

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

Date: (Filing No. S-)

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Reproduced and distributed under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate.

**STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
130TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to S.P. 604, L.D. 1748, “An Act Regarding the So-called Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive Report Produced by the Department of Health and Human Services”

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'An Act To Improve the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and To Improve the So-called Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive Report'

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

'Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3109, sub-§1, ¶A-1 is enacted to read:

A-1. "ASPIRE-TANF" means the Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program established in section 3781-A.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3109, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2021, c. 398, Pt. OO, §§17 to 19, is further amended to read:

2. Identify measures of child and family economic security. Beginning ~~October 15, 2019 and annually~~ January 15, 2023 and biennially thereafter, the department shall obtain and compile the following data for the State regarding child and family economic security from those sources reasonably available to the department, including, but not limited to, data collected and maintained by the department, data available from the Department of Labor and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Revenue Services or other state or federal agencies and such other data as can reasonably be obtained from other public or private sources upon request. The data must include:

- A. The ratio of families with children receiving TANF cash assistance to the number of families with children and income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in the current year and in the previous 4 years;
- B. The percentage of children under 5 years of age receiving TANF cash assistance that also receive assistance from WIC in the current year and in the previous 4 years;

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

- 1 C. The percentage of children under 5 years of age receiving SNAP benefits that also
2 receive assistance from WIC in the current year and in the previous 4 years;
- 3 D. For all families for whom TANF cash assistance has terminated:
- 4 (1) The number and percentage of families with no quarterly earnings from
5 unsubsidized employment:
- 6 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
- 7 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
8 and
- 9 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 10 (2) The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from
11 unsubsidized employment that are below 50% of the federal poverty level:
- 12 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
- 13 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
14 and
- 15 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 16 (3) The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from
17 unsubsidized employment that are at least 50% but below 100% of the federal
18 poverty level:
- 19 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
- 20 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
21 and
- 22 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 23 (4) The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from
24 unsubsidized employment that are at least 100% but below 150% of the federal
25 poverty level:
- 26 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
- 27 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
28 and
- 29 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 30 (5) The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from
31 unsubsidized employment that are at least 150% but below 200% of the federal
32 poverty level:
- 33 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
- 34 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
35 and
- 36 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 37 (6) The number and percentage of families with quarterly earnings from
38 unsubsidized employment that are at least 200% of the federal poverty level:

- 1 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
- 2 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 3 and
- 4 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 5 (7) The mean and median income of families with no quarterly earnings from
- 6 unsubsidized employment:
 - 7 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
 - 8 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
 - 9 and
 - 10 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
 - 11 and
 - 12 (8) The number and percentage of families receiving income from the federal
 - 13 supplemental security income program or federal social security disability benefits:
 - 14 (a) At the time participation in the program was terminated;
 - 15 (b) During the 2nd quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
 - 16 and
 - 17 (c) During the 4th quarter after participation in the program was terminated;
- 18 E. Cumulative data on the highest level of educational attainment of adult parents or
- 19 caretaker relatives receiving TANF cash assistance and cumulative data on the highest
- 20 level of educational attainment of adult parents or caretaker relatives whose
- 21 participation in the program was terminated in the prior year;
- 22 F. The ratio of persons receiving SNAP benefits to the total number of potentially
- 23 eligible persons; the ratio of persons 60 years of age or older receiving SNAP benefits
- 24 to the total number of potentially eligible persons 60 years of age or older; the ratio of
- 25 nonelderly persons with a disability receiving SNAP benefits to the total number of
- 26 potentially eligible nonelderly persons with a disability; and the ratio of children under
- 27 18 years of age receiving SNAP benefits to the total number of potentially eligible
- 28 children under 18 years of age;
- 29 G. The number and percentage of adult parents or caretaker relatives who have
- 30 children in the household and who are receiving SNAP benefits, grouped by highest
- 31 level of educational attainment of the adult parent or caretaker relative;
- 32 H. The ratio of people participating in the MaineCare program, by eligibility group, to
- 33 the total number of potentially eligible persons within each group;
- 34 I. The number and percentage of applications received by the department for the
- 35 MaineCare program and the children's health insurance program as defined in section
- 36 3174-X, subsection 1, paragraph A, by eligibility group, that are processed in less than
- 37 24 hours; that are processed within one to 7 days; that are processed within 8 to 30
- 38 days; that are processed within 31 to 45 days; and that are processed more than 45 days
- 39 after receipt;
- 40 J. The average waiting times, by month, for a person calling the department's call
- 41 center to speak to a person, not including an interactive voice response system; and

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

1 K. The number and percentage, by month, of telephone calls to the department's call
2 center that are terminated by a caller prior to the caller's speaking to a person, not
3 including an interactive voice response system.

