

## Maine Counseling Association – Public Policy Update

Maine 128th Legislature, Second Regular Session (end date: April 18, 2018)  
Report compiled for MeCA Annual Meeting, March 26-27, 2018  
Stan Pelletier, Public Policy Chair

Bills of interest:

### LD 105 - An Act To Create a Centralized Authority To Combat Opiate Addiction in Maine SUMMARY

This bill establishes an office within the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate efforts in the State to combat addiction to opiates.

The Bill was referred to the Committee on State and Local Government on 4/6/17, and was subsequently read, amended, and re-read in both chambers. Now titled "An Act To Create the Substance Use Disorders Cabinet." Ordered Passed to Be Enacted on 3/22/2018.

### LD 186 - An Act To Improve Peer Support Services SUMMARY

This bill proposes to improve peer support services provided to consumers of mental health services who are clients of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Public hearing scheduled for April 20 at 1:00 pm

Work Session was held and tabled - Moved to Carry Over (5/12/17).

Move to Carry Over again 8/2/2017.

### LD 228 - An Act To Amend the Mathematics Requirements for High School Graduation SUMMARY

This bill prohibits requiring the secondary course of study in schools from including an advanced algebra course and prohibits requiring students to achieve proficiency in advanced algebra. The bill requires the Commissioner of Education to amend the rules by the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year requiring students to complete an advanced algebra course.

Public hearing scheduled for April 20 at 1:00 pm

Work Session was held and tabled - Moved to Carry Over (5/12/17)

House moved again to carry over 8/2/2017, placed in legislative files by Senate 2/13/2018  
(DEAD)

### LD 384 - An Act To Strengthen Maine Children's Mental Health SUMMARY

This bill proposes to require MaineCare to cover mental health treatment for a child that uses evidence-based practices, to include meetings with the parent of the child without the child present as long as the meetings are focused on the goals of the treatment.

Public hearing was held April 7 at 1:00 pm

Work Session held and tabled - Moved to Carry Over (5/12/17), again on 8/2/2017.

Amended, re-titled "Resolve, To Clarify Reimbursement for Parent-only Programs under the MaineCare Program", read twice and adopted by Senate on 3/22/2018. Going to House for concurrence.

#### LD 525 - An Act To Enhance Maine's Response to Domestic Violence

##### SUMMARY

This bill provides funding for the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence to support certified batterers' intervention programs for indigent participant fees, training programs, transportation costs and administrative expenses for the coalition.

Public hearing was held March 31 at 1:00

pm. Work session was held April 7

Voted on April 7 as Divided report (Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety)

Work session reconsidered 4/26/17 Voted as Divided

Report. Reported out on 5/8/17 as OTP as amended/ONTP

Amendment:

##### SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, replaces the bill and adds an appropriations and allocations section to provide funding to the Department of Corrections, instead of the Department of Health and Human Services, for batterers' intervention programs. FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

\*Passed by House to be Enacted on 5/23/17

Motioned by Senate on 2/24/17 to be placed on Special Appropriations Table pending Enactment.

Carried over (Senate) 8/2/2017

#### LD 565 - An Act To Address Maine's Opiate Addiction Crisis

##### SUMMARY

This bill proposes to address issues related to the opiate addiction crisis in the State, in particular expanding the availability of Naloxone Hydrochloride (Narcan) to be used in the emergency treatment of opiate overdose, to individuals at risk or friends or family members in a position to assist them in an emergency overdose situation.

Work Session held and Tabled on 5/10/17.

Carry over requested on 5/12/17. Title changed to "An Act Regarding the Prescribing and Dispensing of Naloxone Hydrochloride by Pharmacists." Ordered "Passed to Be Enacted" by House on 3/20/2018 and Senate on 3/22/2018.

#### LD 681 - An Act Regarding Sexual Activity and Sexual Assault at Secondary and Postsecondary Educational Institutions

##### SUMMARY

This bill requires that instruction involving affirmative consent, communication and decision making regarding sexual activity be a mandatory part of secondary school instruction.

"Affirmative consent" is defined as consent to sexual activity that can be revoked at any time and does not include silence, lack of resistance or consent given while intoxicated. This bill also

requires a postsecondary educational institution to make a notation on a student's transcript if the student has been convicted of sexual assault committed on the campus of the postsecondary educational institution.

