

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Create the Maine Council on Poverty and Economic Security

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

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§6-G is enacted to read:

6-G.

Economic
Development

Maine Council
on Poverty and
Economic Security

5 MRSA
§13171

Legislative per
diem for appointed
members plus
expenses

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA c. 391 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 391

POVERTY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

§ 13171. Maine Council on Poverty and Economic Security

The Maine Council on Poverty and Economic Security, as established in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 6-G and referred to in this section as "the council," advises the Governor on ending poverty and providing economic security to disadvantaged citizens in the State.

1. Membership; terms; meetings; removal. The council consists of 11 members. Of the 11 members, 9 must be members appointed by the Governor, including 2 members representing the business community, 2 members representing nonprofit agencies, 2 members representing faith-based organizations and 3 members from the general public. In addition to the members appointed by the Governor, one member must be the Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's designee and one member must be the Commissioner of Labor or the commissioner's designee.

The members shall elect the chair from the membership by majority vote of the membership at the first meeting of the council. The chair serves for the duration of that member's term unless a majority of the membership elects another chair. At the end of the chair's term as member, the membership shall elect a succeeding chair by majority vote of the membership.

Members serve for a term of 2 years. At the end of a term an outgoing member serves until a successor has been appointed.

The council shall meet at least annually to conduct business and to elect officers. A quorum consists of at least 4 members. The affirmative vote of a majority of the members present is necessary to decide any business brought before the council.

A member may be removed by the Governor for:

- A. Failure to attend council meetings;
- B. Ceasing to represent the interest delineated in this subsection;
- C. Moving out of the State; or
- D. Cause, as determined by the Governor.

2. Duties of council. The council shall:

- A. Identify elements in the structure of government and society that are causing people to live in poverty;
- B. Study public and private resources that may be used in direct services to alleviate poverty and to advocate for changes in the structure of government and society studied in paragraph A; and
- C. Develop effective strategies to reduce poverty that can be achieved within the resource constraints of government and the individual with the goal of achieving financial sustainability.

3. Report. The council shall make recommendations to the Governor every 2 years on how to end poverty in the State and provide economic security to citizens of the State.

Sec. 3. Staggered terms. Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 13171, subsection 1, of the initial appointment made by the Governor for members of the Maine Council on Poverty and Economic Security, one member representing the business community, one member representing a nonprofit agency, one member representing a faith-based organization and one member from the general public shall serve initial terms of one year.

SUMMARY

This bill creates the Maine Council on Poverty and Economic Security, which is comprised of 11 members including the Commissioner of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner of Labor or the commissioners' designees and 9 members appointed by the Governor representing the business community, nonprofit agencies, faith-based organizations and the general public to advise the Governor on ending poverty and providing economic security to disadvantaged citizens in the State.