

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

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

**'An Act To Address the Findings of the Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided To Maine's Veterans Regarding Veterans Experiencing Homelessness'**

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

**'Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA §5047, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 600, §2, is further amended to read:

**1. Membership; chair.** The council consists of ~~13~~14 members appointed as follows:

A. Six members appointed by the Governor, 2 from each of 3 regional homeless councils, based on nominations provided by the 3 regional homeless councils;

B. The Director of the Maine State Housing Authority;

C. Three members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, one from each of 3 regional homeless councils, based on nominations provided by the 3 regional homeless councils;

D. One member representing the Office of the Governor, who serves as the chair;

E. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's designee; ~~and~~

F. The Commissioner of Corrections or the commissioner's designee; ~~and~~

G. The Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services or the director's designee.

**Sec. 2. 30-A MRSA §5048, sub-§7**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 600, §4, is further amended to read:

**7. Review, monitor and implement plans.** On an annual basis, review and comment on plans submitted pursuant to Title 34-B, section 1221 and propose amendments and updates to and implement a plan to end homelessness; ~~and~~

**Sec. 3. 30-A MRSA §5048, sub-§8**, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 600, §5, is amended to read:

**8. Advise departments.** Advise the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Human Services on issues related to homelessness and other issues related to the duties of the council; ~~and~~  
and

**Sec. 4. 30-A MRSA §5048, sub-§9** is enacted to read:

**9. Develop strategic plan regarding homelessness among veterans.** Develop strategies to enhance coordination and communication among agencies and organizations that provide services that seek to place veterans in permanent housing and that seek to improve access to services known to support housing stability for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or veterans who are at risk of homelessness. The council shall develop and periodically review a strategic plan that:

A. Establishes a baseline for homelessness in the State from which improvements can be measured. In determining the baseline, the council is not required to use the federal definition of homelessness and may include levels of housing instability or ranges of homelessness;

B. Develops a method of measuring homelessness among veterans in the State to demonstrate whether efforts to reduce the number of homeless veterans in the State have been successful;

C. Identifies specific processes for improving communication among agencies that provide services to veterans, including services unrelated to homelessness, that will facilitate identification of veterans in need of housing assistance or veterans who may be at risk of homelessness and maximize resources available to address homelessness among veterans; and

D. Develops a framework and timeline for determining progress of communication and coordination efforts targeting homelessness among veterans and the effectiveness of those efforts in reducing homelessness among veterans.

The Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services shall periodically report to the council regarding the progress of implementing the strategies described in this subsection. Beginning February 1, 2018, the director shall report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over veterans affairs on the implementation of the strategic plan. The report must include, but is not limited to, the effect of the strategic plan on homelessness among veterans based on the measurements required to be established by this subsection.

**Sec. 5. Development of initial strategic plan.** By February 15, 2017, the Statewide Homeless Council, established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A, chapter 202, subchapter 5-A, shall develop an initial strategic plan pursuant to Title 30-A, section 5048, subsection 9.

**Sec. 6. Report to Legislature.** By March 1, 2017, the Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall present the strategic plan developed pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A, section 5048, subsection 9, including a description of the process used to develop it, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over veterans affairs.

**Sec. 7. Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services to establish Veterans Service Officer position.** No later than February 1, 2017, the Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services within the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management shall establish one additional Veterans Service Officer position within the bureau. Duties must include coordination of efforts to address homelessness among veterans in the State.

**Sec. 8. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and allocations are made.

**DEFENSE, VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF**

**Veterans Services 0110**

Initiative: Provides funding for one Veterans Service Officer position and related costs.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	1.000
Personal Services	\$0	\$81,258
All Other	\$0	\$10,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$91,258</b>

**SUMMARY**

This amendment replaces the bill. Like the bill, the amendment implements a recommendation of the Commission To Strengthen and Align Services Provided to Maine's Veterans regarding homelessness among veterans by requiring coordination of agencies that provide services to veterans to maximize resources available to support stable, permanent housing for veterans at risk of homelessness. The bill establishes a new interagency council under the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services. The amendment requires an existing entity, the Statewide Homeless Council, to develop a strategic plan similar to the plan in the bill. The amendment also requires that the Director of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over veterans affairs regarding the implementation of the plan and its effect on homelessness among veterans.

The amendment also establishes an additional Veterans Service Officer position responsible in part for coordinating efforts to address homelessness among veterans in the State. The amendment also adds an appropriations and allocations section.