Public hearing is April 10 at 1:00 pm

Work session held 4/24/17 and voted as divided

Report. Reported out on 6/24/17 as OTP as

Amended/ONTP. Amendment:

#### SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, strikes the part of the bill that requires a notation to be made on the transcript of a postsecondary student who is convicted of sexual assault. This amendment requires the Commissioner of Education to review the content standards and performance indicators for the content area of health, physical education and wellness, including instruction on affirmative consent, communication and decision making regarding sexual activity and the effects of alcoholic drinks, stimulants and narcotics on the ability to give affirmative consent, communicate and make appropriate decisions, during the 2017-2018 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.

#### FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

\*Passed to be Enacted by House on 6/16/17.

Motioned by Senate to be placed on Special appropriations Table pending Passed to be Enacted on 6/19/17. Carried over by Senate on 8/2/2017.

LD 808 - An Act To Restore Community Support Services for Adults with Mental Illness

#### SUMMARY

This bill restores access to services for persons with mental illness under Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 17 to those persons who were eligible for those services before the Department of Health and Human Services adopted new eligibility rules in 2016.

Work Session held and tabled on 5/10/17

Work session held and voted as divided report on

5/16/17 Reported out as OTP as amended/ONTP on

6/9/17 Amendment:

Senate Amendments - SUMMARY: This amendment adds an appropriations and allocations section.

#### FISCAL NOTE

#### REQUIRED SUMMARY

This amendment directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rules in Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 17, Community Support Services to restore access to services to persons who have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder. The amendment removes the need for the appropriations and allocations section by reducing some of the eligibility criteria and requiring the department to fund the remaining added services within existing resources.

## FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

\*Passed to be Enacted by House on 6/16/17

Motioned by Senate to be placed on Special appropriations Table pending Passed to be Enacted on 6/19/17.

Moved from Special Appropriations table 7/20/17, Passed to be Enacted in concurrence.

Vetoed by Governor, veto overridden by Senate 8/2/17, upheld by House 8/2/17. (DEAD)

## LD 902 - Resolve, To Increase Access to Evidence-based Psychosocial Treatment for Children in the MaineCare Program

### SUMMARY

This resolve requires the Department of Health and Human Services to increase the MaineCare reimbursement rates for evidence-based outpatient psychosocial treatments for children to a rate that covers all costs involved with providing the service, including additional training, clears waiting lists and attracts providers to all areas of the State, including underserved rural areas.

The resolve also requires the department to cover 2 additional evidence-based services known as trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and parent management training programs through a request for proposals, using General Fund funds for training and hiring staff. The department and the contracted providers are required to develop a reimbursement rate for providing the service that is sufficient to allow the continued financial health of the service providers providing these therapies.

Public hearing was March 29 at 3:00

pm. Work Session held and tabled on

4/18/17. Carry Over requested 5/12/17. Carried over by both houses 8/2/2017.

## LD 912 - An Act To Clarify the Scope of Practice of Certain Licensed Professionals Regarding Conversion Therapy

### SUMMARY

This bill proposes to amend the current law to establish that practices or treatments that seek to change an individual's, particularly a minor's, sexual orientation or gender identity are prohibited for certain professionals licensed under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 32 and to establish penalties for that conduct. Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development.

Work Session held and tabled on 5/11/17

Carry Over requested on 5/12/17, carried over 8/2/17.

Public hearing held 2/14/18, with significant written input by ACA membership before and testimony from allied organizations during hearing. Work session tabled on 2/27/18, work session held on 3/6/2018, measure voted on to a Divided Report (report not yet released).

## LD 952 - An Act To Ensure Access to Opiate Addiction Treatment in Maine

### SUMMARY

This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rules to increase the MaineCare reimbursement rate for outpatient opioid treatment to \$80 per week and to permit outpatient opioid treatment providers to be open 6 days per week as provided under federal law. It directs the department to contract with a 3rd-party consultant to conduct a rate study regarding reimbursement to outpatient opioid treatment providers. It authorizes opioid treatment programs under the Maine Pharmacy Act to operate without maintaining a pharmacist in charge but requires opioid treatment programs to enter into a written agreement with a licensed pharmacist to serve as a consultant to the opioid treatment program. It authorizes registered professional nurses, certified nurse practitioners and licensed practical nurses to dispense opioid medication for substance abuse treatment purposes to patients in an opioid treatment program.

