

LD 393 amendment for sponsor, Rep. Meyer, to replace concept draft

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

Whereas, every child in the State deserves to grow up in a safe and stable environment to provide opportunities for success; and

Whereas, it is necessary to address the underlying issues that contribute to child abuse and neglect including poverty, substance use disorder, behavioral health issues; and

Whereas, funding for services must be provided immediately to keep children safe; and

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

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

\$2m in each year for behavioral health services for families in reunification activities

Initiative: \$1m in each year to provide additional services under the Homebuilders program in the Office of Child and Family Services.

Initiative: \$1m in each year to provide additional services under the Parents as Teachers program operated through the home visiting program in the Office of Child and Family Services.

Kinship navigators

Initiative: \$420,000 in each year to increase the contract for kinship navigators.

Supportive services

Sec. 1. Department of Health and Human Services to prioritize and ensure supportive services. The Department of Health and Human Services shall study the ability of the State to allow a parent of a minor child removed from the home but engaged in rehabilitation and reunification services to continue to receive services that the parent was eligible for prior to the child being removed from custody and to receive priority for services that are waitlisted and are critical to allowing families to transition out of the child protective system. As part of this study, the department shall examine the following:

1. The extent to which a parent may continue to receive services, including but not limited to, transportation, child care, housing assistance and home visiting services, at the same level as the parent was eligible prior to the child being removed from custody under relevant federal and state laws.
2. The extent to which families, both children and parents, can be prioritized for services that have waitlists, including but not limited to housing vouchers,

behavioral health services and substance use disorder treatment, that are necessary for allowing families to transition out of the child protective system.

The Department shall submit a report with its findings and recommendations, including any recommended legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters no later than February 1, 2023. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters is authorized to report out legislation to the 1st Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

Discretionary funds

Initiative: \$200,000 in each year to provide funding for temporary assistance to families through the Child Protective Services Contingency Fund.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §4066, 2-A [annual report on child welfare] is enacted to read:

2-A. Contingency fund expenditures. A summary of expenditures from the child protective services contingency fund established in section 4004, subsection 1, paragraph D, including annual spending, purposes for expenditures and ranges of expenditures for families.

Department coordinator for child welfare services

Initiative: Provides funding for one full time position in the Department of Health and Human Services, Commissioner's office to coordinate the organization of the child welfare system across state departments.

Sec. 3. Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Coordinator. The Child Welfare Coordinator within the Department of Health and Human Services shall coordinate the organization of the child welfare system within the department and across state departments. The Coordinator shall develop prevention strategies and action plans to address the effects of poverty and racial and geographic disparities on child welfare and engage with stakeholders including parents, kinship and resource families, and youth.

Recovery Fund Council

Sec. 4. The Recovery Fund Council to expand medication assisted treatment in rural areas and through Federally Qualified Health Clinics and expedite peer recovery center development. The Recovery Fund Council established pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement Regarding Use of Opioid Settlement Funds, signed January 26, 2022, between the State through the Office of the Attorney General and the Maine Subdivisions shall endeavor to expedite resources to expand medication assisted treatment in rural areas of the state and through Federally Qualified Health Clinics to ensure that families that are involved in the child protective system are able to access treatment. The Recovery Fund Council shall also endeavor to expedite the development of peer recovery centers in every county in the State.

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

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the concept draft. The amendment does the following:

1. It provides \$2m in each year for behavioral health services to families engaged in rehabilitation and reunification programs. It provides \$1m each year for the Homebuilders program and \$1m each year for the Parents as Teachers program operated through the home visiting program.
2. It provides \$420,000 a year to increase the contract the department has for kinship navigators.
3. It requires the department to study the ability of the State to allow a parent of a minor child removed from the home but engaged in rehabilitation and reunification services to continue to receive services that the parent was eligible for prior to the child being removed from custody and to receive priority for services that are waitlisted and are critical to allowing families to transition out of the child protective system department to continue to provide supportive services to parents who have had children removed from the home but remain engaged in rehabilitation and reunification programs. The department shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters no later than February 1, 2023.
4. It provides \$200,000 funding in each year to the child protective services contingency fund established in Title 22, section 4004, subsection 1, paragraph D. It requires the annual report that is currently required pursuant to Title 22, section 4066 to include a summary of expenditures from the contingency fund.
5. It establishes a Child Welfare Coordinator within the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate the organization of the child welfare system within the department and across state departments.
6. It requires the Recovery Fund Council established pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement Regarding Use of Opioid Settlement Funds, signed January 26, 2022, between the State through the Office of the Attorney General and the Maine Subdivisions shall endeavor to expedite resources to expand medication assisted treatment in rural areas of the state and through Federally Qualified Health Clinics to ensure that families that are involved in the child protective system are able to access treatment. The Recovery Fund Council shall also endeavor to expedite the development of peer recovery centers in every county in the State.