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Date: (Filing No. H-)

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
128TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 1014, L.D. 1475, Bill, “An Act To Reduce Child Poverty by Leveraging Investments in Families Today”

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'An Act Regarding Transportation and Parents as Scholars in the TANF Program'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting the following:

'Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3769-E is enacted to read:

§3769-E. Working Cars for Working Families Program

There is established the Working Cars for Working Families Program, referred to in this section as "the program," to help families with children obtain or retain sustainable employment by providing them with access to reliable, affordable transportation. The program provides eligible families, as determined under subsection 4, with loans to purchase vehicles or with donated vehicles as described in subsection 7.

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Enrollment period" means the 3-year period following the date an individual has been approved for program participation. If an individual's participation in the program is terminated by the department before the end of the 3-year period, the enrollment period ends on the date the department terminates the individual's participation in the program.

B. "Pilot period" means fiscal years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21.

2. Funding established. For fiscal years 2017-18 to 2020-21, the department shall use \$6,000,000 in funds provided under the TANF federal block grant and accrued prior to fiscal year 2017-18 to fund the program.

3. Administration. The department may contract with a private nonprofit agency or agencies to administer the program established by this section in fiscal years 2017-18 to

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

1 2020-21. The agency or agencies must provide services to eligible families statewide and
2 have demonstrated capacity to work with low-income families and provide case
3 management assistance. Nothing in this section may be construed to mean that the
4 department, or any agency delivering program services under contract with the
5 department, is required to obligate or expend any funds beyond existing funds available
6 to them under this section.

7 **4. Eligibility requirements.** Within the limits of available program resources, an
8 individual is eligible for services under this program as determined by the department if
9 the individual's family:

10 A. Includes a minor child or children living in the household;

11 B. Has income that is less than 200% of the federal poverty guidelines;

12 C. Is engaged in employment, or is participating in a training or education program
13 directly leading to employment, including but not limited to the Parents as Scholars
14 Program established pursuant to section 3790, the Competitive Skills Scholarship
15 Program established pursuant to Title 26, section 2033 or any program approved by a
16 career center administered by the Department of Labor;

17 D. Would have improved access to sustainable employment or preparation for
18 employment as a result of program participation;

19 E. Has the financial ability or necessary resources available to insure and maintain a
20 vehicle, including resources that may be available through the ASPIRE-TANF
21 Program under section 3782-A or alternative aid under section 3763; and

22 F. Agrees to participate in a case management program under subsection 8 designed
23 to improve understanding of the responsibilities of car ownership as a condition of
24 program eligibility.

25 **5. Application; decision; appeal.** The department shall give an individual the
26 opportunity to make a written application for the program and the individual must be
27 given a prompt written decision in response to that application. Any decision related to
28 eligibility for the program under this section must include notice that the decision may be
29 appealed by the individual through a request for a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the
30 decision in accordance with rules adopted by the department. The 30-day appeal period
31 may be extended if the claimant can show good cause for failing to appeal within the
32 30-day period.

33 **6. Vehicles provided.** Under the program, the agency or agencies administering the
34 program shall obtain reliable vehicles and provide them to eligible individuals. The
35 amount of any payment by an individual must be established using a sliding scale, which
36 may include down payment assistance, designed to ensure affordability and the greatest
37 likelihood of successful program participation. The sliding scale must provide that no
38 monthly payment for a program vehicle is due, nor does one accrue, from any individual
39 whose family income is at or below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines.

40 **7. Program vehicles; reliability.** All vehicles donated or subject to loans under this
41 program must be assessed prior to acceptance into the program to determine that they are
42 sufficiently reliable to ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, a family's successful
43 participation in the program. A program administrator shall have the option of repairing

1 or selling any vehicle that does not meet the standard of reliability established for
2 acceptance into the program. Any proceeds from such sale must be reinvested in the
3 program.

4 **8. Case management services.** Agencies administering the program must provide
5 case management services to participating individuals to ensure that they will have
6 information about the basic responsibilities of car ownership and the support necessary to
7 participate successfully in the program.

8 **9. Registration, insurance and repairs.** Agencies administering the program shall
9 use 10% of funds provided by the department to establish a reserve fund for emergencies
10 related to repairs or other necessary costs essential for maintaining a vehicle for eligible
11 participants.

12 **10. Participant savings account.** A participant in the program must designate 15%
13 of the participant's monthly loan payment for deposit in a separate identifiable account
14 that may be used during the period of enrollment only for program vehicle repairs,
15 insurance or registration costs for a program vehicle or other transportation-related
16 purposes. The participant's payment must be matched by the program administrator with
17 funds available to the program. Any balance available in such an account at the end of
18 the participant's enrollment period must be provided to the program participant.

19 **11. Obligated funds carried over beyond pilot period.** Any funds provided under
20 this section may be carried forward beyond the pilot period to continue to provide
21 program services to an eligible participant for the duration of that participant's enrollment
22 period as long as those funds were obligated prior to the expiration of the pilot period.

23 **12. Program evaluation.** The department shall submit a report by January 15, 2022
24 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over human services
25 matters evaluating the program. The report must include:

26 A. The number of families and individuals participating in the program for each year
27 of the pilot period, indicating the number receiving a donated vehicle and those who
28 participated through a loan agreement;

29 B. The number of participants engaged in employment or participating in an
30 education or training program at the time the participants entered the program;

31 C. The number and percentage of participants that successfully completed an
32 education or training program while participating in the program;

33 D. The number and percentage of participants that were continuously employed
34 throughout the participants' period of participation;

35 E. The number and percentage of participants who experienced an increase in wages
36 or hours of employment throughout their period of enrollment;

37 F. The number and percentage of participants that defaulted on a loan and were
38 terminated from the program as a result; and

39 G. The number and percentage of participants that left the program prior to the end
40 of the participants' enrollment period.

1 After reviewing the evaluation, the committee may introduce legislation, including
2 emergency legislation, to continue or modify the program established under this section.

3 **13. Rulemaking.** The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules
4 adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5,
5 chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

6 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3790, sub-§8** is enacted to read:

7 **8. Promotion of the program.** The department shall take steps to ensure that the
8 program is appropriately promoted to eligible individuals who would benefit from
9 participating in the program with the goal of increasing enrollment to the maximum
10 extent allowed under this section. The department shall post information on publicly
11 accessible websites relating to TANF assistance and develop materials to be distributed at
12 departmental offices. The department shall also ensure that any contracted agency
13 providing employment, case management or educational services to TANF participants
14 appropriately promotes the program.

15 **Sec. 3. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
16 allocations are made.

17 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF (FORMERLY DHS)**

18 **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families 0138**

19 Initiative: Provides an allocation to establish the Working Cars for Working Families
20 Program.

21	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2017-18	2018-19
22	All Other	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
23			
24	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	<u>\$1,500,000</u>	<u>\$1,500,000</u>
25			

26 **SUMMARY**

27 This amendment, which is a minority report of the committee, removes everything
28 from the bill except the pilot program that provides access to reliable transportation for
29 working low-income families with children or those engaged in a training program
30 directly leading to employment. Funding for the pilot program is decreased to
31 \$6,000,000 rather than the \$10,000,000 in the bill. The amendment also requires the
32 Department of Health and Human Services to promote the Parents as Scholars Program.
33 The amendment adds an appropriations and allocations section.

34 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

35 **(See attached)**