Work session held on 5/10/17 and voted as OTP - AM Reported out OTP-AM on 5/18/17

Amendment:

#### SUMMARY

This amendment removes the section from the bill that relates to pharmacy oversight. It changes the increase in reimbursement in the bill for methadone providers from \$80 to \$72 a week. It removes the language that gives the Department of Health and Human Services the authority to increase reimbursement by rulemaking.

#### FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

\*Passed to be Enacted by House on 5/30/17.

Motioned by Senate to be placed on Special appropriations Table pending Passed to be Enacted on 5/31/17. Vetoed by Governor, veto overridden by both houses 8/2/17, passed into Law.

#### LD 966 - An Act To Create Mental Health Liaison Positions in Each County Jail

##### SUMMARY

This bill provides for a mental health liaison in each county or regional jail to oversee inmates with serious mental illness and connect them to the services for which they qualify, to work with the court system to ensure that they receive due process and speedy trials and to assist inmates who qualify for MaineCare to apply for and receive MaineCare benefits and services. This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to issue a request for proposals to private providers of behavioral health services and advocacy to replace intensive case manager positions within the department to staff the 15 mental health liaison positions in the county and regional jails.

Public hearing is March 31 at 9:30 am. Work session schedules for April 12 at 10:00 am Work Session held and tabled on 4/12/17

Carry Over requested on 5/12/17

Carried over on 8/2/17.

Voted OTP-AM on 3/5/2018 (Committee on Health and Human Services)

#### LD 1015 - An Act To Improve the Student Transfer Process

##### SUMMARY

This bill provides that a parent of a student requesting a transfer from one school administrative unit to another school administrative unit may not request the Commissioner of Education to review a decision to not approve a transfer if both superintendents find a transfer is not in the student's best interest. The bill also establishes the Commission To Study the Student Transfer Process to conduct a review of the appeal process under the laws governing the transfer of a student from one school administrative unit to another school administrative unit, including, but not limited to, a review of the criteria used by the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education to make a decision regarding a parent's request to review a decision to not approve a transfer.

Public hearing is March 27 at 1:00 pm. Work session scheduled for April 14 at 9:00 am

Work Session held and voted on 4/14/17 as Divided Report

Reported out on 5/17/17 as OTP as

Amended/ONTP Amendment:

SUMMARY - This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve that, like the bill, establishes the Commission To Study the Student Transfer Process. The commission is directed to conduct a review of the appeal process under the laws governing the transfer of a student from one school administrative unit to another school administrative unit.

The amendment adds 4 members to the commission.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

\*Passed by House on 5/30/17.

Motioned by Senate to be placed on The Special Study Table pending final passage on 5/31/17. Placed in Legislative Files (Senate) on 8/2/2017 (DEAD).

LD 1133 - An Act Regarding Access to Appropriate Residential Services for Individuals Being Discharged from Psychiatric Hospitalization

SUMMARY

This bill provides that, if a patient in a hospital who received treatment for a psychiatric condition and who the hospital has determined is clinically ready for discharge requests admission or readmission from the hospital to a facility operated by a residential service provider and that request is denied, the residential service provider must provide the patient the reasons for the denial in writing no later than 3 business days after the request is denied. The bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a standardized form for use by residential service providers to state the specific reasons for denial. A residential service provider must provide the standardized form to the patient or the patient's parent or guardian or designated representative. A residential service provider must annually send to the department's division of licensing and regulatory services a report of all patients who are denied admission or readmission and the reasons given the patients that were contained in the standardized forms. The bill allows a patient or a patient's parent or guardian or designated representative to recover \$500 from a residential service provider that violates these provisions. It also provides for the revocation of the license of a residential service provider that violates these provisions 3 times or more in a calendar year.

Work Session held and tabled on 5/10/17

Carry Over requested on 5/12/17, carried over (both houses) 8/2/17. Voted OTP-AM (Committee on Health and Human Services) 3/9/18.

