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## **An Act To Improve the Child Welfare System**

**Emergency preamble. Whereas,** acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas,** maintaining a sufficient number of qualified foster homes provides a critical safety net for vulnerable children; and

**Whereas,** recruitment and retention of highly qualified child welfare staff will allow for more timely and thorough investigations of allegations of abuse and neglect; and

**Whereas,** a new comprehensive child welfare information system will make more information available in a timely manner, which will allow for better outcomes for children; and

**Whereas,** this legislation provides funding necessary to enhance the child welfare system and services available to children in the care of the State; and

**Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

### **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. Rate increase for foster homes.** The daily rates for foster homes must be increased as follows: Unlicensed Homes must be increased from \$10.00 to \$18.50, Level A Licensed Homes must be increased from \$16.50 to \$25.00, Level B Licensed Homes must be increased from \$26.25 to \$35.00, Level C Licensed Homes must be increased from \$39.38 to \$45.00, Level D Licensed Homes must be increased from \$52.50 to \$60.00, Level E Licensed Homes must be increased from \$65.62 to \$75.00 and Medical Licensed Homes must be increased from \$60.00 to \$70.00.

**Sec. 2. New job classification.** The Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Human Resources and the Department of Health and Human Services shall work together to develop a new job classification for the Child Welfare Investigator position. This classification must consider relevant education and training in investigative practice in lieu of the possession of a license in social work. This education and training must be obtained from service and experience in law enforcement or other similar fields.

**Sec. 3. Development of a new comprehensive child welfare information system.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall conduct a needs analysis for its comprehensive child welfare information system and review possible solutions to meet those needs. The Department of Health and Human Services shall purchase or develop a new comprehensive child welfare information system.

**Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and allocations are made.

### **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF**

**IV-E Foster Care/Adoption Assistance 0137**

Initiative: Provides funding for increased foster home reimbursement rates to increase recruitment and retention of foster families in this State.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$0	\$463,791
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$463,791</b>

<b>FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$0	\$695,686
<b>FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$695,686</b>

**Office of Child and Family Services - District 0452**

Initiative: Provides increased funding for the creation of 16 Human Services Casework Supervisor positions within the Office of Child and Family Services, child protective services to increase coaching and oversight of child protective staff.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	16.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$922,441
All Other	\$0	\$82,472
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,004,913</b>

<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Personal Services	\$0	\$202,488
All Other	\$0	\$25,418
<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$227,906</b>

**Office of Child and Family Services - District 0452**

Initiative: Provides funding for the creation of 2 Regional Associate Director for Child Welfare positions.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
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SP0758, LD 1923, item 1, 128th Maine State Legislature  
An Act To Improve the Child Welfare System

POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	2.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$193,334
All Other	\$0	\$10,296
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$203,630

<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Personal Services	\$0	\$42,439
All Other	\$0	\$2,260
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$44,699

**Office of Child and Family Services - District 0452**

Initiative: Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 7065, provides funding for the recruitment and retention of employees in Child Protective Services Caseworker positions, Child Protective Services Caseworker Supervisor positions, Child Protective Services Assistant Program Administrator positions and Child Protective Services Program Administrator positions via a \$5 per wage-hour stipend payment.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Personal Services	\$0	\$3,648,877
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$3,648,877

<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Personal Services	\$0	\$781,523
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$781,523

**Office of Child and Family Services - District 0452**

Initiative: Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 7065, provides funding for the recruitment and retention of employees in Child Protective Services Caseworker positions, Child Protective Services Caseworker Supervisor positions, Child Protective Services Assistant Program Administrator positions and Child Protective Services Program Administrator positions via a \$1 per wage-hour stipend payment for employees holding or obtaining a relevant master's degree.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Personal Services	\$0	\$112,570

GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$112,570
<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Personal Services	\$0	\$24,710
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$24,710

**State-funded Foster Care/Adoption Assistance 0139**

Initiative: Provides funding for increased foster home reimbursement rates to increase recruitment and retention of foster families in this State.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$0	\$3,104,315
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$3,104,315

**State-funded Foster Care/Adoption Assistance 0139**

Initiative: Provides increased funding for procurement of a pilot program for child welfare services to support children in the State's custody through supportive visitation, which will allow for the supervision of court-ordered visitation with relatives of the children and will provide assessment and evaluation of parental capacity as it relates to the parent's ability to safely care for the child.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$0	\$2,250,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$2,250,000

**State-funded Foster Care/Adoption Assistance 0139**

Initiative: Provides increased funding for procurement of child welfare services to support children in the State's custody through clinical support and guidance of child welfare casework practice. This funding will allow each district office to procure a clinician to aid the district in clinical consultation within child welfare cases, in training to increase staff knowledge of mental health and behavioral needs of children in the State's custody and in consultation within child welfare cases on parental capacity. In addition, this increase in funding will allow for procurement of clinical services to support each district office to evaluate staff functioning and provide debriefing for critical incidents.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$0	\$880,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$880,000</b>

**State-funded Foster Care/Adoption Assistance 0139**

Initiative: Provides increased funding for the development of a new comprehensive child welfare information system.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$0	\$8,000,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT  
 OF**

<b>DEPARTMENT TOTALS</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$19,668,096</b>
<b>FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$695,686</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,078,838</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$21,442,620</b>

**Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

**SUMMARY**

This bill provides additional funding to enhance the child welfare system and services available to children in the care of the State. This bill also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a needs analysis for its comprehensive child welfare information system, review possible solutions to meet those needs and purchase or develop a new system. It also provides funding for the development of a new comprehensive child welfare information system.