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Date: (Filing No. H-)

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
127TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

HOUSE AMENDMENT “ ” to COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “A” to H.P. 1104, L.D. 1625, Bill, “An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine's Veterans by Requiring the University of Maine System To Provide Supportive Services to Student-veterans”

Amend the amendment by striking out the substitute title and replacing it with the following:

'An Act To Increase Access to Postsecondary Education for Maine National Guard Members and Veterans'

Amend the amendment by striking out everything after the substitute title and inserting the following:

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

PART A

Sec. A-1. Identify potential inefficiencies and propose improvements to veterans' services. The University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, for their respective campuses and in consultation with the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services, shall each:

- 1. Identify the needs of student-veterans and potential student-veterans attempting to achieve a postsecondary education to degree completion, including but not limited to their ability to gain admission to the University of Maine System or the Maine Community College System, successfully meet the requirements of a course of study, successfully transition to civilian life in a supportive educational environment, obtain available federal veterans' benefits and successfully meet personal and financial obligations;
- 2. Identify existing services specifically for student-veterans and other services available to student-veterans on each campus that meet the needs identified in subsection 1;

HOUSE AMENDMENT

1 3. Assess the effectiveness in meeting the needs identified in subsection 1 of existing
2 services specifically for student-veterans and other services available to student-veterans
3 on each campus;

4 4. Determine what services are not currently being offered that, if offered, would
5 meet the needs identified in subsection 1; and

6 5. Propose services and solutions that fulfill the needs identified in subsection 1 on
7 each campus or across campuses that are based upon best practices in postsecondary
8 educational institutions within the State and nationwide.

9 **Sec. A-2. Report.** By January 15, 2017, the University of Maine System and the
10 Maine Community College System shall each submit a report of its findings and
11 proposals under section 1 to the joint standing committees of the Legislature having
12 jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs and veterans and legal affairs. Each joint
13 standing committee is authorized to introduce a bill to the First Regular Session of the
14 128th Legislature related to the subject matter of the reports.

15 PART B

16 **Sec. B-1. 37-B MRSA §152, sub-§2,** as amended by PL 2003, c. 488, §1 and
17 affected by §5, is further amended to read:

18 **2. Rental proceeds.** Except as provided in section ~~353~~ 353-A, rental proceeds from
19 the rental of armories under this section must be paid into the State Treasury and credited
20 to the Armory Rental Fund to be used for operation and maintenance expenses at the
21 various state-owned facilities of the Military Bureau. Rental proceeds credited to the
22 Armory Rental Fund are in addition to the appropriations made for operation and
23 maintenance expenses included for that purpose in the Military Fund.

24 **Sec. B-2. 37-B MRSA §154,** as amended by PL 2013, c. 469, §2, is further
25 amended to read:

26 **§154. Capital Repair, Maintenance, Construction and Acquisition Account**

27 Except as provided in section ~~353~~ 353-A, the Capital Repair, Maintenance,
28 Construction and Acquisition Account is established in the Military Bureau as a
29 nonlapsing fund to assist in defraying the capital repair, maintenance and construction of
30 state-owned properties of the Military Bureau, as well as purchasing land for training
31 sites. The bureau may not spend \$500,000 or more for any single capital repair,
32 maintenance or construction project or land acquisition unless that expenditure is
33 approved in advance by the Legislature. Not later than January 1st of each odd-numbered
34 year, the bureau shall submit a list to the Legislature that identifies the location, nature
35 and cost of each planned capital repair, maintenance and construction project and land
36 acquisition costing less than \$500,000.

37 **Sec. B-3. 37-B MRSA §155,** as amended by PL 2003, c. 488, §3 and affected by
38 §5, is further amended to read:

1 **§155. Reimbursement fund**

2 The Maine National Guard may provide services in accordance with section 181-A,
3 subsections 4 and 5 and section 183 for federal, state, county, regional and municipal
4 governments and agencies and nongovernmental entities and may charge for those
5 services. Except as provided in section ~~353~~ 353-A, the fees collected must first be
6 allocated for funding the cost of providing those services, and any remaining fees may be
7 expended only within the Military Bureau.

