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Joint Order, Reestablishing the Task Force on Maine's 21st Century Economy and Workforce

WHEREAS, the members of the Task Force on Maine's 21st Century Economy and Workforce worked together in a nonpartisan manner, with input from the State's businesses, education community and workforce and policy experts, to develop unanimous recommendations for targeted investments in places where workforce barriers were identified in order to provide some immediate alleviation of workforce shortages in priority sectors; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force on Maine's 21st Century Economy and Workforce focused most of its recommendations on the health care sector, while there are other priority sectors in the State, such as retail trade, professional and business services and the hospitality industry; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force on Maine's 21st Century Economy and Workforce recommended that the task force be authorized to continue its important work in order to develop additional recommendations to address workforce issues in these additional priority sectors; now, therefore, be it

ORDERED, the House concurring, that the Task Force on Maine's 21st Century Economy and Workforce, established by Joint Order 2017, S.P. 294, referred to in this order as "the task force," is reestablished and authorized to continue its work as follows.

1. Appointments; composition. Notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the task force consists of members appointed as follows:

A Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, including one member of the party holding the largest and one member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Senate; B Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, including one member of the party holding the largest and one member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the House of Representatives; C One member representing the interests of the Maine Community College System, appointed by the President of the Senate; D One member representing the interests of the University of Maine System, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; E One member representing the interests of apprenticeship programs in the State, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; F One member representing the interests of providers and teachers of adult education in the State, appointed by the President of the Senate; G One member representing the interests of retail trade, professional and business services or the hospitality industry, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; H One member representing the statewide interests of the business community, appointed by the President of the Senate; I One member representing the interests of a Maine business that employs more than 1,000 workers, appointed by the President of the Senate; and J One member representing the interests of a Maine business that employs fewer than 1,000 workers, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall invite to participate as members of the task force the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, and the Commissioner of Labor, or the commissioner's designee.

2. Chairs. The first-named Senator is the Senate chair of the task force and the first-named member of the House of Representatives is the House chair of the task force. The chairs may invite the participation of interested parties and stakeholders who represent the interests of those sectors of industry that have experienced significant workforce shortages and who are not task force members.

3. Appointments; convening. All appointments must be made no later than 15 days following passage of this order. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been made. When the appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs of the task force may call and convene the first meeting of the task force. If 15 days or more after the passage of this order a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the task force to meet and conduct its business.

4. Duties. The task force shall develop strategies to make targeted and strategic investments in the State's workforce and businesses; to expand partnerships among the State's workers, educators and businesses to specifically address workforce needs and worker training; to develop strategies for attracting, retaining and training Maine workers in sectors of industry most acutely affected by workforce shortages, as identified in priority order by the Maine Department of Labor, including retail trade, professional and business services and the hospitality industry; and to help improve the ability of small businesses to innovate and expand.

5. Compensation. The legislative members of the task force are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses related to their attendance at authorized meetings of the task force. Public members not otherwise compensated by their employers or other entities that they represent are entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary expenses and, upon a demonstration of financial hardship, a per diem equal to the legislative per diem for their attendance at authorized meetings of the task force.

6. Quorum. A quorum is a majority of the members of the task force, including those members invited to participate who have accepted the invitation to participate.

7. Staffing. The Legislative Council shall contract for necessary staff support for the task force during the legislative session and may contract for such staff support for a longer period to the extent needed and if sufficient funding is available. At the request of the task force, the Legislative Council may provide drafting assistance to the task force during the legislative session and other staffing support to the task force when the Legislature is not in session.

8. Reports. No later than November 7, 2018, the task force shall submit a final report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Second Regular Session of the 128th Legislature.