

**An Act To Help Veterans Access Jobs, Education, Health Care and Housing
and provide General Support to Veterans**

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and inserting in its place the following:

PART A

Sec. A-1. 10 MRSA §8003, sub-§2-A, ¶¶ M and N are amended to read:

M. To ~~exercise discretionary authority, after consultation with licensing boards if applicable, to review and determine on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with any applicable licensing board,~~ examination and licensing eligibility for applications for licensure submitted by ~~individuals who identify themselves as~~ veterans with military service, experience and training; and

N. To ~~exercise discretionary authority to~~ waive examination fees and license fees for applicants for licensure who ~~identify themselves as~~are veterans with military service, experience and training.

Sec. A-2. 10 MRSA §8011 is amended to read:

By January 1, 2014, each board, commission, office and agency within the department listed in section 8001 or affiliated with the department under section 8001-A shall adopt a process to facilitate qualified returning military veterans and qualified spouses of returning military veterans or of active duty service members to qualify for professional licenses granted by those boards, commissions, offices and agencies in an expeditious manner. For the purposes of this section, "returning military veteran" means a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who has been honorably discharged from active duty with an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions. Regulation and each licensing board within or affiliated with the department shall, upon presentation of satisfactory evidence by an applicant for professional or occupational licensure, accept education, training or service completed by the applicant as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or Reserves of the United States Armed Forces, the national guard of any state, the military reserves of any state or the naval militia of any state toward the qualifications to receive the license.

1. Endorsement. The board, commission, office or agency ~~may~~ shall permit a returning military veteran or a spouse of a returning military veteran or of an active duty service member who holds a comparable license in another state to acquire a license by endorsement in this State for the remainder of the term of the license from the other state or until a license is obtained in this State.

2. Temporary license. The board, commission, office or agency ~~may~~ shall permit a returning military veteran or a spouse of a returning military veteran or of an active duty service member who holds a comparable license in another state to obtain a temporary license in this State for a period of time necessary to obtain a license in this State.

3. Acceptance of military credentials. The board, commission, office or agency shall permit a returning military veteran who applies for a license less than 2 years after being discharged from active

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duty and whose military training and experience qualifies the veteran for a license in a profession or occupation that requires a license in this State to acquire a temporary license until a license is issued.

4. Continuing education requirements. The board, commission, office or agency may allow a full or partial exemption from continuing education requirements for a returning military veteran or the spouse of a returning military veteran or of an active duty service member. Evidence of completion of continuing education requirements may be required for a subsequent license or renewal. A board, commission, office or agency shall provide that continuing education requirements may be met by comparable military training.

Sec. A-3. 32 MRSA §88, sub-§2, ¶I is amended to read:

I. The board may establish and collect licensure fees, application fees, examination fees, course and conference fees, tuition and other charges as determined necessary by the board for the efficient administration of this chapter. The board may waive examination fees and license fees for applicants for licensure as an emergency medical services person who are veterans with military service, experience and training. All funds received pursuant to this paragraph must be deposited into a nonlapsing fund established for the purpose. Maine Emergency Medical Services shall administer the fund with the advice and consent of the commissioner. Funds must be deposited with the Treasurer of State to the credit of the fund and may be invested as provided by law. Interest on these investments must be credited to the fund.

Sec. A-4. 32 MRSA §9407, sub-§1 is amended to read:

1. Application; fee. Applications for original licenses shall be made to the commissioner on forms prescribed by ~~him~~the commissioner with respect to the requirements of section 9405. The fee for a license application is \$400, of which \$100 must be submitted with the application and \$300 must be submitted upon issuance of the license. If the previously issued license has expired and has not been renewed within a period of 60 days, the application shall be considered the original application and the same fees and all requirements of an original application shall apply. The commissioner may waive the license fees for applicants for original licensure who are veterans with military service, experience and training.

Sec. A-5. Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation to study license-renewal extension and fee waiver provisions; report. The Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation shall determine whether and to what extent a veteran who was an active or reserve member of United States Armed Forces or a member of the National Guard is entitled to an automatic extension of that person's Maine professional or occupational license, certificate or registration or is exempt from the payment of license-renewal fees if the veteran's professional or occupational license, certificate or registration expired while the veteran was under an order to active duty. The review shall include, but not be limited to, the professional and occupational license-renewal provisions within the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 10, chapter 903; Title 32; and Title 37-B, section 390-A and any applicable rules adopted under those statutes. By January 1, 2022, the Commissioner shall submit a report of the

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commissioner's findings and recommendations, including recommended legislation, for establishing uniform policies for the automatic extension of all Maine professional or occupational licenses, certificates and registrations and the waiver of otherwise-applicable renewal fees for members of the Maine National Guard or of the United States Armed Forces who are called to active duty to the joint standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over business, research and economic development matters, over professional licensing of health care professions matters and over veterans affairs matters. The committees are authorized to report out legislation related to the report to any regular or special session of the 130th Legislature.

