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EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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STATE OF MAINE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 132ND LEGISLATURE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 396, L.D. 628, “An Act Regarding Eligibility to Apply for a Department of Education Diploma”

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

'Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-A, as amended by PL 2023, c. 171, §1, is further amended to read:

1-A. Eligibility for students impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements in subsection 1, a student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because the student experienced a significant interruption to the student's education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency during the student's secondary school education history.

~~This subsection is repealed on September 1, 2026.~~

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §257-A, sub-§1-C is enacted to read:

1-C. Exception for disruption to student's education conditions. A student is eligible to apply for a Department of Education diploma if that student is at least a 4th year secondary school student and is unable to satisfy the requirements for a diploma from a school administrative unit because of a disruption to the student's education during the student's secondary school education history. A disruption to the student's education may include, but is not limited to, conditions described in section 5161, subsection 2-A.

Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §5161, sub-§2-A, as amended by PL 2021, c. 445, §3, is further amended to read:

2-A. Education disruption. "Education disruption" means disruption of the educational program of an elementary or secondary school student as a result of:

A. Homelessness or foster care placement or another housing disruption;

1 B. Absence for ~~10 or more consecutive school days due to placement in an interim~~
2 ~~program~~ more than 10% of the school days in a school year due to unforeseen
3 circumstances, including, but not limited to, placement in an interim program,
4 unplanned hospitalization or serious medical condition;

5 C. Enrollment in ~~3~~ 2 or more schools or educational programs ~~in a single school year~~
6 during the student's secondary school education; or

7 D. The student's being an immigrant student or a migrant student.

8 "Education disruption" does not include an absence for 10 or more consecutive school days
9 as a result of a planned absence for a reason such as a family event or a medical absence
10 for a planned hospitalization or recovery or pursuant to a superintendent's determination
11 developed in accordance with section 5205, subsection 2.'

12 Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section
13 number to read consecutively.

14 SUMMARY

15 This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, makes permanent the
16 ability for a student to be eligible for a Department of Education diploma due to a
17 significant interruption to the student's education at any point during the student's
18 educational history as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendment also changes
19 the definition of "education disruption" to include any housing disruption, absence for more
20 than 10% of school days in a school year due to unforeseen circumstances and enrollment
21 in 2 or more schools during the student's secondary school education.