LD 1189 - An Act To Define the Age of Consent for Alcohol or Drug Treatment and Mental Health Services

SUMMARY

Current law provides that a minor under 18 years of age may consent to treatment for abuse of alcohol or drugs or for emotional or psychological problems. This bill provides that a minor who is 14 years of age or older may consent to treatment for abuse of alcohol or drugs or for emotional or psychological problems and does not need the consent of a parent or guardian for such treatment. It also provides that if the parent or guardian consents to such treatment of a minor 14 years of age or older, the minor may not abrogate that consent and that if a minor 14 years of age or older consents to such treatment, a parent or guardian may not abrogate that Consent. Proposed in amendment: change age to 12.

Work Session was held and tabled on

5/12/17 Carry Over requested on 5/12/17, carry over approved 8/2/17.

Work session held on 2/22/18, voted on, Divided Report (Committee on Health and Human Services). Reported Out 3/21/18 ONTP/OTP-AM.

LD 1197 - An Act to Support Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment and Recovery

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Fund for Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment and Recovery and funds it by requiring 10% of the tax revenue from the retail sale of marijuana and marijuana products to be deposited in the fund. The fund is used for substance use disorder prevention, recovery and treatment programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This bill specifies that the additional funding for existing programs for substance use disorder, treatment and recovery is intended to supplement, not supplant, funding appropriated for those purposes.

Work Session held and tabled 5/16/17

Carry Over requested on 5/17/17. Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation reported out on 3/7/18 with the result LTW (leave to withdraw), placed in legislative files.

LD 1231 - An Act Regarding Mental Health Care for Maine Veterans

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management to station at each of the bureau's field offices a social worker to provide direct mental health care to veterans, to coordinate mental health care for veterans and to work with the Federal Government and state and local mental health service providers to provide mental health care to veterans. It also requires the director to administer a program to provide grants to providers of mental health services to veterans and appropriates ongoing funds of \$1,000,000 annually for the program.

Public hearing is April 19 at 1:00 pm

Work session held and reported out as Divided Report on  
5/12/17 Reported out as OTP as Amended/ONTP on 6/2/17

Amendment:

SUMMARY - This amendment expands the provisions in Committee Amendment that establish a pilot program to provide mental health case management services to veterans. It also establishes the Veterans Mental Health Case Management and Services Fund and changes the source of funding. The amendment also adds an emergency preamble and emergency clause and an appropriations and allocations section.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

SUMMARY - This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve. The amendment establishes a program for the collection of data by hospitals regarding the number of veterans presenting to the hospitals' emergency departments for mental or behavioral health care. The data must be analyzed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, to quantify the unmet need for mental health care services, particularly inpatient treatment, among veterans in the State and to identify gaps in mental health care services administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The amendment also establishes a 2-year pilot program to provide contracted case management services to veterans in need of mental health care services. The amendment provides funding to mitigate the costs to hospitals for collecting and reporting data and to pay for the contracted case management services program. FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

\*Passed in House on 6/27/17

Motioned by Senate to be placed on Special Appropriations Table pending final passage on 6/28/17. Finally passed Senate as emergency measure 7/20/17, became law without signature of Governor (Emergency measure).

LD 1429 - An Act Regarding the Epidemic of Opiate Abuse

SUMMARY

This bill addresses the opiate crisis in Maine by:

1. Allowing funds from property forfeited pursuant to a criminal forfeiture action to be assigned by the court, upon the request of the investigating or prosecuting agency, to a law enforcement agency in this State that provides case management and other social services to persons with substance use disorders;
2. Clarifying that the Class B crimes of aggravated furnishing of scheduled drugs and aggravated trafficking or furnishing of counterfeit drugs are for the death of another person, whose death was caused by drugs furnished by the defendant; and
3. Requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to provide an annual report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters regarding the Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program, including the number of prescribers participating and trends in prescription practices.

Work Session held on 4/28/17 (Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety).

Voted as OTP-AM on 5/15/17

Reported out as OTP-AM on  
6/14/17 Amendment:

SUMMARY - This amendment adds to the bill new variants of aggravated trafficking of scheduled drugs that includes trafficking in scheduled drugs when the trafficked scheduled drug was a contributing factor in the death of another person, a Class A crime, or serious bodily injury of another person, a Class B crime. The amendment also adds an appropriations and allocations section.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

Passed to be Enacted by House on 6/16/17

Motioned by Senate to be placed on The Special Appropriations Table pending Passed to be Enacted on 6/19/17. Carried over by Senate 8/2/17.

