have pursued a course of study available only at a public institution outside the State as part of the New England regional student program offered by the New England Board of Higher Education to be eligible for the educational opportunity tax credit, starting with the tax year beginning January 1, 2016.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 921 - An Act To Strengthen the Right of a Victim of Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence To Take Necessary Leave from Employment

SUMMARY

This bill expands the law creating the right to a leave of absence for employees who are victims of violence by requiring that a returning employee be placed in the employee's former employment position or a position of equivalent employment status. The bill prohibits discrimination or retaliation against an employee for exercising the right to take a leave of absence or enforcing the provisions of the law and creates a private right of action to enforce the law, and to seek injunctive or equitable relief and compensatory damages.

Public hearing is 4/6/15 at 9:30 am.

LD 936 - An Act To Protect Children from Sexual Predators, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault

SUMMARY

This bill does the following:

1. Raises to Class C the crime of sexual abuse of a minor who is either 14 or 15 years of age;
2. Raises to Class C the crime of visual sexual aggression against a child under 14 years of age;
3. Raises to Class C the crime of sexual misconduct with a child and changes the age of the victim to include children 14 years of age or younger. Current law applies only to children under 14 years of age;
4. Raises to Class C the crime of solicitation of a child to commit a prohibited act and changes the age of the victim to include children 14 years of age or younger. Current law applies only to children under 14 years of age;
5. Enacts a prohibition on traveling into, out of or within this State or attempting to travel for the purposes of illegal sexual acts involving a minor. The bill also prohibits transporting a minor, attempting to transport a minor or soliciting or enticing a minor to travel into, out of or within the State for illegal sexual purposes. Illegal sexual purposes include engaging in a sexual act with a minor, prohibited under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 17-A, chapter 11; engaging in sexual exploitation of a minor, prohibited under Title 17-A, chapter 12; or engaging in sex trafficking or prostitution, prohibited under Title 17-A, chapter 35. The bill makes illegal traveling a Class B crime;
6. Expands current law on sexual exploitation of a minor 1 that prohibits exhibiting uncovered or covered portions of the genitals, anus or pubic area to include uncovered or covered breasts or buttocks;
7. Raises to Class C the crime of possession of sexually explicit material showing a child under 16 years of age engaging in sexually explicit conduct; and
8. Expands forfeiture of assets for a violation of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 17-A, chapter 12, sexual exploitation of a minor, to provide for forfeiture of all money, negotiable instruments, securities, personal property and accounts held in a financial institution or held in any other manner in the name of the defendant or in which the defendant has an ownership interest that are directly or indirectly proceeds of the violation.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 1141 - An Act To Increase the Affordability of College Tuition and Attract Professionals to Maine

CONCEPT DRAFT SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to implement a comprehensive strategy to increase the affordability of tuition at state public universities and colleges for Maine residents, thereby increasing the graduation rate from those state public institutions of higher education, and to attract to and keep in Maine young professionals. The comprehensive strategy may include, but is not limited to:

1. Establishing a textbook scholarship program, in coordination with the public institutions of higher education to provide scholarships for the purchase of textbooks at those institutions. The scholarships would be available to graduates of Maine high schools who have a grade point average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale;
2. Establishing scholarships or providing incentives for degree completion with agreements to remain in the State after graduation for specified periods. Under this program, a full scholarship for the 4th and final year of school at a Maine public institution of higher education would be provided to students who agree to work in the State for a certain period of time following graduation;
3. Requiring the Department of Education and the Finance Authority of Maine cooperatively to issue low-interest student loans to students attending a public or private institution of higher education in this State who meet certain criteria, such as financial need, academic merit, graduating within 4 years or agreeing to work in public service for a certain period after graduation;
4. Requiring the Finance Authority of Maine to establish additional tax credits, state grants and other forms of financial aid for higher education for residents of this State who are graduates from a Maine public institution of higher education and an education loan repayment program for all graduates of an institution of higher education who are residents of this State;
5. Establishing a loan repayment program for graduates employed in certain high- demand fields in this State;
6. Establishing goals for college graduation attainment for the next 25 years;
7. Exploring the development of an entity, such as a board of regents, to oversee higher education in this State in order to best serve the higher education needs of the residents and businesses of this State;and
8. Establishing a pilot project, based on Oregon's "Pay Forward, Pay Back" model, under which a student enrolled in a public institution of higher education, in lieu of paying tuition or fees, contracts to pay the State a certain percentage of the student's annual income following graduation for a specified number of years. The pilot project would eventually replace the current system of charging a resident of the State tuition and fees for enrollment at a state public institution of higher education. The pilot project would:
 - A. Allow a student who is a resident of the State and who qualifies for admission to an institution to enroll in the institution without paying tuition or fees;
 - B. Provide that, in lieu of paying tuition or fees, the student must sign a binding contract to pay to the State or the institution for a specified number of years a certain percentage of the student's annual adjusted gross income upon graduation from the institution;
 - C. Specify the number of years and the percentage of annual adjusted gross income for contracts at each participating institution and base the specifications on research to date; and
 - D. Establish a funding source for the first 15 to 20 years of the pilot project and a revolving fund into which payments made under the pilot project are deposited to provide long-term funding.A pilot project may include variations by specific institution depending on the total cost of education at the institution, the portion of the cost that is paid by the State, the number of years of student repayment specified in the contract and the percentage of annual adjusted gross income specified in the contract.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 1145 - An Act To Improve Maine's Involuntary Commitment Processes