4 **Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §3109, sub-§2-A** is enacted to read:

5 **2-A. Survey experiences of TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants.** Beginning in
6 calendar year 2024 and biennially thereafter, the department shall conduct a survey of
7 TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants and compile the answers to include in its biennial
8 report for the following year pursuant to subsection 3. The department shall select a
9 representative sample of current TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants and a
10 representative sample of TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants whose participation in
11 TANF was terminated in the previous year and whose contact information remains
12 available to the department's office for family independence. The department shall survey
13 the selected samples of participants using an anonymized survey. The department shall
14 provide the opportunity to respond orally to the survey for participants who request
15 interpreter services or another reasonable accommodation. Information about the
16 participants is confidential. The department may use funds from the federal Temporary
17 Assistance for Needy Families block grant to contract for this work. The survey topics
18 must include, but are not limited to:

19 A. Administrative burdens faced by ASPIRE-TANF participants;

20 B. Availability of interpretation and translation services;

21 C. Experiences of discrimination based on racial or ethnic identity, sex, gender
22 identity, sexual orientation, ability or disability status, religion, national origin or
23 marital status;

24 D. Availability of education and training programs, including postsecondary
25 programs, and staff knowledge of and referrals to appropriate programs and services;

26 E. Availability of adequate support services, including but not limited to child care
27 and transportation, and recommendations for other support services needed but not
28 available;

29 F. Overall experiences and recommendations for improvement of ASPIRE-TANF; and

30 G. Optional demographic questions, including but not limited to geographic location,
31 racial or ethnic identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, national
32 origin, marital status and need for interpretation and translation services.

33 **Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §3109, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 485, §1, is repealed
34 and the following enacted in its place:

35 **3. Measuring the effect of department initiatives to improve child and family**
36 **economic security; reports.** The department shall submit biennial reports, in accordance
37 with this subsection, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
38 over health and human services matters that analyze TANF's and ASPIRE-TANF's impact
39 on family economic security, including increased ability to meet basic needs, improved
40 education levels and increased income.

41 A. No later than January 15, 2023, the department shall present the data collected
42 pursuant to subsection 2 along with an assessment of how these measures can be
43 improved. The department shall also identify any obstacles to improving economic

1 security for children, families and individuals, which must include an analysis of how
2 methods for determining TANF eligibility may be changed to increase the number of
3 children under poverty eligible to receive assistance, and make recommendations for
4 addressing those obstacles, which may include improved coordination between state
5 agencies. The department shall convene a representative group of current and former
6 TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants who volunteer to review the data collected
7 pursuant to subsection 2. This group must have the opportunity to create a separate
8 report making recommendations to improve economic security for children, families
9 and individuals, which may also be presented by the group to the joint standing
10 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services
11 matters.

12 This paragraph is repealed January 30, 2023.

13 B. Beginning January 15, 2025, and biennially thereafter, the department shall present
14 the data collected pursuant to subsection 2 and the survey responses compiled pursuant
15 to subsection 2-A along with an assessment of how these data measures can be
16 improved. The department shall also identify any obstacles to improving economic
17 security for children, families and individuals and make recommendations for
18 addressing those obstacles, which may include improved coordination between state
19 agencies. The department shall convene a representative group of current and former
20 TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants who volunteer to review the data collected
21 pursuant to subsection 2 and the anonymized survey data collected pursuant to
22 subsection 2-A. This group must have the opportunity to create a separate report
23 making recommendations to improve economic security for children, families and
24 individuals, which may also be presented by the group to the joint standing committee
25 of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters.

26 For all reports required pursuant to this subsection, the joint standing committee's review
27 must include the opportunity for public comment, and the joint standing committee may
28 introduce any legislation that is considered necessary to address barriers faced by the
29 department in improving economic security for children, families and individuals in this
30 State.

31 **Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §3762, sub-§1, ¶A-1** is enacted to read:

32 A-1. "Culturally and linguistically appropriate services" means services that are
33 designed to serve culturally diverse populations in their preferred languages; function
34 effectively within the context of cultural beliefs, behaviors and needs presented by
35 TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants and their communities; contribute to a work
36 environment that supports diversity; promote community engagement; build trust and
37 relationships with TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants; actively support and enable
38 TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants to make informed choices; and value and
39 facilitate the exchange of information with TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants.