LD 1495 - An Act To Break the Generational Cycle of Domestic Violence

SUMMARY

This bill provides that a nonprofit organization that provides counseling and educational services to children who are affected by domestic violence and that receives referrals from a parent, guardian or relative of a child affected by domestic violence or a school, law enforcement agency, health care organization, health care provider or domestic violence resource center may apply to the Department of Health and Human Services for funding for these services. The bill directs the department to divide the State into 8 regions for purposes of providing funding to these nonprofit organizations and to provide funding in all 8 regions. In determining which nonprofit organizations to fund, the department must consider, among other factors, how much money each nonprofit organization spends on administration versus direct services and must give special consideration to nonprofit organizations that minimize administrative expenses and to nonprofit organizations in rural areas. Services provided by the nonprofit organization must be targeted to children who are 2 years of age or older and under 12

years of age. The bill provides that the department must report on the implementation of these provisions to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over public safety matters and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters no later than November 7, 2018.

Work Session held and tabled on 5/4/17

Carry Over requested on 5/12/17, approved 8/2/2017.

Committee on Health and Human Services work session held 1/9/18, voted ONTP. Reported out ONTP 1/24/18, placed in Legislative Files (Senate) 2/1/18 (DEAD)

LD 1507 - An Act To Establish a Student Loan Bill of Rights To License and Regulate Student Loan Servicers

SUMMARY

This bill does the following.

1. It creates a position of student loan ombudsman under the Superintendent of Consumer Credit Protection within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, Bureau of Consumer Credit Protection. The student loan ombudsman's duties include: receiving,

reviewing and, if possible, resolving complaints from student loan borrowers; compiling and analyzing student loan borrower data; assisting student loan borrowers to understand their rights and responsibilities; providing information to the public, agencies and Legislators regarding concerns of student loan borrowers and making recommendations to resolve them; analyzing and monitoring the development and implementation of other legislation and policies that affect student loan borrowers and recommending necessary changes; reviewing student loan history for borrowers who consent; disseminating information about the ombudsman's availability to assist others; establishing and maintaining a student loan borrower education course; and other necessary actions.

2. It requires the superintendent to submit an annual report by January 1st of each year in regard to the effectiveness of the student loan ombudsman and to recommend additional steps necessary to gain regulatory control over licensing and enforcement with respect to student loan servicers.

3. It establishes a licensing procedure for student loan servicers, which includes an investigation of an applicant, along with a license fee and an investigation fee.

4. It identifies prohibited acts for student loan servicers, including employing any scheme, device or artifice to defraud or mislead student loan borrowers.

5. It identifies duties of the superintendent in regard to investigations and examinations of student loan servicers.

6. It requires student loan servicers to comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations related to student loan servicing.

7. It requires the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation to adopt routine technical rules necessary to carry out the provisions in this bill.

Work session held on 5/11/17 and voted on as OTP-AM

Amendment:

SUMMARY - This amendment makes the following changes to the bill.

1. It removes the provision creating the position of student loan ombudsman under the Superintendent of Consumer Credit Protection within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, Bureau of Consumer Credit Protection.

2. It clarifies the definition of "student education loan"; Reported out as OTP-AM in 6/1/17.

Referred to Committee on Insurance and Financial Services on 6/21/17.

Carried over 8/2/17. 3/1/18 work session, voted Divided Report. Reported out 3/22/18 (OTP Maj./ONTP Min.).

LD 1517 - An Act To Ensure Access to Behavioral Health Services

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Behavioral Health Oversight Council to review reimbursement rate-setting for certain behavioral health services provided under MaineCare and advise the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Corrections and the Commissioner of Public Safety regarding the behavioral health system in the State. It sets out requirements for reimbursement rate-setting to be used by the Department of Health and Human Services to determine rates for certain behavioral health services provided under

MaineCare. It directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rules in Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Sections 13, 17, 23, 28, 65 and 97 to increase reimbursement rates by fiscal year 2018-19 to reflect a 20% increase from rates in fiscal year 2008-09.