SUMMARY

This bill is based on certain recommendations in the report "Recommendations for Improving the Involuntary Commitment Process," by the Judicial Branch Mental Health Working Group dated December 15, 2014. It amends the laws governing involuntary hospitalization by:

1. Authorizing a health care practitioner to administer involuntary treatment to a person being involuntarily held or detained if the person's condition poses a serious, imminent risk to the person's physical or mental health and other conditions are met;
2. Specifying that family members may be the source of history and information that forms the basis of an opinion of a medical practitioner regarding a person for whom an emergency application for admittance to a psychiatric hospital has been filed;
3. Creating exceptions to the 24-hour hospital emergency hold period to authorize a hospital to involuntarily detain a mentally ill person meeting certain criteria for emergency psychiatric hospitalization for 2 additional 48-hour periods;
4. Limiting the State's costs related to transporting certain patients to reasonable costs;
5. Allowing for the discharge of an involuntary petition if the patient subsequently agrees to voluntary commitment;
6. Clarifying that orders of involuntary commitment and treatment also transfer with a patient that is transferred from one hospital to another; and
7. Permitting medical examinations and consultations required or permitted under involuntary hospitalization laws to be conducted using telemedicine technologies.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 1153 - An Act To Restore Local Control of Education to Towns

SUMMARY

This bill repeals the laws governing proficiency-based graduation requirements. It provides that a school administrative unit may elect to opt out of the so-called Common Core State Standards and statewide student assessments. It provides that a school administrative unit may establish a method of transferring funds to a public charter school that is an alternative to the current method. It makes it optional, instead of mandatory, for a school administrative unit to develop and implement a performance evaluation and professional growth system for educators.

No public hearing scheduled yet.

LD 1180- An Act To Require Education in Public Preschool Programs and Elementary Schools Regarding Child Sexual Abuse

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to develop model policies and a program of technical assistance for child sexual abuse response policies and reporting procedures and for age-appropriate instruction on child sexual abuse detection and prevention that may be used as part of the basic course of study in public preschool programs and elementary schools. The bill requires the Department of Education to make the model policies and technical assistance program available no later than March 1, 2016 to assist school administrative units with the implementation of child sexual abuse education programs and child sexual abuse response policies and reporting procedures in public preschool programs and kindergarten to grade 5. The bill requires that, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, the basic course of study for elementary schools must include age-appropriate instruction on child sexual abuse detection and prevention for all students enrolled in public preschool programs and kindergarten to grade 5. The bill requires a school administrative unit that operates a public preschool program or an elementary school to develop a prevention plan, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, that includes a written local policy and an implementation plan for the child sexual abuse education programs and child sexual abuse response policies and reporting procedures. The bill also requires the commissioner to review the content standards and performance indicators for the content area of health education, including age-appropriate instruction on child sexual abuse detection and prevention during the 2015-2016 school year as part of the commissioner's 5-year review cycle of the content standards and performance indicators required under the system of learning results

No public hearing scheduled yet.