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Resolve, To Fund the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the average age of the 20,597 nurses in the State this year who renewed their nursing licenses is 50.5 years of age, older than the average age of nurses nationally; and

Whereas, nurse faculty members generally are older workers with an average age of 54.5 years and nearly 1/3 of faculty in the State's nursing education programs do not plan to be working in 5 years; and

Whereas, the State's schools of nursing continue to turn away qualified applicants due to a lack of faculty needed to expand the nursing programs to accommodate more students; and

Whereas, the State created the nursing education loan repayment program under the Finance Authority of Maine to address the critical need for qualified faculty in the State's schools of nursing; and

Whereas, the nursing education loan repayment program has never received funding; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Nursing education loan repayment program. Resolved: That the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor and the Department of Education are directed to research federal funding sources to fund the nursing education loan repayment program established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 10, section 1019 and report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Labor by January 1, 2010 with suggested plans to obtain federal funding from the sources identified.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.