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Date: (Filing No. S-)

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**STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
130TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

SENATE AMENDMENT “ ” to COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “A” to S.P. 507, L.D. 1564, “An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Unemployment Compensation”

Amend the amendment on page 2 by inserting after the 2nd section 12 the following:

'Amend the bill in section 12 in subsection 6 in the 6th line (page 6, line 12 in L.D.) by striking out the following: "wholly or mainly" and inserting the following: ~~'wholly or mainly'~~ 'mainly'

Amend the amendment by striking out all of section 35 and inserting the following:

'Sec. 35. 26 MRSA c. 26-A, sub-c. 2 is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER 2

PEER WORKFORCE NAVIGATOR PILOT PROGRAM

§2065. Peer workforce navigator pilot program

1. Peer workforce navigator pilot program. No later than January 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Labor, referred to in this subchapter as "the commissioner," shall adopt a peer workforce navigator pilot program to support the Governor's Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan dated May 4, 2021. The Department of Labor, referred to in this subchapter as "the department," shall contract with qualified entities to operate the pilot program for a period of 2 years. The pilot program must:

A. Target underserved populations as described in subsection 2, paragraph A to expand opportunities for employment through reemployment services, education or training opportunities, apprenticeships and other models that result in skill development and family-supporting careers;

B. Assist individuals with meeting basic needs in order to help them persist in education and work;

C. Connect individuals with services and job training programs provided by career centers operated by the department or its workforce partners, including the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System;

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1 D. Conduct outreach and provide individual assistance and education to individuals
2 applying for and making ongoing claims for unemployment compensation benefits,
3 including partial unemployment benefits and assistance for dislocated or marginalized
4 workers; and

5 E. Identify systemic issues creating barriers to successful reemployment for
6 individuals seeking jobs, including improvements to the unemployment compensation
7 system in chapter 13 to reduce those barriers.

8 **2. Qualified entities.** To be eligible to receive a navigator contract under this section,
9 an entity must:

10 A. Demonstrate that it has existing peer relationships with underserved populations,
11 including immigrants, individuals with limited English proficiency, inexperienced and
12 untrained individuals, low-income and homeless individuals, individuals who have
13 been out of the workforce for an extended period, individuals with low literacy and
14 individuals with disabilities;

15 B. Have the capability to carry out the duties of this section, including knowledge of
16 eligibility requirements and application processes related to the unemployment
17 compensation system in chapter 13, reemployment services, education and training
18 services and other resources necessary to help underserved populations increase their
19 economic security;

20 C. Comply with existing confidentiality standards to ensure the privacy of all
21 information collected from individuals receiving navigator services; and

22 D. Provide services under this section without charge to the individuals receiving those
23 services.

24 **3. Commissioner's duties; award criteria; navigator services.** The commissioner
25 shall establish standards for the awarding of contracts to qualified entities in accordance
26 with this subsection.

27 A. The commissioner may award multiple contracts to perform one or more of the
28 navigator services described in this section.

29 B. To support the maintenance of relationships between qualified entities and
30 underserved populations and to ensure a high quality of service, the commissioner shall
31 award contracts to qualified entities for the duration of the pilot period as long as the
32 qualified entities satisfy performance standards set forth in the contracts.

33 C. The commissioner shall give priority for navigator contracts to qualified entities
34 that are a recognized source of support or advocacy for underserved populations as
35 described in subsection 2, paragraph A, such as racial and ethnic minorities, persons
36 with low literacy, persons with disabilities and others seeking to improve skills and
37 gain employment.

38 D. Navigator services provided by qualified entities that receive navigator contracts
39 must be coordinated with and supplement, not supplant, services provided by the
40 department.

41 All navigator services provided under this subsection must be performed in a manner that
42 is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the population served, including individuals
43 with limited English proficiency, persons with low literacy and persons with disabilities.

1 recognizing the varying levels of digital literacy and access to technology among
2 individuals in need of services.

3 **4. Funding.** The department shall seek available workforce development funds for
4 the pilot program under this section.'

5 Amend the amendment by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or
6 section number to read consecutively.

7 **SUMMARY**

8 This amendment changes the eligibility requirements for the supplemental benefit for
9 dependents under the Employment Security Law and changes the peer workforce navigator
10 pilot program.

11 **SPONSORED BY:** _____

12 (Senator VITELLI, E.)

13 **COUNTY: Sagadahoc**