

Maine Counseling Association – Public Policy Update
128th Legislature March 3, 2017
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The 128th Legislature is now very active, and the list of submitted bills grows every day.

One Legislative Request (#1756), An Act to Enhance Workforce Development for Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Workers, may be of significant interest to us as the session develops.

Bills of interest so far:

LD 43 - Resolve, To Establish the Task Force To Study Higher Education Attainment and Completion Goals.

SUMMARY

This resolve establishes the Task Force To Study Higher Education Attainment and Completion Goals. The task force membership consists of Legislators, representatives of quasi-governmental and business entities, state agency commissioners and one member of the public. The task force's duties include examination and review in the areas of college completion, statewide postsecondary education attainment goals and metrics, college affordability and completion initiatives and college and university support of state policies and strategies to enable college completion and support workforce development. The task force is required to submit a report containing its findings and recommendations, including any necessary implementing legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December 15, 2017.

Public hearing was January 27. Work sessions were scheduled for February 2 and 27, but were tabled.

LD 94 - An Act To Provide a Source of Funding for Drug Abuse Resistance Education

SUMMARY

This bill requires that the funds generated by forfeited firearms that are auctioned to federally licensed firearms dealers or the public be used to fund educational programs taught by law enforcement officers that target prevention of substance abuse, violence or high-risk behavior and teach students good decision-making skills to help them lead safe and healthy lives. These educational programs are known as the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program.

Public hearing was held February 6.

Work session was March 6. Divided report (Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety)

LD 95 - An Act To Provide a Method for a Student To Be Excused from Standardized Testing

SUMMARY

This bill requires a school administrative unit to excuse a student from a standardized assessment 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.

Public hearing was February 6.

Work session was held March 16. March 17 voted as Ought Not To Pass (Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs)

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.

LD 107 - An Act To Increase the Effectiveness of Opioid Addiction Therapy

SUMMARY

This bill repeals the 24-month limit on MaineCare coverage or reimbursement for buprenorphine and naloxone combination drugs, also known as Suboxone, for the treatment of addiction to opioids.

LD 169 - An Act To Support Sexual Assault Survivors

SUMMARY

This bill enacts protections for alleged victims of gross sexual assault that mirror protections provided in federal law. The bill contains the following provisions. 1. The bill requires a prosecutor or law enforcement agency to provide written information to an alleged victim concerning the right to undergo a forensic examination and the right to receive the results and any report resulting from a forensic examination unless disclosure to the alleged victim could impede or compromise an ongoing investigation or an ongoing prosecution. 2. The bill requires the prosecutor or law enforcement agency that has custody of the results and any report to retain the results and any report without charge until the expiration of the period of the statute of limitations. The bill requires the prosecutor or law enforcement agency, at least 60 days prior to destroying or disposing of the results and report, to provide notice of the intended destruction or disposal to the victim and allows for further retention upon the objection of the victim. The bill provides for routine technical rulemaking by the Chief of the State Police regarding retention and destruction or disposal of the results and any report.

Public hearing was held March 1.

Work session held on March 8. Voted Ought Not To Pass March 8, reported out ONTP March 10. (Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety)

LD 180 - An Act To Enhance Higher Education in Maine through the Creation of a Unified Board of Higher Education

SUMMARY

This bill replaces the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System and the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy with the Board of Trustees of Higher Education to provide a unified body for the governance of those institutions. Part A makes changes to the law to replace some select references to the individual boards of trustees with references to the unified board and enacts a new chapter in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A with provisions that establish the new unified board. Part B establishes a transition team to recommend further changes to the law to fully accomplish the transition to the unified board. The transition team will recommend specific changes to determine the qualifications of trustees and the powers and duties of the unified board in a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs. The report of the transition team must also recommend changes to the administration or organization of and the existing law governing the University of Maine System, the Maine Maritime Academy and the Maine Community College System to ensure the efficient operation under the unified board and to avoid any potential conflicts with the law establishing the unified board. The joint standing committee is authorized to submit a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 128th Legislature based upon the report.

Public hearing was held March 8 at 9:00 am. No work session yet scheduled.

LD 186 - An Act To Improve Peer Support Services

CONCEPT DRAFT

SUMMARY

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

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.

LD 322 - An Act To Reintroduce Civics to High School Graduation Requirements

SUMMARY

This bill requires secondary schools to provide instruction in civics as part of the requirements for graduation.

