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H.P. 701

House of Representatives, March 12, 2013

**Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Study Accessibility and
Affordability of Higher Education**

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative TREAT of Hallowell.
Cosponsored by Senator CAIN of Penobscot and
Representatives: DILL of Old Town, KUMIEGA of Deer Isle, KUSIAK of Fairfield, LIBBY
of Lewiston, MacDONALD of Boothbay, NELSON of Falmouth, TIPPING-SPITZ of Orono,
Senator: CUSHING of Penobscot.

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

3 **Whereas,** the Commission To Study Accessibility and Affordability of Higher
4 Education is established to study ways to improve higher education by making it more
5 affordable and accessible to the State's citizens; and

6 **Whereas,** the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that
7 the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next
8 legislative session; and

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

13 **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule
14 353, the Commission To Study Accessibility and Affordability of Higher Education,
15 referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established; and be it further

16 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of
17 13 members appointed as follows:

18 1. Six members appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

19 A. Two members of the Senate, including not more than one member from the party
20 holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature;

21 B. One member who is currently attending an institution of higher education or who
22 is a recent graduate of an institution of higher education;

23 C. One member who represents a family who has a student attending an institution of
24 higher education;

25 D. One member who is a representative of a public institution of higher education;
26 and

27 E. One member who represents an advocacy organization that represents students or
28 consumer interests; and

29 2. Seven members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives as
30 follows:

31 A. Three members of the House of Representatives, including not more than 2
32 members from the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature;

33 B. One member who is currently attending an institution of higher education or who
34 is a recent graduate of an institution of higher education;

35 C. One member who represents a family who has a student attending an institution of
36 higher education;

1 D. One member who is a representative of a private institution of higher education;
2 and

3 E. One member who is a representative of a financial institution in the State.

4 The commission also has the following ex officio members: the Chief Executive
5 Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine; the Commissioner of Education, or the
6 commissioner's designee; the Chair of the State Board of Education; and the
7 Superintendent of Consumer Credit Protection within the Department of Professional and
8 Financial Regulation; and be it further

9 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate
10 chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the
11 commission; and be it further

12 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all
13 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
14 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
15 Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members,
16 the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more
17 after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been
18 made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority
19 for the commission to meet and conduct its business; and be it further

20 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:

21 1. Undertake a comprehensive study of the administrative and academic decisions
22 and practices at the institutions and system levels that affect accessibility and
23 affordability of higher education;

24 2. Examine the effectiveness and financial sustainability of current financial
25 assistance programs in the State;

26 3. Review the transparency and disclosure policies of institutions of higher education
27 concerning financial aid awards, adjustments to those awards and total borrowing costs;

28 4. Review other states' efforts to improve accessibility and affordability of higher
29 education and consider the best practices from other states, public institutions and
30 systems of higher education in implementing the commission's plan;

31 5. Provide recommendations for implementing a strategic plan and specific actions
32 that may be reasonably taken to increase the accessibility and enhance the affordability of
33 public higher education for residents of the State;

34 6. Consult with all departments and agencies in the State to obtain advice and
35 information as the commission determines necessary to facilitate its purposes; and

36 7. Have 5 meetings in 2013, with the first meeting on August 1, 2013; and be it
37 further