Work Session held on 5/18/17

Work Session reconsidered on 5/31/17 and reported out as Divided

Report Reported out on 6/12/17 as OTP-AM/ONTP

Amendment: SUMMARY - This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, strikes the bill and makes it a resolve. The amendment retains the section in the bill that increases reimbursement rates by June 1, 2018. The increase in that section is changed from 20% to 2%, which must be applied to employee wages and benefits. The amendment specifies that increases to Section 97, Private Non-Medical Institution Services include only Appendix B and Appendix E. The amendment adds an appropriations and allocations section.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

Passed House on 6/19/17.

Motioned by Senate to be placed on The Special Appropriations Table pending

Finally Passed in concurrence. Carried over 8/2/17.

LD 1666 -- "An Act To Ensure the Successful Implementation of Proficiency-based Diplomas by Extending the Timeline for Phasing in Their Implementation"

Tacks on Four years to established timelines for implementation.

Tabled numerous times, most recently 3/20/18.

LD 1694 -- "Resolve, Directing the Department of Education To Adopt Protocols Designed To Prevent Youth Suicide"

Will direct schools to put in place protocols meant to respond to suicidal students in SAU's. These include parent contact/interview, risk evaluation prior to return to school, and meeting with school counselor upon return.

Voted on 1/17/18, divided report, reported out 3/1/18. Passed House on 3/18/18, Senate on 3/20/18.

LD 1852 -- "Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 115: the Credentialing of Educational Personnel, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education"

SUMMARY:

Emergency legislation deemed necessary as legislative review is required for major overhauls of agency rules (in this case, the Department of Education). DOE is attempting to enact major revisions to Chapter 115, which relates to credentials and certification of Education professionals, including school counselors and career development professionals. MeCA, along with MeSCA, the MEA, and others, have given testimony regarding this at a number of hearings and work sessions. Of particular concern to counseling professionals: sections 11 (Endorsement 075, School Counselor) and 17 (Endorsement Career Development Specialist)

[new]. In brief, the changes to section 11 are mostly a step in the right direction, as the requirements for certification as school counselors become somewhat more rigorous, closer to current CACREP standards. We conveyed the opinion that state standards should be in step with best practice standards set forth by our accreditation organizations, irrespective of geographical location of particular training programs. Section 17 is another matter. We believe that trained school counselors already exceed the standards set forth in this section, and we suggest that school counselors be utilized as career development specialists. We advocate that, if the state goes forward with this special endorsement, that it be granted to trained and certified school counselors. If the Board believes an alternative pathway is necessary or desirable, we suggest that such a pathway to certification be based on the extensive and rigorous standards set forth by ACA (American Counseling Association), ASCA (American School Counselor Association), and NCDA (National Career Development Association) and their state branches, not based on the language contained in section 17, which sets the bar too low. A link to the complete text of the MeCA statement on this matter may found on the MeCA website.

With these proposed rule changes on display in section 17 and throughout Chapter 115, the DOE seems to be charging in the direction of 1. Overhauling accepted practices of professional training and development, 2. Creating so-called "alternative pathways" which seem to substitute work-experience for formalized training to an unsettling degree, and 3. Allowing school superintendents to have an extraordinary degree of control over the professional credentialing of new hires, which has the potential to follow them beyond their initial work setting.

Work session (Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs) 3/21/18, voted OTP-AM.

LD 1866 -- "An Act To Increase Youth Mental Health Awareness in Schools"

Will require minimum levels of staff in each school administrative unit to be certified in "youth mental health first aid." Funds for training attached.

Referred to Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs 3/20/18.

LD 1879 -- "An Act To Enhance and Increase the Availability of Mental Health Providers in Maine"

Introduced as Emergency legislation to create a fund to assist mental health providers with repayment of student loans, acknowledging an "acute shortage" of qualified mental health providers in the State of Maine. LCPC's included.

Numerous criteria. Referred by both houses to Committee on LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 3/22/18.

LD 1883 -- "An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Strengthen School Security"

Just introduced in House, establishes fund with most of the rules governing what the monies are to be allocated for to be written later by DOE.

LD 1884 -- "An Act To Create a Community Protection Order To Allow Courts To Prevent High-risk Individuals from Possessing Firearms"

Just introduced in Senate. Attempts to make distinctions between "high-risk" individuals including some with mental illness from individuals with mental illness who do not pose risk.