



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 1495

H.P. 1105

House of Representatives, April 14, 2021

**An Act To Help Veterans Who Are Caregivers of Children with
Special Needs and of Family Members To Optimize Their Respite
Hours**

Received by the Clerk of the House on April 12, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.

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

Sec. 1. 37-B MRSA §508-A is enacted to read:

§508-A. Veteran caregivers

The bureau shall ensure that veteran service officers have the training and resources necessary to:

1. Caregivers of children with special needs. Provide information to veterans who are caregivers of children with special needs on state and federal resources and programs for respite hours and services and on any available funding for respite hours and services; and

2. Caregivers of family members. Provide information to veterans and assistance to veterans who provide caregiver services to their family members who are not veterans on utilizing federal caregiver programs.

Sec. 2. Review of federal caregiver programs for veterans. The Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall review which federal caregiver programs exist to assist veterans and report to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs by January 1, 2022 on the potential for and cost of implementing similar programs in the State. The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs may report out legislation based upon the report to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature.

Sec. 3. Adapt programs to assist veterans caring for children with special needs. The Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall review programs currently provided by the State to veterans and adapt the programs as necessary to ensure the programs provide assistance specifically targeted to the needs of veterans who are caregivers of children with special needs. In adapting programs under this section, the bureau shall ensure that program staff consult with doctors, therapists, educational professionals and other professionals in fields relevant to caring for children with special needs to ensure that the services provided to each veteran who is a caregiver of a child with special needs are adapted to serve the specific needs of that child.

Sec. 4. Other services for veterans caring for children with special needs. The Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall consult with and provide resources to other entities in the State that offer services to veterans to encourage those entities to provide services specifically targeted to the needs of veterans who are caregivers of children with special needs.

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services to ensure that veteran service officers are able to provide information to veterans who are caregivers of children with special needs on state and federal resources and programs and any available funding for respite hours and services and provide information and assistance to veterans in utilizing federal caregiver programs for family members who are not veterans. It directs the Director of the Maine Bureau of

1 Veterans' Services to review which federal caregiver programs exist to assist veterans and
2 report back to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs by January 1,
3 2022 on the potential for and cost of implementing similar programs in the State.

4 This bill also directs the director to review programs currently provided by the State to
5 veterans and adapt the programs as necessary to ensure the programs provide assistance
6 specifically targeted to the needs of veterans who are caregivers of children with special
7 needs and to consult with and provide resources to other entities in the State that offer
8 services to veterans to encourage those entities to provide services specifically targeted to
9 the needs of veterans who are caregivers of children with special needs.