



# 128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

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Legislative Document

No. 1560

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H.P. 1076

House of Representatives, May 2, 2017

### An Act Regarding Veteran Homelessness

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Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative STEWART of Presque Isle.  
Cosponsored by Senator DAVIS of Piscataquis and  
Representatives: CASÁS of Rockport, FARRIN of Norridgewock, GOLDEN of Lewiston,  
HANINGTON of Lincoln, WINSOR of Norway, Senators: CARPENTER of Aroostook,  
WHITTEMORE of Somerset.

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 proposes to address veteran homelessness in this State in a comprehensive  
6 and collaborative manner by implementing strategies recommended in the "Strategic Plan  
7 to Prevent and End Veteran Homelessness" prepared by the Department of Defense,  
8 Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services.

9 1. The bill would create a subcommittee of the Statewide Homeless Council, referred  
10 to in this bill as "the subcommittee," to share information among all organizations  
11 working to prevent and address veteran homelessness.

12 A. The subcommittee consists of the following members:

- 13 (1) The members of the Maine Homeless Veterans Action Committee;
- 14 (2) A representative of the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services, who is the chair;
- 15 (3) A representative of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, who is  
16 the vice-chair;
- 17 (4) A veteran who advocates on behalf of homeless veterans;
- 18 (5) The justice action coordinator from the United States Department of Veterans  
19 Affairs;
- 20 (6) A representative of a community action program;
- 21 (7) A representative of the Veterans Justice Outreach Program of the United  
22 States Department of Veterans Affairs;
- 23 (8) A representative of the Maine Department of Labor;
- 24 (9) A representative of the Maine Apartment Owners and Managers Association;
- 25 (10) An employment specialist from the United States Department of Veterans  
26 Affairs;
- 27 (11) A representative of Shelter Plus Care or the Bridging Rental Assistance  
28 Program at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services;
- 29 (12) A member of the Statewide Homeless Council; and
- 30 (13) Other representatives of organizations that provide services to homeless  
31 veterans.

32 B. The following are the duties of the subcommittee:

- 33 (1) Manage the list by name of homeless veterans through regular review and  
34 updating and conferencing to coordinate the deployment of resources;

- 1 (2) Add the name of a homeless veteran to the list at the request of an agency or  
2 concerned citizen;
- 3 (3) Provide training on best referral practices to other agencies and  
4 organizations; and
- 5 (4) Report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having  
6 jurisdiction over veterans matters.
- 7 2. The bill would encourage the execution of memoranda of understanding between  
8 state agencies that provide services to veterans, including the Bureau of Maine Veterans'  
9 Services, Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Labor, to foster  
10 the improvement of communication between these agencies and the improvement of the  
11 sharing of data among providers of services to veterans.
- 12 3. The bill would provide funding for the establishment of an Assistant Coordinator  
13 of Homeless Veterans Services in the Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services. This position:
- 14 A. Reports to, staffs and coordinates the activities of the subcommittee;
- 15 B. Works with agencies and organizations to coordinate service delivery, data  
16 collection and data analysis and reporting; and
- 17 C. Administers the Landlord Assistance Fund, to be established in the bill.
- 18 4. The bill would provide funding for enhancements to technology, including the  
19 development of uniform reporting standards and improved data collection.
- 20 5. The bill would provide grants for a statewide system of veteran homelessness  
21 prevention. Grants must be approved by the subcommittee and administered by the  
22 Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services.
- 23 6. The bill would provide training on best practices for referring a homeless veteran  
24 to law enforcement, hospital staff or helpline staff accessed by dialing 2-1-1. The  
25 subcommittee would administer this training.
- 26 7. The bill would add capacity to the 2-1-1 system to help homeless veterans and  
27 encourage people to use the 2-1-1 system to report a veteran in distress.
- 28 8. The bill would seek to find long-term solutions to reduce barriers to veterans  
29 securing housing, including, but not limited to, substance abuse, mental illness, felony  
30 charges, lack of a driver's license, physical disability, lack of case management and  
31 unemployment.
- 32 9. The bill would increase the number of permanent supportive housing units.
- 33 10. The bill would require the subcommittee to establish a pilot project to determine  
34 best practices for a coordinated system of entry using a standard assessment process by  
35 all providers in order to provide a consistent level of services to homeless veterans  
36 regardless of which provider first serves a veteran.

1           11. The bill would establish a percentage of Section 8 vouchers for which homeless  
2 veterans will be given preference.

3           12. The bill would provide funding to assist landlords to improve substandard  
4 apartments to provide housing for homeless veterans.

5           13. The bill would provide for an annual address on the state of homelessness to be  
6 given to the Legislature by the Statewide Homeless Council.