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Date:

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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
129TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 1259, L.D. 1772, Bill, “An Act To Secure Transitions to Economic Prosperity for Maine Families and Children”

Amend the bill in section 1 in paragraph B in subparagraph (6) in the 3rd line (page 2, line 10 in L.D.) by inserting after the following: "income" the following: "excluding any income disregarded pursuant to subparagraph (7-D), divisions (a) and (b)"

Amend the bill in section 1 in paragraph B by striking out all of subparagraphs (7-D) and (7-E) and inserting the following:

'(7-D) In determining benefit levels, the department shall disregard the following amounts from the monthly earnings of recipients:

(a) One hundred percent of all earned income for the first 3 months of employment. Any month in which the disregard under this division does not increase the recipient's benefit above that which it would be if the disregard in division (c) is applied does not count as a month in which earned income is disregarded under this division;

(b) Seventy-five percent of all earned income for the 4th to 6th months of employment. Any month in which the disregard under this division does not increase the recipient's benefit above that which it would be if the disregard in division (c) is applied does not count as a month in which earned income is disregarded under this division;

(c) One hundred and eight dollars and 50% of the remaining earnings that are less than the federal poverty level for any month of employment in which a disregard in division (a) or (b) is not applied; and

(d) All actual child care costs necessary for work, except that the department may limit the child care disregard to \$175 per month per child or \$200 per month per child under 2 years of age or with special needs;

(7-E) For any period during which a household's food supplement assistance is reduced as a result of earnings and receipt of the earned income disregard applied

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

1 under subparagraph (7-D), division (a) or (b), the household must receive
2 additional food supplement assistance in an amount that will, in addition to the
3 food supplement assistance for which the household remains eligible, provide the
4 household with a minimum of \$50 in food supplement assistance. Additional
5 food supplement assistance under this subparagraph is a noncash benefit and may
6 be used to purchase only those food items permitted under the food supplement
7 program.'

8 Amend the bill in section 3 in subsection 18 by striking out all of the last sentence
9 (page 4, lines 35 to 38 in L.D.) and inserting the following:

10 'The department shall grant an extension to a household for each month in which a family
11 received TANF assistance and an earnings disregard under subsection 3, paragraph B,
12 subparagraph (7-D), division (a) or (b). This extension does not apply to a TANF
13 recipient who has reached the 60-month time limit prior to October 1, 2019.'

14 Amend the bill in section 4 in §3769-G in subsection 1 in the 2nd line (page 5, line 4
15 in L.D.) by striking out the following: "\$3,000,000" and inserting the following:
16 '\$2,000,000'

17 Amend the bill by striking out all of sections 5 and 6 and inserting the following:

18 '**Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §3788, sub-§7-A** is enacted to read:

19 **7-A. Basic skills education.** The department shall make available to individuals
20 participating in the ASPIRE-TANF program basic skills education, including programs
21 that assist individuals in obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent or comparable
22 credential. The time spent by an ASPIRE-TANF participant in basic skills education
23 must be counted toward the first 20 hours of the participant's required weekly work
24 participation, except that this subsection is suspended for any period for which it would
25 cause the State to fail to meet the work participation rate requirements pursuant to 42
26 United States Code, Section 607, subsection (a). The department shall ensure that the
27 State's work verification plan required under federal law for validating work participation
28 activities of ASPIRE-TANF participants includes basic skills education in the definition
29 of vocational educational training when it is a necessary part of a participant's vocational
30 educational training plan.

31 **Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
32 allocations are made.

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

34 **Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment 0146**

35 Initiative: Provides allocations for additional support services for the new population
36 added due to the changes in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

37	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2019-20	2020-21
38	All Other	\$3,217,548	\$4,290,064
39			
40	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	<u>\$3,217,548</u>	<u>\$4,290,064</u>

1 **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families 0138**

2 Initiative: Provides allocations for community action agencies to expand the services to
3 assist parents to find stable employment.

4	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2019-20	2020-21
5	All Other	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000
6			
7	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	<u>\$1,500,000</u>	<u>\$2,000,000</u>

8 **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families 0138**

9 Initiative: Provides allocations to change the income disregard and to no longer count
10 earnings disregards against the 60-month limit in the Temporary Assistance for Needy
11 Families program.

12	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2019-20	2020-21
13	All Other	\$3,166,293	\$4,221,724
14			
15	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	<u>\$3,166,293</u>	<u>\$4,221,724</u>

16 **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families 0138**

17 Initiative: Provides deallocations to account for the reduction in transitional benefits due
18 to changes in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

19	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2019-20	2020-21
20	All Other	(\$3,311,876)	(\$4,415,834)
21			
22	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	<u>(\$3,311,876)</u>	<u>(\$4,415,834)</u>

23 **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families 0138**

24 Initiative: Provides allocations to replace Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
25 benefits due to increased income disregard in the Temporary Assistance for Needy
26 Families program.

27	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2019-20	2020-21
28	All Other	\$249,075	\$332,100
29			
30	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	<u>\$249,075</u>	<u>\$332,100</u>

1	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,		
2	DEPARTMENT OF		
3	DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2019-20	2020-21
4			
5	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	\$4,821,040	\$6,428,054
6			
7	DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$4,821,040	\$6,428,054
8			

9 Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or
10 section number to read consecutively.

11 **SUMMARY**

12 This amendment makes the following changes to the bill.

13 1. It clarifies that employment earnings in the months when earnings are subject to
14 disregards do not affect special housing allowances.

15 2. It reduces the number of months that the Department of Health and Human
16 Services disregards the earnings of a recipient of temporary assistance for needy families,
17 or TANF, benefits and removes the requirement that the earnings be continuous for more
18 than 2 months to be counted.

19 3. It stipulates that a month in which earnings are insufficient to change a benefit
20 amount is not counted as a month in which earnings are disregarded.

21 4. It changes the requirement for food supplement assistance for a TANF recipient to
22 be the same amount as prior to employment to a minimum of \$50 in food supplement
23 assistance.

24 5. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to approve an extension
25 from the 60-month limit for TANF recipients who have employment earnings that are
26 subject to disregards rather than not counting those months in the 60-month limit.

27 6. It changes the amount of TANF block grant funds that can be used for initiatives
28 in the bill from \$3,000,000 to \$2,000,000.

29 7. It corrects the language for basic skills education to refer to a high school diploma
30 or equivalent or comparable credential. It also states that basic skills education counting
31 as work participation requirements may be suspended if the State no longer meets the
32 work participation rates required by the Federal Government.

33 The amendment also adds an appropriations and allocations section.

34 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

35 **(See attached)**