



126th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2014

Legislative Document

No. 1849

S.P. 748

In Senate, March 28, 2014

**Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Study College
Affordability and College Completion**

(EMERGENCY)

Reported by Senator MILLETT of Cumberland for the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Order, S.P. 721.

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

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

3 **Whereas,** this legislation needs to take effect before the expiration of the 90-day
4 period in order to allow the commission established in this resolve sufficient time to
5 complete its work; and

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

10 **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule
11 353, the Commission To Study College Affordability and College Completion, referred
12 to in this resolve as "the commission," is established; and be it further

13 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That the commission consists of
14 13 members as follows:

15 1. The President of the Senate shall appoint:

16 A. Two members of the Senate who serve on the Joint Standing Committee on
17 Education and Cultural Affairs, including one member of the party holding the
18 highest and one member of the party holding the 2nd highest number of seats in the
19 Legislature;

20 B. One person representing a statewide association of independent higher education
21 institutions; and

22 C. One person representing a statewide association of student financial aid directors;

23 2. The Speaker of the House shall appoint:

24 A. Three members of the House of Representatives who serve on the Joint Standing
25 Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, including 2 members of the party
26 holding the highest and one member of the party holding the 2nd highest number of
27 seats in the Legislature;

28 B. One person with expertise in higher education policy issues representing a
29 nonprofit entity in the State that provides financial assistance to students or to high
30 schools to assist students for college enrollment; and

31 C. One person with expertise in higher education policy issues representing a
32 statewide education policy research institute; and

33 3. Four members of the publicly supported higher education systems in the State,
34 including:

35 A. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System or the chancellor's designee;

36 B. The President of the Maine Community College System or the president's
37 designee;

- 1 C. The President of the Maine Maritime Academy or the president's designee; and
- 2 D. The Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine or the chief
- 3 executive officer's designee; and be it further

4 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate
5 chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the
6 commission; and be it further

7 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all
8 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
9 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
10 Council once all appointments have been completed. Within 15 days after appointment of
11 all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission, which
12 must be no later than 30 days following the appointment of all members; and be it further

13 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall examine and make
14 recommendations on the development of strategies to keep the cost of public
15 postsecondary education in the State affordable and to increase the graduation rate of
16 students enrolled in state-supported public institutions of higher education. The strategies
17 and related cost issues to be reviewed include:

18 1. Oregon's "Pay Forward, Pay Back" pilot project's model of funding public
19 postsecondary education, under which a student enrolled in a public institution of higher
20 education, in lieu of paying tuition or fees, contracts to pay to the State a certain
21 percentage of the student's annual income upon graduation for a specified number of
22 years;

23 2. Increased funding to the State of Maine Grant Program established in the Maine
24 Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 11612 that boosts the minimum grant from \$1,000
25 to \$1,500 for eligible Maine residents;

26 3. The initiatives proposed by the public and independent colleges and universities in
27 the State as part of the March 2014 "Improving College Affordability and Completion in
28 Maine" report submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural
29 Affairs;

30 4. The extent to which Maine's public institutions of higher education support the
31 state reforms included in the October 2013 "The Game Changers" report prepared by
32 Complete College America, which recommends implementing the following strategies to
33 enable more college students to complete degree programs and certificate programs and
34 graduate from college: Performance Funding; Corequisite Remediation; Full-Time is 15;
35 Structured Schedules; and Guided Pathways to Success;

36 5. The mandatory fees charged to students beyond the price of tuition charges,
37 including technology and laboratory fees;

38 6. The affordability of college textbooks, including consideration of the costs and
39 benefits of open source textbooks, for college students in the State; and

1 7. Other strategies that a majority of the commission members agree to include in
2 this review.

3 The commission shall review previous reports prepared and submitted to the
4 Legislature on college affordability and the rate of college degree completion in the State,
5 including the "Statewide Education and Workforce Development Strategic Plan" report
6 submitted by the Education Coordination Committee to the Joint Select Committee on
7 Maine's Workforce and Economic Future on January 30, 2014; and be it further

8 **Sec. 6. Staffing assistance; information. Resolved:** That the University of
9 Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy
10 shall provide staffing assistance to the commission. The Finance Authority of Maine
11 shall provide the commission with access to any nonconfidential aggregate information in
12 its student financial assistance database for postsecondary education students in the State
13 necessary to carry out the duties pursuant to section 5. The Office of Policy and Legal
14 Analysis shall provide drafting assistance to the commission; and be it further

15 **Sec. 7. Report; recommendations. Resolved:** That the commission shall
16 submit a report containing its findings and recommendations pursuant to section 5,
17 including any necessary implementing legislation, to the joint standing committee of the
18 Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters by December 9, 2014. The joint
19 standing committee may submit a bill related to this report to the First Regular Session of
20 the 127th Legislature.

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

23 SUMMARY

24 This resolve is reported out by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and
25 Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Order 2013, S.P. 721. The resolve establishes the
26 Commission To Study College Affordability and College Completion. The commission
27 is directed to examine and make recommendations on the development of strategies to
28 keep the cost of public postsecondary education in the State affordable and to increase the
29 graduation rate of students enrolled in state-supported public institutions of higher
30 education.

31 The commission is required to submit a report by December 9, 2014 to the joint
32 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters. The
33 report submitted by the commission must include findings, recommendations and any
34 necessary implementing legislation to keep the cost of public postsecondary education in
35 the State affordable and to increase the graduation rate of students enrolled in state-
36 supported public institutions of higher education. The joint standing committee of the
37 Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs may submit a bill
38 related to this report to the First Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.