40 **Sec. 6. 22 MRSA §3762, sub-§1, ¶G** is enacted to read:

41 G. "Trauma-informed services" means services that acknowledge and are informed by
42 the widespread impact of trauma and recognize the potential paths for recovery;
43 recognize the unique signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families and staff;
44 respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and
45 practices; and seek to actively avoid retraumatization.

1 **Sec. 7. 22 MRSA §3762, sub-§21** is enacted to read:

2 **21. Duty to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate and trauma-**
3 **informed services.** The department shall work with all TANF and ASPIRE-TANF
4 participants to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and trauma-
5 informed services to assist each family in obtaining the services and skills necessary to
6 sustain economic stability and opportunity after leaving TANF. Each TANF and ASPIRE-
7 TANF participant must be screened to identify any need for culturally or linguistically
8 appropriate or trauma-informed services. If such a need is identified, the department shall
9 use appropriate methods and techniques to work with the participant to develop goals that
10 reflect, to the greatest extent possible, the preferences of the participant and individualized
11 plans that address the participant's situation and barriers to sustained economic stability.
12 The department shall work with TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants to connect them
13 with appropriate programs and services available to help the families attain and sustain
14 economic stability and to ensure the well-being of the children.

15 **Sec. 8. 22 MRSA §3788, sub-§1-A**, as enacted by PL 1997, c. 530, Pt. A, §26, is
16 amended to read:

17 **1-A. Information about and application for Parents as Scholars Program.** When
18 there are fewer than 2,000 enrollees in the Parents as Scholars Program under chapter
19 1054-B, the department shall inform all persons applying for ASPIRE-TANF and all
20 ASPIRE-TANF participants reviewing or requesting to amend their education, training or
21 employment program under ASPIRE-TANF of the ~~program~~ Parents as Scholars Program
22 and shall offer them the opportunity to apply for the program. The department shall assist
23 persons who apply for ASPIRE-TANF and participants seeking to matriculate for
24 postsecondary education, including through appropriate referrals for remedial services or
25 financial aid assistance, and shall assist persons with the provision of ASPIRE-TANF
26 services for which they are eligible.

27 **Sec. 9. 22 MRSA §3788, sub-§6**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 291, §9, is further
28 amended to read:

29 **6. Education, training and employment services.** The ASPIRE-TANF program
30 must make available a broad range of education, training and employment services in
31 accordance with section 3781-A, subsection 3 and the federal Personal Responsibility and
32 Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 110 Stat. 2105 and
33 the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, Public Law 109-171, 120 Stat. 4. These services
34 and activities must include all of those services and activities offered by the Additional
35 Support for People in Retraining and Employment Program on October 1, 1989, except in
36 2-year and 4-year postsecondary education and except as provided in chapter 1054-B. This
37 section does not prohibit the department from purchasing equivalent services from
38 providers other than those from whom those services were purchased on October 1, 1989.
39 When a particular approved education or training service is available at comparable quality
40 and cost, including the cost of support services, and the implementation of the family
41 contract would not be unreasonably delayed, the program participant may choose to enroll
42 for that service with the provider of that person's preference. If this decision is not mutually
43 agreed to by the participant and the case manager, the decision must be reviewed by the
44 case manager's supervisor. These services ~~do not~~ must include reimbursement for the cost
45 of tuition ~~or~~, mandatory fees and the cost of transcripts or transferring credits for

1 ~~postsecondary education unless: when the participant has exhausted any available~~
2 ~~educational funding to complete the participant's family contract, in accordance with~~
3 ~~department rules.~~

4 ~~A. The participant is unable to secure other educational funding needed to complete~~
5 ~~the participant's family contract due to:~~

6 ~~(1) Poor credit as determined by the educational funding source; or~~

7 ~~(2) The consideration by the educational funding source of resources from past~~
8 ~~years that are not actually available to the participant;~~

9 ~~B. In the determination of the department, failure to pay the tuition or fee would result~~
10 ~~in higher ASPIRE-TANF program costs to achieve the participant's approved goal; or~~

11 ~~C. The participant meets an exception specified in rules adopted by the department.~~

12 When a substantially similar postsecondary education or training program of comparable
13 quality is available at both a public and private institution, within a reasonable commuting
14 distance for the participant, the department may choose to approve the program offered at
15 the public institution if the participant's program can be completed at less cost at the
16 institution.

