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Date: (Filing No. H- )

**EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

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**STATE OF MAINE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
132ND LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 396, L.D. 628, “An Act Regarding Eligibility to Apply for a Department of Education Diploma”

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

**Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-A**, as amended by PL 2023, c. 171, §1, is further amended to read:

**1-A. Eligibility for students impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.** Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements in subsection 1, a student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because the student experienced a significant interruption to the student's education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency during the student's secondary school education history.

~~This subsection is repealed on September 1, 2026.~~

**Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-C** is enacted to read:

**1-C. Exception for disruption to student's education conditions.** A student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is at least a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because of a disruption to the student's education during the student's secondary school education history. A disruption to the student's education may include, but is not limited to, conditions described in section 5161, subsection 2-A.

**Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §5161, sub-§2-A**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 445, §3, is further amended to read:

**2-A. Education disruption.** "Education disruption" means disruption of the educational program of an elementary or secondary school student as a result of:

- A. Homelessness or foster care placement or another housing disruption;

**COMMITTEE AMENDMENT**

1 B. ~~Absence for 10 or more consecutive school days due to placement in an interim~~  
2 ~~program~~ more than 10% of the school days in a school year due to unforeseen  
3 circumstances, including, but not limited to, placement in an interim program,  
4 unplanned hospitalization or serious medical condition;

5 C. Enrollment in ~~3~~ 2 or more schools or educational programs ~~in a single school year~~  
6 during the student's secondary school education; or

7 D. The student's being an immigrant student or a migrant student.

8 "Education disruption" does not include an absence for 10 or more consecutive school days  
9 as a result of a planned absence for a reason such as a family event or a medical absence  
10 for a planned hospitalization or recovery or pursuant to a superintendent's determination  
11 developed in accordance with section 5205, subsection 2.'

12 Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section  
13 number to read consecutively.

#### 14 SUMMARY

15 This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, makes permanent the  
16 ability for a student to be eligible for a Department of Education diploma due to a  
17 significant interruption to the student's education at any point during the student's  
18 educational history as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendment also changes  
19 the definition of "education disruption" to include any housing disruption, absence for more  
20 than 10% of school days in a school year due to unforeseen circumstances and enrollment  
21 in 2 or more schools during the student's secondary school education.