

Legislative opportunities to improve child safety and family well-being in Maine: Improving support for families experiencing challenges and ensuring an effective child protective response when children are unsafe.

Carried over on the special appropriations table:

- LD 540 would establish peer respite centers to address mental health challenges
- LD 1714 would create a sustainable funding source for Recovery Community Centers using a percentage of the adult use cannabis tax revenue
- LD 1236 would increase children's behavioral health services in rural areas
- LD 580 would create a new emergency family court process for protective parents to seek an ex parte family court order for temporary custody of their children when the other parent poses an imminent risk to the child's safety

In the proposed supplemental budget:

- One-time funding for VOCA to address the gap in federal funding for services. Amend to incorporate the language from the unanimous Judiciary Committee report in LD 2084, to provide on-going funding, temporarily, while the federal Victims of Crime Fund recovers.
- Investments in caseworker pay raises, additional legal aides, and supervisor positions focused on coaching and training
- The Maine Recovery Council has allocated \$750,000 in community-based flexible funds for families with substance use in their history. The legislature could match this to address family needs and prevent crisis.

Currently being considered:

- LD 1877 bill would address financial stress on families living in deep poverty by increasing monthly TANF assistance by 20%
- LD 857 would create an evaluation process for Family Team Meetings, which are a critical part of the family reunification process
- LD 1540 would create a pilot program through Maine Housing to prevent evictions for Mainers with low incomes
- LD 472 would bridge a federal funding gap to support certified community behavioral health clinics
- Follow the Judiciary Committee recommendation in their report back to AFA, to include an extra \$2M in the budget for public defenders offices
- LD 2237 would expand and strengthen community-based mental health services. We collectively support the provisions including crisis receiving centers, crisis mobile response, medication management services, and peer supports.