



# 131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

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Legislative Document

No. 545

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H.P. 350

House of Representatives, February 9, 2023

**An Act to Establish a Cabinet-level Position to Ensure a Continuum  
of Care to Support Children and Their Families**

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Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

*Robert B. Hunt*  
ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative STOVER of Boothbay.  
Cosponsored by Senator RENY of Lincoln.

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

2 **CONCEPT DRAFT**

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

5 This bill, through a multiphase process, would establish a comprehensive continuum  
6 of coordinated services aimed at identifying, evaluating and supporting young children's  
7 physical, emotional and social development.

8 1. The Department of Health and Human Services would collect an inventory of  
9 programs that currently exist through the Department of Education and the Department of  
10 Health and Human Services, including, but not limited to, the Early Childhood  
11 Comprehensive Systems program, Help Me Grow Maine and developmental screening,  
12 Early Childhood Consultation Partnership, Maternal and Child Health program, Partners  
13 in Care Coordination program, children with special health care needs care coordination,  
14 the State's Plan of Safe Care, CradleME, early intervention under the federal Individuals  
15 with Disabilities Education Act, Part C and any other related program that provides  
16 identification of delayed development or disabilities, referral, coordination or planning of  
17 services for children from birth through 3 years of age. The inventory would include:

18 A. A description of the programs;

19 B. Detailed funding streams for the programs, including the Title V Maternal Child  
20 Health Block Grant;

21 C. The methods of finding, referring, planning and coordinating services for young  
22 children; and

23 D. Identification of areas in which processes can be streamlined and efficiencies made.

24 2. A working group would analyze the information collected under section 1 and make  
25 recommendations to the Children's Cabinet established under the Maine Revised Statutes,  
26 Title 5, section 19131. The working group would be a partnership of public and private  
27 stakeholders, including representatives of the programs evaluated, children's advocates,  
28 providers, parent advocacy representatives and early childhood educators. The working  
29 group would provide recommendations to the Children's Cabinet for how to structure a new  
30 cabinet-level department that provides supportive learning and public health prevention  
31 and intervention services across a continuum of care to young children and their families.

32 3. The Children's Cabinet would develop a data-driven plan and report that takes into  
33 consideration the recommendations of the working group in order to develop a new  
34 cabinet-level department. The report will provide clear milestones to be met in a timely  
35 fashion to develop the new department. The Children's Cabinet would be required to  
36 submit a report to the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over  
37 education matters and health and human services matters. The committees will have  
38 authorization to submit legislation during the session in which the report is received.

39 4. A cabinet-level position would be established within available funds. The position  
40 would be required to provide supportive, preventive, protective, learning and intervention  
41 services to young children and their families. The cabinet-level position would develop a

1 continuous system of care that spans across programs aimed at providing identification,  
2 evaluation, education and support of young children and their families.