17 **Sec. 10. 22 MRSA §3788, sub-§6-A** is enacted to read:

18 **6-A. Parents as Scholars Program prematriculation services.** The department shall
19 assist ASPIRE-TANF participants interested in applying for the Parents as Scholars
20 Program under chapter 1054-B to prepare to matriculate, including enrolling participants
21 or preparing participants for enrollment in a program providing remedial services necessary
22 for matriculation; identifying the strengths, needs and barriers faced by participants; and
23 making referrals to programs qualified to assist participants with the services, supports,
24 education, training and accommodations needed to reduce or overcome barriers to
25 enrollment in the Parents as Scholars Program. The department shall cover the cost of
26 support services in accordance with this section needed for any activity under this
27 subsection included in the family contract. Any hours spent preparing for matriculation
28 under this subsection, including, but not limited to, exploring educational opportunities and
29 financial aid options and applying for educational programs or financial aid, must be
30 considered hours of participation in ASPIRE-TANF for the purposes of participation under
31 chapter 1053-B. These hours may also be counted for federal participation as allowable by
32 federal law.

33 **Sec. 11. 22 MRSA §3790, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 20, Pt. K, §14, is
34 further amended to read:

35 **1. Established.** The department shall establish a student financial aid program based
36 on need for up to 2000 participants known as the Parents as Scholars Program, referred to
37 in this section as the "program," to aid needy students who have dependent children and
38 who are matriculating in postsecondary undergraduate 2-year and 4-year degree-granting
39 education programs. Enrollees in the program must be provided with a package of student
40 aid that includes aid for living expenses equivalent to that provided pursuant to chapter
41 1053-B, medical assistance pursuant to chapter 855 and services and benefits at least
42 equivalent to those provided pursuant to chapter 1054-A and to participants in the Higher
43 Opportunity for Pathways to Employment Program pursuant to chapter 1054-C. A family

1 that ceases to receive aid under this chapter as a result of increased child support or
2 increased hours of, or increased income from, employment is eligible to receive transitional
3 support services in accordance with section 3762, subsection 8. The program must be
4 supported with funds other than federal block grant funds provided under the United States
5 Social Security Act, Title IV-A, except that federal funds may be used in accordance with
6 federal law if their use does not result in the imposition of conditions of participation or
7 program requirements other than those established by this chapter.

8 **Sec. 12. 22 MRSA §3790, sub-§3**, as repealed and replaced by PL 1999, c. 407,
9 §1, is amended by enacting a new 2nd blocked paragraph to read:

10 For the purposes of this subsection, study hours are counted as 3 times the number of hours
11 of classroom instruction, which may include virtual instruction. These study hours are not
12 required to be scheduled or supervised. A participant is deemed to meet the participation
13 requirements of this subsection if the participant, in order to improve the participant's
14 academic performance or to improve the participant's attendance or to more appropriately
15 meet the needs of the participant's family, has chosen to matriculate less than full-time but
16 at least half-time, as defined by acceptance to and official registration of at least a half-time
17 study by the training or educational institution.

18 **Sec. 13. 22 MRSA §3790-A, sub-§2-A** is enacted to read:

19 **2-A. Coordination with state educational institutions and programs.** The
20 department shall consider a referral from an educational institution or program that is part
21 of the University of Maine System; the Maine Community College System; Jobs for
22 Maine's Graduates, established in Title 20-A, chapter 226; an adult education program
23 established pursuant to Title 20-A, chapter 315; or the career centers established by the
24 Department of Labor as an application for the Higher Opportunity for Pathways to
25 Employment Program as long as, in accordance with department rules, the referral is
26 submitted by a qualified person at the institution or program on a form provided by the
27 department for this purpose and signed by the prospective student expressing a desire to
28 enroll in the Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment Program. The department
29 shall notify these institutions and programs of the opportunity to refer prospective students
30 in accordance with this subsection and make available to prospective students and these
31 institutions and programs referral forms to serve as applications for purposes of this
32 subsection.