Public hearing was February 16.

Work session was held March 7. Voted Ought Not To Pass March 7. Reported out as ONTP March 10. (Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs)

LD 356 - An Act To Repeal Certain Requirements for Graduation from Secondary School

SUMMARY

Under current law, in order to award to a student a diploma indicating graduation from secondary school, a school must certify that the student has demonstrated proficiency in each of the guiding principles set forth in rules adopted by the Department of Education. In accordance with rules adopted by the department, the guiding principles are measured using rubrics that assess and grade a student's proficiencies in being a clear and effective communicator, a self-directed and lifelong learner, a creative and practical problem solver, a responsible and involved citizen and an integrative and informed thinker. This bill repeals this requirement.

Public hearing was held February 27.

Work session scheduled for March 21 at 1:00 pm.

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

CONCEPT DRAFT

SUMMARY

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

LD 412 - An Act To Require the Completion of Courses of Study in Home Economics and Industrial Arts Education Prior to Graduation from High School

SUMMARY

This bill adds home economics and industrial arts to the list of courses required for a high school diploma and adds home economics and industrial arts to the areas of essential instruction in the system of learning results.

Public hearing was February 27.

Work session is scheduled for March 21 at 1:00 pm.

LD 462 - An Act To Require a Capstone Project as a Condition of High School Graduation

SUMMARY

This bill requires all high school students to complete a capstone project in which the student must identify a problem, develop a solution to that problem and share that solution with the community.

Public hearing was held February 27.

Work session is scheduled for March 21 at 1:00 pm.

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 is scheduled for March 31 at 1:00 pm.

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

CONCEPT DRAFT

SUMMARY

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. 5 This bill proposes to address issues related to the opiate addiction crisis in the State.

LD 573 - Resolve, To Audit Standardized Testing in Maine's Schools

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Maine Education Policy Research Institute to conduct an audit of standardized testing in a random sample of school administrative units statewide for the purpose

of understanding the amount, cost and usefulness of standardized testing. This bill requires the Maine Education Policy Research Institute no later than January 1, 2018 to issue a report with its findings and recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, which may report out a bill based upon the report to the Second Regular Session of the 128th Legislature.

Public hearing was March 15 at 1:00 pm. No work session yet scheduled.

LD 607 - An Act To Enhance Maine's Coordinated Response to Mental Health Crises

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide assistance to crisis intervention teams and agencies that provide mental health crisis services and to law enforcement agencies to enable them to coordinate mental health crisis services. The bill sets July 1, 2018 as the date by which a crisis intervention team or agency must enter into and sign a memorandum of understanding with each law enforcement agency that provides law enforcement services in the area of the State served by the crisis intervention team or agency. The bill requires the memorandum of understanding to be effective for 3 years and to be renewed every 3 years. The memorandum of understanding must include descriptions of the following: the internal processes the law enforcement agency uses to identify a person in need of mental health crisis services; the protocol the law enforcement agency uses to share a contact report with a crisis intervention team or agency; the process the crisis intervention team or agency uses to receive the report; the protocol the crisis intervention team or agency uses to communicate with a person in need of mental health services or the guardian or family members of that person; and the procedures to be used to convene on a quarterly basis multidisciplinary team meetings to review experiences and discuss opportunities for improvement.

LD 679 - An Act To Reform School Testing Procedures

SUMMARY

This bill limits statewide assessment program testing requirements to grades 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 and limits any use of alternative measures of student achievement to grades 9 and 11. It also limits the statewide system of learning results testing requirements to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. The bill authorizes the Commissioner of Education to adopt rules to implement the provisions of the bill.

Public hearing is scheduled for March 27 at 9:30.

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.

LD 688 - An Act To Provide MaineCare Coverage for Music Therapy

SUMMARY

This bill requires music therapy services to be reimbursed under the MaineCare program upon approval of coverage by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The Department of Health and Human Services is directed to adopt routine technical rules to implement this requirement.

Public hearing is March 20 at 9:30 am.

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.

LD 839 - Resolve, To Address Substance Use and Addiction in County Jails

SUMMARY

This resolve provides funding to the Department of Corrections to establish a 4- month pilot project to assist in the rehabilitation of individuals incarcerated at county jails who are experiencing substance use issues or addiction, especially issues or addiction related to opioid use.