



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2022

Legislative Document

No. 1997

H.P. 1484

House of Representatives, February 23, 2022

**An Act To Implement Certain Recommendations of the Committee
To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income Security**

Reported by Representative SYLVESTER of Portland for the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing pursuant to Public Law 2021, chapter 405, section 1, subsection 6.

Reference to the Committee on Labor and Housing suggested and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R(t) B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

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

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §3109** is enacted to read:

3 **§3109. Committee To Improve the Effectiveness and Accessibility of Maine's Safety**
4 **Net and Work Support Programs**

5 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
6 following terms have the following meanings.

7 A. "Committee" means the Committee To Improve the Effectiveness and Accessibility
8 of Maine's Safety Net and Work Support Programs established in section 12004-G,
9 subsection 15-C.

10 B. "Safety net program" means a program designed to provide economic assistance to
11 individuals lacking adequate income and assets.

12 C. "Work support program" means a program that provides economic support or
13 services to help individuals successfully gain or retain employment and increase their
14 economic security.

15 **2. Committee To Improve the Effectiveness and Accessibility of Maine's Safety**
16 **Net and Work Support Programs.** The Committee To Improve the Effectiveness and
17 Accessibility of Maine's Safety Net and Work Support Programs is established within the
18 office.

19 A. The director shall appoint all members of the committee, which at a minimum must
20 include:

21 (1) At least 2 individuals who receive or previously received support from safety
22 net programs or work support programs;

23 (2) An academic specializing in issues related to poverty and the workforce;

24 (3) Staff from departments administering key safety net programs or work support
25 programs, including but not limited to the Department of Health and Human
26 Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, the Department
27 of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Revenue Services and the
28 Maine State Housing Authority;

29 (4) Individuals familiar with sources of data and technology related to participation
30 in safety net programs or work support programs or other factors related to
31 individuals living in poverty or with limited incomes;

32 (5) At least 2 individuals from advocacy organizations with expertise in policy or
33 legal matters related to programs administered by state, federal or municipal
34 governments;

35 (6) A representative from the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial,
36 Indigenous and Tribal Populations established in chapter 631; and

37 (7) Other stakeholders as determined by the director.

38 B. The committee shall review existing safety net programs and work support
39 programs and make recommendations to improve the coordination and adequacy of
40 existing safety net programs and work support programs with the goal of improving
41 basic income security for residents of this State. The committee shall consider the

1 correlation among guaranteed basic income programs, a reduction in poverty, increased
2 economic stability and the beneficial impact on the State of a guaranteed basic income
3 program. In developing recommendations, the committee shall:

4 (1) Review opportunities to take advantage of options for the State available under
5 federal law to improve the adequacy of safety net programs and work support
6 programs or other essential resources to help individuals in need to meet basic
7 needs;

8 (2) Examine the ways in which the State could better coordinate safety net
9 programs and work support programs to simplify access and improve efficiency,
10 including:

11 (a) Streamlining eligibility for safety net programs and work support
12 programs;

13 (b) Facilitating automatic enrollment or allowing an individual to opt out of
14 enrollment;

15 (c) Integrating applications and application processes between safety net
16 programs and work support programs and governmental departments;

17 (d) Improving data sharing while protecting client confidentiality to make it
18 easier for individuals to be screened for, to apply for and to receive safety net
19 program and work support program assistance;

20 (e) Removing unnecessary barriers for individuals to access the safety net
21 programs and work support programs for which those individuals are eligible;

22 (f) Improving communication and knowledge sharing between governmental
23 departments to ensure that accurate information is provided to individuals
24 seeking assistance; and

25 (g) Making the application processes more efficient and capable of meeting
26 the unique needs of the individuals who are applying for assistance;

27 (3) Review opportunities to change policies and processes to reduce so-called
28 benefit cliffs and interactions between existing safety net programs and work
29 support programs;

30 (4) Determine how the State could improve access to safety net programs and work
31 support programs for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal
32 populations with the goal of reducing racial and economic disparities in the State;
33 and

34 (5) Review ways to make eligibility requirements for safety net programs and
35 work support programs clear and understandable for the public.

36 C. The committee shall conduct periodic reviews of safety net programs and work
37 support programs and report findings and recommendations, including any suggested
38 legislation, annually to the office and the joint standing committee of the Legislature
39 having jurisdiction over health and human services matters. After reviewing the report,
40 the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and
41 human services matters may report out legislation relating to the subject matter of the
42 report.

1 **Sec. 2. 5 MRSA §12004-G, sub-§15-C** is enacted to read:

2 **15-C.**

3 Human Committee To Improve the Effectiveness Expenses Only 5 MRSA
4 Services: and Accessibility of Maine's Safety Net §3109
5 Safety Net and Work Support Programs
6 Programs

7 **Sec. 3. Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income Security;**
8 **reestablished.** The Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income
9 Security, referred to in this section as "the committee," is established.

- 10 1. The committee consists of 11 members appointed as follows:
- 11 A. Three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including a
12 representative of each of the following joint standing committees:
- 13 (1) The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over labor
14 and housing matters;
- 15 (2) The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health
16 and human services matters; and
- 17 (3) The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
18 taxation matters;
- 19 B. Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the
20 House, including a representative of each of the following joint standing committees:
- 21 (1) The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over labor
22 and housing matters;
- 23 (2) The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health
24 and human services matters; and
- 25 (3) The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
26 innovation, development, economic advancement and business matters;
- 27 C. Two members of the public who represent low-income workers and recipients of
28 public benefits, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 29 D. One member of the public who represents business and industry, appointed by the
30 Speaker of the House;
- 31 E. One member of the public who represents higher education, appointed by the
32 Speaker of the House; and
- 33 F. One member of the public who represents a trade union, appointed by the Governor.
- 34 To the greatest extent practicable, the appointing authorities shall reappoint the persons
35 they appointed to the Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income
36 Security under Public Law 2021, chapter 405.
- 37 A legislative member who is not reelected may continue to serve on the committee for the
38 duration of the committee. If a member elects to not continue serving on the committee, a
39 person must be appointed to the committee in the same manner as the vacating member
40 was appointed.
- 41 2. The first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named House of
42 Representatives member is the House chair of the committee.

1 disparities in the State; and make eligibility requirements for safety net and work support
2 programs clear and understandable for the public.

3 The bill also reestablishes the Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic
4 Income Security to continue the work of the previous study committee. The bill directs the
5 study committee to examine and make recommendations about the feasibility and
6 economic impact and poverty reduction effect of providing basic income security through
7 a direct cash payment system and other programs designed to help individuals and families
8 become more economically secure. The bill authorizes the committee to use the balances
9 from the study authorized in Public Law 2021, chapter 405. The committee may also seek
10 funding contributions to supplement the balances available to be used to support the hiring
11 of an outside consultant to conduct a feasibility study or to provide the committee with
12 additional staffing.

13 The joint standing committee has not taken a position on the substance of the bill and
14 by reporting this bill out the joint standing committee is not suggesting and does not intend
15 to suggest that it agrees or disagrees with any aspect of this bill. The joint standing
16 committee is reporting the bill out for the sole purpose of obtaining a printed bill that can
17 be referred to the joint standing committee for a public hearing and subsequent committee
18 action in the normal course.