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FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2013

Legislative Document

No. 1407

H.P. 1003

House of Representatives, April 12, 2013

An Act To Increase Access to Postsecondary Education for Maine's Children

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

Millient M. Macfarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative HAYES of Buckfield.

Cosponsored by Senator CRAVEN of Androscoggin and

Representatives: FARNSWORTH of Portland, JONES of Freedom, KUMIEGA of Deer Isle, MALABY of Hancock, NUTTING of Oakland, VOLK of Scarborough, Senator: MASON of Androscoggin.

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 availability of financial support for higher education increases the 4 likelihood of students seeking education beyond high school; and 5 Whereas, the opportunity exists to assist parents of newborn children to obtain grants to establish college savings funds to provide support in funding higher education 6 7 for their children; and 8 Whereas, this opportunity may be missed if parents do not enroll their children within one year of birth; and 9 10 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within 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. 13 14 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows: 15 Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §264 is enacted to read: 16 §264. Increasing access to higher education 17 The department shall require a parent of an infant under one year of age who applies 18 for family assistance administered by the department to apply on behalf of the infant for a Harold Alfond College Challenge grant administered by the Finance Authority of Maine, 19 or sign a statement indicating that the infant is not eligible for a grant or the reason why 20 21 the parent chooses not to apply for a grant. The department shall provide information to the parent about the grant program and the method of applying for a grant and provide 22 23 assistance in applying for a grant if requested by the parent. For the purposes of this section, "family assistance" includes the MaineCare program, a food supplement program 24 under section 3104 or 3107 and any assistance provided under subtitle 3, part 3. 25 26 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved. 27 **SUMMARY** 28

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to require a parent of an infant under one year of age seeking family assistance from the department to apply on behalf of the infant for a Harold Alfond College Challenge grant or sign a statement indicating why the parent chooses not to apply. The bill also requires the department to provide information to parents about the grants and assist parents in applying if requested.

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