



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 1109

LR 1843(05)

An Act To Improve General Assistance Reimbursements

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "

Committee: Health and Human Services

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Potential current biennium cost increase - General Fund

Potential current biennium savings - General Fund

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill defines homelessness and establishes it as an emergency for the purposes of being granted General Assistance (GA), assuming applicant is not otherwise ineligible or disqualified from receiving GA. By being deemed an emergency, municipalities would be allowed to go over the normal monthly cap on housing expenditures in GA. This will potentially increase assistance payments made by municipalities and increase amounts reimbursed to municipalities by the Department of Health and Human Services. A more precise estimate of the fiscal impact is not possible because recipient data related to number of months on assistance, amounts paid to each recipient, number of recipients who return and the frequency of emergency status resides at the municipal level and varies over time.

Additionally, this bill makes an applicant for general assistance who voluntarily abandons or refuses to use an available resource without just cause ineligible to receive general assistance to replace the abandoned or refused resource for a period of 120 days. This will potentially reduce assistance payments made by municipalities and reduce amounts reimbursed to municipalities by the Department of Health and Human Services. The potential savings to the department is not expected to be significant because the frequency of refusing or abandoning resources is expected to be very small, the municipalities ability to identify abandoned or refused resources is unknown and recipients typically do not stay in the program, having to reapply each month they seek help. A more precise estimate of the fiscal impact is not possible because recipient data related to number of months on assistance, amounts paid to each recipient, number of recipients who return and the frequency of refusal of resources resides at the municipal level and varies over time.