33 **Sec. 14. Improve application processes for postsecondary education**
34 **programs.** In order to improve access to postsecondary certificate and degree programs
35 through the ASPIRE-TANF program under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, chapter
36 1054-A; the Parents as Scholars Program under chapter 1054-B; the Higher Opportunity
37 for Pathways to Employment Program under chapter 1054-C; the Competitive Skills
38 Scholarship Program under Title 26, chapter 25, subchapter 5; and other programs
39 providing similar opportunities, the Department of Health and Human Services, the
40 Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the University of Maine System and
41 the Maine Community College System shall work together to explore the feasibility of
42 creating a single application for persons expressing a desire to enroll in postsecondary
43 education and training programs to be available from the departments and at relevant
44 educational institutions and programs, including, but not limited to, the University of Maine
45 System, the Maine Community College System, adult education programs established

1 pursuant to Title 20-A, chapter 315 and the career centers established by the Department
 2 of Labor. The Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education,
 3 the Department of Labor, the University of Maine System and the Maine Community
 4 College System shall identify opportunities for an individual to initiate an application, with
 5 the departments coordinating and facilitating the application for the correct program based
 6 on the applicant's interests and program eligibility requirements.

7 By February 1, 2024, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department
 8 of Education, the Department of Labor, the University of Maine System, the Maine
 9 Community College System and adult education programs established pursuant to Title
 10 20-A, chapter 315 shall provide a written status update for the joint standing committee of
 11 the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters regarding the
 12 feasibility of facilitating applications for postsecondary education programs. This written
 13 status update must include any needs, financial, technological or otherwise, identified to
 14 achieve this type of enhanced coordination and strategies to meet those needs. The joint
 15 standing committee may introduce any legislation that it considers necessary in response
 16 to this status update to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

17 **Sec. 15. Rulemaking.** No later than October 1, 2023, the Department of Health and
 18 Human Services shall adopt rules to implement this Act. Rules adopted pursuant to this
 19 section are routine technical rules as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter
 20 375, subchapter 2-A. For the purposes of Title 22, section 3762, subsection 1, paragraph
 21 A-1, section 3762, subsection 1, paragraph G and section 3762, subsection 21, in advance
 22 of rulemaking, the department shall consult with current and former participants in the
 23 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program under Title 22, chapter 1053-B and
 24 consider their recommendations.

25 **Sec. 16. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
 26 allocations are made.

27 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF**

28 **Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment 0146**

29 Initiative: Provides allocation for required program changes to child care hours and
 30 allowable tuition.

31	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	2021-22	2022-23
32	All Other	\$0	\$2,023,570
33			
34	FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$2,023,570

35 **Office for Family Independence Z020**

36 Initiative: Provides appropriations and allocations to establish one Management Analyst II
 37 position to handle new on-going reporting requirements.

38	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2021-22	2022-23
39	POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	1.000
40	Personal Services	\$0	\$92,085
41	All Other	\$0	\$9,966
42			
43	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$102,051

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
DEPARTMENT OF
DEPARTMENT TOTALS**

	2021-22	2022-23
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$0	\$102,051
FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUND	\$0	\$2,023,570
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$2,125,621

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

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the bill, which is a concept draft. It does the following.

1. It requires the addition of qualitative survey data from participants in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF, and the Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or ASPIRE-TANF, in the report that is submitted to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 3109. It changes the report from an annual report to a biennial report beginning January 15, 2023.

2. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate and trauma-informed services to TANF and ASPIRE-TANF recipients. It requires the rule-making process to implement these services to include consultation with current and former TANF and ASPIRE-TANF participants.

3. It requires the department to assist ASPIRE-TANF participants seeking to matriculate in postsecondary education through the Parents as Scholars Program with access to remedial services, financial assistance and the provision of ASPIRE-TANF services. Services must include reimbursement for tuition, fees and transcript costs. Hours spent preparing for matriculation are considered hours of participation in ASPIRE-TANF.

4. It creates parity between the Parents as Scholars Program and the Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment Program by making services and benefits equivalent between the programs and by requiring, for both programs, that study hours be counted for 3 hours for every one hour of classroom instruction and options for half-time study be made available. It also modifies program requirements regarding how study hours and half-time enrollment are counted.

5. It provides that a referral from the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System, Jobs for Maine's Graduates, adult education programs and Department of Labor career centers must be considered an application for the Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment Program as long as the referral is submitted by a qualified person and on a form provided for this purpose and signed by the student.

6. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, the University of Maine System and the Maine Community

1 College System to explore the feasibility of simplifying the application process for
2 education programs, including ASPIRE-TANF, the Parents as Scholars Program, the
3 Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment Program and the Competitive Skills
4 Scholarship Program, to a single application.

5 The amendment also adds an appropriations and allocations section.

6 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

7 **(See attached)**