8 **Sec. B-4. 37-B MRSA §352, sub-§§4 to 7**, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 488, §4
9 and affected by §5, are amended to read:

10 **4. State postsecondary education institution.** "State postsecondary education
11 institution" means the University of Maine System, the Maine Maritime Academy, the
12 Maine ~~Technical~~ Community College System or any other college or university system
13 established as a public instrumentality of this State.

14 **5. Tuition.** "Tuition" means the total semester, trimester, quarter or term or credit
15 hour cost of instruction to the student as periodically published in the catalog of a state
16 postsecondary education institution, ~~including mandatory fees and lab fees but~~ excluding
17 ~~all~~ mandatory fees and lab fees and other expenses such as book charges, room and
18 board.

19 **6. Tuition benefit.** "Tuition benefit" means tuition provided by the Maine National
20 Guard using either state or federal funds or waivers of tuition from a state postsecondary
21 education institution.

22 **7. Unsatisfactory participant.** "Unsatisfactory participant" means a member who
23 has accumulated 9 or more unexcused absences from unit training assemblies or who
24 within a 12-month period, without proper authorization, fails to attend or complete the
25 entire period of annual training.

26 **Sec. B-5. 37-B MRSA §353**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 469, §5, is repealed.

27 **Sec. B-6. 37-B MRSA §§353-A, 353-B and 353-C** are enacted to read:

28 **§353-A. Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund**

29 The Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund, referred to in this section as "the
30 fund," is established in the Military Bureau as a nonlapsing account in the General Fund
31 to provide tuition benefits for eligible Maine National Guard members to state
32 postsecondary education institutions. Deposits to the fund may come from sources
33 including but not limited to: the Armory Rental Fund established in section 152; the
34 Capital Repair, Maintenance, Construction and Acquisition Account established in
35 section 154; the reimbursement fund established in section 155; revenue generated from
36 the Maine Military Authority; and rental income fees under Title 5, section 1742,
37 subsection 26, paragraph B. The Adjutant General is responsible for oversight and
38 allocation of these funds in accordance with this subchapter. The Adjutant General shall
39 provide a report to the Commissioner of Education on the first day of January each
40 calendar year accounting for the use of all funds in the fund.

1 **§353-B. Tuition benefit for member**

2 A member who meets the prerequisites of section 354 is entitled to a 100% tuition
3 benefit at a state postsecondary education institution. The benefit applies to tuition for a
4 member enrolled or accepted for admission to a state postsecondary education institution
5 on a full-time or part-time basis. To be eligible for the benefit, a member must be enrolled
6 full time or part time at a state postsecondary education institution. The benefit may be
7 used to earn one credential at the following levels: baccalaureate, associate or certificate
8 and licensure. The benefit must be reduced by any other tuition assistance received by a
9 member not related to housing costs or non-tuition expenses.

10 **§353-C. Waiver required**

11 If the cost of providing the tuition benefit under this subchapter exceeds the amount
12 of money available in the Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund established in
13 section 353-A, the tuition benefit must be provided in the form of a tuition waiver
14 provided by the state postsecondary education institution.

15 **Sec. B-7. 37-B MRSA §354, sub-§§2 and 3**, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 488, §4
16 and affected by §5, are amended to read:

17 **2. Participant.** Be a satisfactory participant in the Maine National Guard who has
18 not previously earned a bachelor's degree or equivalent and be a member in good standing
19 of the Maine National Guard at the beginning of and throughout the entire semester for
20 which the member receives benefits; ~~and~~

21 **3. Contractual commitment.** Enter into a written contractual commitment with the
22 Maine National Guard to serve in the Maine National Guard for at least one year beyond
23 the end of the term for which a tuition benefit is granted-; and

24 **Sec. B-8. 37-B MRSA §354, sub-§4** is enacted to read:

25 **4. Pursued all other benefits available.** Have applied for all available tuition
26 benefits not related to housing costs or non-tuition expenses, including but not limited to:

27 A. Federally funded military tuition assistance;

28 B. Employer tuition reimbursements or assistance; and

29 C. Federal grants, such as a Federal Pell Grant.

30 **Sec. B-9. 37-B MRSA §355**, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 488, §4 and affected by
31 §5, is amended to read:

32 **§355. Cessation of tuition benefit**

33 The tuition benefit granted under this subchapter for a member ceases upon:

34 **1. Credit hours.** Accumulation of ~~150~~ 130 credit hours or the equivalent of the
35 tuition benefit as provided in this subchapter when the benefit is used in part or in whole;

36 **2. Unsatisfactory participation.** Unsatisfactory participation in the Maine National
37 Guard as certified to the state postsecondary education institution ~~or regionally accredited~~
38 private college or university by the Adjutant General; ~~or~~

1 **3. Good academic standing.** Failure by the member to maintain good academic
2 standing and a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale at the state
3 postsecondary education institution ~~or regionally accredited private college or university;~~
4 or

5 **4. Restitution plan.** Imposition of a plan for the member to pay restitution of tuition
6 benefits in accordance with this subchapter.

7 **Sec. B-10. 37-B MRSA §356, sub-§2,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 488, §4 and
8 affected by §5, is amended to read:

9 **2. Repay tuition.** If the member becomes an unsatisfactory participant or does not
10 remain in good academic standing with the state postsecondary education institution ~~or~~
11 ~~regionally accredited private college or university,~~ then the member shall repay the full
12 amount of a tuition benefit for all courses taken during the preceding semester, trimester,
13 quarter or term to the Maine National Guard.

14 **Sec. B-11. 37-B MRSA §356, sub-§4** is enacted to read:

15 **4. Rules.** The Adjutant General shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this
16 section, which are routine technical rules under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

17 **Sec. B-12. 37-B MRSA §357,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 488, §4 and affected by
18 §5, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

19 **§357. In-state tuition rates**

20 A member who is approved to receive tuition benefits under this subchapter qualifies
21 for in-state tuition rates.

22 **Sec. B-13. 37-B MRSA §358,** as enacted by PL 2003, c. 488, §4 and affected by
23 §5, is repealed.

24 **Sec. B-14. 37-B MRSA §§359 and 360** are enacted to read:

25 **§359. Mobilized or deployed members**

26 Any member who is a student receiving a tuition benefit under this subchapter who is
27 mobilized or deployed is entitled to an extension of the time the tuition benefit may be
28 claimed equal to the amount of time served on active duty.

29 **§360. Policies and implementation**

30 The Adjutant General is responsible for overall policies, guidance, administration and
31 proper use of the program provided for in this subchapter.

32 **Sec. B-15. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
33 allocations are made.

34 **DEFENSE, VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT**
35 **OF**

36 **Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund Z190**

37 Initiative: Establishes the Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund within the
38 Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management.

1	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2015-16	2016-17
2	All Other	\$500	\$500
3			
4	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$500	\$500
5			

6 **SUMMARY**

7 Like Committee Amendment "A", Part A of this amendment replaces the bill with
 8 language directing the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College
 9 System to identify the needs of student-veterans on their campuses, including needs
 10 related to admission, degree completion, transitioning to civilian life and meeting
 11 personal and financial obligations, and directs the University of Maine System and the
 12 Maine Community College System to identify existing services that meet the needs
 13 identified, assess the effectiveness of those services, determine what services are not
 14 being offered that, if offered, would meet those needs and propose services and solutions
 15 that fulfill those needs across campuses that are based upon best practices.

16 Part B of this amendment establishes the Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund
 17 and amends existing law regarding education assistance grants to Maine National Guard
 18 members. The amendment provides that the Maine National Guard Postsecondary Fund
 19 will provide for 100% of an eligible member's tuition costs. If the tuition benefit costs
 20 exceed the amount in the fund, the amendment states that the benefit will be provided in
 21 the form of a waiver from the state postsecondary education institution. The amendment
 22 clarifies that tuition does not include lab fees or other mandatory fees charged to students.
 23 The amendment specifies that the benefit entitles a member to one postsecondary
 24 education credential, whether it be at the associate, baccalaureate, certificate or licensure
 25 level. The amendment specifies that a member must first pursue all other state, federal
 26 and employer-provided benefits available and have not previously earned a bachelor's
 27 degree in order to qualify for the tuition benefit.

28 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

29 **(See attached)**

30 SPONSORED BY: _____

31 (Representative FARRIN)

32 TOWN: Norridgewock