PART B

Sec. B-1. 20-A MRSA §10010 is amended to read:

If a current member of the United States Armed Forces or a veteran of the United States Armed Forces who has been ~~honorably~~ discharged from active duty with an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions is enrolled in a program of education at any campus of the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System or the Maine Maritime Academy, that member or veteran is eligible for in-state tuition rates, regardless of the member's or veteran's state of residence.

The Maine Maritime Academy and the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System shall designate a liaison to provide benefits assistance to enrolled and prospective students who are members of the United States Armed Forces or veterans of the United States Armed Forces who have been discharged from active duty with an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions. To the extent space is available, the Maine Maritime Academy and the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College system shall designate a specific location at each institution, equipped with at least one computer with Internet access, where enrolled students who are members of the United States Armed Forces and veterans of the United States Armed Forces who have been discharged from active duty with an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions may congregate to study, to provide support to their peers and to receive assistance from the designated liaison.

PART C

Sec. C-1. 34-B MRSA §3011 is enacted to read:

The Bridging Rental Assistance Program is established within the department as a transitional housing voucher program. The purpose of the program is to assist persons with mental illness with housing assistance for up to 24 months or until they receive assistance from a housing voucher program administered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat.888, Section 8 or receive an alternative housing placement. The department shall adopt rules to carry out the purpose of the program. Rules

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adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

The department shall, in coordination with the Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans Services, develop a method of identifying eligible veterans who are homeless and assisting those persons to receive assistance under this section.

PART D

Sec. E-1. 37-B MRSA §505, sub-§1-C, ¶¶ A and B are amended to read:

A. The bureau may provide a grant of temporary assistance not to exceed ~~\$2,000~~ \$2,500 to a veteran currently a resident of this State who has filed a valid claim for a veteran's pension, pending notification of the award of such a pension. For purposes of this paragraph, "claim for a veteran's pension" means a claim filed with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to 38 United States Code, Chapter 15.

B. The bureau may provide a grant of temporary assistance not to exceed ~~\$2,000~~ \$2,500 to a veteran currently a resident of the State who demonstrates to the bureau's satisfaction a financial need and suffers an emergency, including but not limited to:

- (1) Damage to that veteran's home due to fire, flood or hurricane that is not fully compensable by insurance;
- (2) Illness or the illness of an immediate family member; or
- (3) Hardship that would result in the veteran becoming homeless.

PART E

Representative McCreight's proposed data-collection provision

SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the _____ report of the committee, replaces the bill, which is a concept draft.

Part A of the amendment helps veterans access jobs in the following ways:

1. It requires the Director of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation to review the examination and licensing eligibility of applicants for licensure who are veterans with military service, experience and training and to waive any applicable examination and licensing fees for these self-identified veterans. Under

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current law, the director has discretion to conduct these reviews and to grant these fee waivers for individuals who self-identify as veterans.

2. It requires each professional licensing board within or affiliated with the department to grant a license by endorsement or a temporary license to a person who holds a comparable license in another state and who is a returning military veteran, the qualified spouse of a returning military veteran or the qualified spouse of an active duty service member. Under current law, these professional licensing boards may, but are not required, to provide licensure by endorsement or temporary licenses in these circumstances.

3. It requires each professional licensing board within or affiliated with the department to permit a returning military veteran who applies for a license less than 2 years after being discharged from active duty and whose military training and experience qualifies the veteran for a license in this State to acquire a temporary license until the full license is issued.

4. It expands the definition of a "returning military veteran" who is eligible for assistance in obtaining a professional license; licensure by endorsement or temporary licensure if the returning military veteran holds a comparable license in another state; recognition of military training and experience toward licensure; and full or partial exemption from continuing education requirements to include veterans who were discharged from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States with a general discharge under honorable conditions.

5. It authorizes the Emergency Medical Services' Board to waive examination and initial licensing fees for an applicant for licensure as an emergency medical services person who is a veteran with military service, experience and training.

6. It authorizes the Commissioner of Public Safety to waive initial licensing fees for an applicant for licensure as a security guard who is a veteran with military service, experience and training.

7. It directs the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation to study the various provisions for automatic extension of Maine professional and occupational licenses, certificates and registrations and the waiver of otherwise-applicable renewal fees for members of the Maine National Guard or of the United States Armed Forces whose licenses expire while they are called to active duty. It directs the commissioner to submit a report by January 1, 2020, to the joint standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over business, research and economic development matters, over professional licensing of health care professions matters and over veterans affairs matters. The committees are authorized to report out legislation related to the report to any regular or special session of the 130th Legislature.

Part B of the amendment helps veterans access post-secondary education in the State by requiring the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy to designate a veteran liaison to provide academic counseling and benefits assistance to students who are members of the United States Armed Forces and to designate a specific

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location at each university where those students may congregate to study, to provide support to their peers and to receive assistance from the veterans liaison.

Part C of the amendment helps veterans access housing by requiring the Department of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans Services, to develop a method of identifying veterans who are homeless and eligible for temporary housing assistance under the Bridging Rental Assistance Program.

Part D of the amendment provides general support to veterans by increasing the maximum amount of temporary assistance that may be provide to a veteran from the Veterans Temporary Emergency Assistance Fund from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

Part E of the amendment.... Rep. McCreight's proposal