Disclaimer: These notes are not intended to represent direct quotes, things may not be in chronological order, and ideas may not always be accurately attributed. If you have corrections or comments, please let Scott know and he will edit accordingly.

**Augusta:** Melody Fitch (Family Violence Project), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Donna Kelley (KBH), Stephanie Primm (Knox County Homeless Coalition), Mike Mooney (New Beginnings), Arwen Agee (VA), Chet Barnes (DHHS), David Sovetsky ( Mid Maine Homeless Shelter), Vickie McCarthy (Consumer Council System of Maine)

**Portland:** Rob Parritt (City of Portland), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Ginny Dill (Shalom House), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Norm Maze (Shalom House), John Winnikka (Franie Peabody), Rachel Boyce (Preble Street), Wendy Dubois (The Opportunity Alliance), Rebecca Hobbs (Family Crisis Services), Dave MacLean (City of Portland),

**Bangor:** James Gagne (Prebel Street Veterans Services), Gail Garrow (OHI)

**On the Phone**: Dan Fleming (Shaw House), Alley Smith (Veterans, Inc.), Melissa McEntee (RGH), Emily Flinkstrom (Fair Tide), Jennifer Weatherbee (CHCS), Chris Roberts (HUD), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Kari Bradstreet (Hope and Justice Project), Jessica Wood (OCFS), Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Heidi Bradley (CHCS), Janice Laura Hewey (Catholic Charities), Gerald Botta (HOME, Inc.).

[If I missed anyone or misspelled your name, please let me know]

**Meeting: Maine CoC**

**Date: June 15, 2017, 1:00 to 3:00 PM**

**Location: Tandberg Teleconferencing Sites**

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Review of Minutes**: Minutes from May 18, 2017 were reviewed. On page 4, the motion regarding the use of S+C at Milbridge should have included that MCOC “would waive the priorities…”. This was part of the discussion and the motion but was not captured in the minutes. Approved as Amended.

**HMIS Costs**. When PCOC lost their HMIS grant a few years back, an arrangement was made with MaineHousing where the Portland providers would pay an annual user fee in order to cover their portion of the cost of maintaining and operating the system. Historically, MaineHousing would send PCOC a total number and they would divvy it up among the providers, but this year, with no “PCOC”, MaineHousing sent the ‘bills’ directly to each providers. MCOC has an HMIS grant and so providers do not pay these sorts of fees. How should we address this now that we are one CoC?

-We need to know what the total annual cost is for the whole state and then figure out how we want to cover that cost. The MCOC grant should still cover most of it.

-Many providers would not be able to cover an additional fee – it would be an undue burden.

-Shouldn’t the overall cost go down? Isn’t is easier, and less work, to have just one CoC, not two?

-**MOTION:** MCOC will request from the HMIS Lead a total cost budget for the next operating year. Seconded and **PASSED.**

**Use of Shelter Plus Care at Milbridge Harbor:** Cullen, who facilitated the discussion on this topic at last month’s meeting, began by apologizing to the group for allowing such a complicated issue to be rushed through a discussion and pushed to a vote at the very end of the meeting. He pointed out that most MCOC votes are unanimous and that we should strive to be united, especially on something this important. We need to ensure that everyone is fully informed before going to a vote and several people have since said they did not understand exactly what was being voted on.

**MOTION**: To allow MCOC to revisit the vote regarding the use of S+C at Milbridge Harbor. Seconded and **PASSED**.

-This is a complicated issue. It impacts a population we are all trying to serve and no one wants to see people become homeless – we can all agree on that point.

-The question we need to answer is: what is the best solution to this problem? There were 4 potential subsidy options brought up last month but some of those were simply dismissed and the discussion was all about S+C. BRAP, STEP and HCV need to be more thoroughly explored.

-BRAP is not a viable option in this situation. HUD covenants still apply and the project cannot charge tenants 51% of their income for rent.

-Letters were sent to MaineHousing to request that STEP or HCV be used. MaineHousing responded that there is currently no HCV available and federal restrictions would not allow it to be used in this situation. STEP would also not work in this situation because it is outside both the operational, and the Fed HOME guidelines of the program.

-Questions were submitted to the HUD AAQ desk by DHHS and by the CoC Board asking about the potential impact on the scoring of our next CoC Application if we do not follow our Prioritization process in this instance. The answer to both questions was the same – HUD cannot comment on questions that could directly impact CoC application scoring.

