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Date: (Filing No. H-)

VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
127TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 1099, L.D. 1611, Bill, “An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Strengthen and Align the Services Provided to Maine's Veterans by Establishing an Interagency Council To Coordinate Services for Homeless Veterans”

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.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

40 **Sec. 5. Development of initial strategic plan.** By February 15, 2017, the
41 Statewide Homeless Council, established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A,

1 chapter 202, subchapter 5-A, shall develop an initial strategic plan pursuant to Title 30-A,
 2 section 5048, subsection 9.

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

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

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

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

19 **Veterans Services 0110**

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

21	GENERAL FUND	2015-16	2016-17
22	POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	0.000	1.000
23	Personal Services	\$0	\$81,258
24	All Other	\$0	\$10,000
25		<hr/>	<hr/>
26	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$91,258

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SUMMARY

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

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