-That leaves S+C. Shalom House currently has a Sponsor Based S+C Grant that does not have the same sorts of restrictions that Project Based or Tenant Based S+C requires. For example, it can serve ‘at risk’ populations, like the folks at Milbridge now. They will need to request from HUD that they be allowed to transfer this grant to Milbridge, but HUD has said they would approve this.

-This grant currently provides 6 One Bedroom vouchers in York County. The Milbridge project is 5 SRO units in Washington County, so there is concern that Milbridge would not be able to fully utilize the available funding, unless people leave the project and take their voucher with them to a new unit, though HUD does not typically allow this with SB S+C.

-If we move the SB grant to Milbridge, we would need to provide 6 TB vouchers to the people currently in the Shalom project – which also waives our prioritization. Why not just put 5 TB vouchers at Milbridge, as voted on and approved last month? DHHS has stated that they intend to use TB vouchers, that tenants can take with them if they move, and that they will backfill vacant units with TB vouchers as they become available. This would seem to avoid many of the complications associated with using the SB vouchers there.

-MCOC needs to look at all the Pros and Cons involved – not just at what DHHS wants to do.

-DHHS is the grantee, they are responsible for all of the S+C grants, and they have received approval from HUD to use S+C at Milbridge as describe in their letter to HUD (Chet provided copies of the Department’s letter to HUD and HUD’s response).

-Cullen stated that we are a collective body trying to solve a problem and we all need to understand all of the benefits or detriments involved. As a newly merged CoC it is important that we come together and have a consensus on this – not have one agency just go off and do whatever they want regardless of the will of the group.

-Tom, from Milbridge Harbor, was not able to attend today as he is at a board meeting discussing the future of the project.

-MCOC currently has an Appeal filed with HUD that we have not received a response to that could potentially restore some of the funding MCOC lost in the 2016 application – if we win the appeal, some funding could be returned to Milbridge.

-If we are already seeking to amend the SB S+C grant to move it to Milbridge, why not include amendments to change the size and/or dollar amount to make it a better fit for Milbridge at the same time and remove all these other potential problems?

-Chet clarified that it is not an amendment – it is an “Assignment and Assumption”, meaning Shalom assigns the grant to Milbridge and Milbridge assumes the grant from Shalom. All this discussion about allowing tenants to leave with a voucher and have the units backfilled simply cannot be done with a Sponsor Based Grant.

-Ginny pointed out that if TB S+C is used, and people leave and take their vouchers, the CoC would still need to waive priorities because Milbridge does not serve the CoC priorities.

-There is a potential for funding to go unused if we put this Sponsor Based grant at Milbridge – that would impact the performance of the grant and potentially of the CoC. Using Tenant Based Vouchers does not have this same complicating issues – that Milbridge may not be physically able to utilize the funding, and that SB vouchers are not allowed to follow the Tenant if they move. If the CoC wants to use SB at Milbridge, DHHS will do that, but people need to understand the risks.

-But issuing Tenant Based S+C is historically done using a waitlist and on CoC Priorities – back filling empty units at Milbridge would not use the S+C Waitlist or the CoC Priorities. Could they?

-Both options – TB or SB – appear to have pros and cons. There is no one perfect solution for this. There will need to be adjustments and amendments either way we go.

-We have a Grantee with a proposal for how they want to use one of their grants to help another project, and HUD has told them they can do it. It is not up to one project to tell another project how to use their funding.

-They are only asking for 5 vouchers – Maine has over 900 S+C vouchers leased up under 18 separate grants. These 5 are not going to make or break our CoC score. S+C grants already fail to meet income and employment measures.

-But it is not going to be just 5 if they backfill every time someone leaves.

-Then that rules out SB because they cannot take the voucher with them – they are tied to the project, not to the tenant.

-But HUD said they could use SB.

-HUD also said they could use TB.

-Either way, how could this not be setting a precedent about using S+C as the fix if this sort of thing happens again to other projects?

-DHHS is not intending to set a precedent or a new policy with this, but they are not opposed to considering this in other situations on a case by case basis.

-Can there be SB vouchers attached to the units, but TB vouchers made available if a tenant moves?

-Chet suggested that the CoC could vote to provide a letter in support of the concept of using some form of S+C at Milbridge, and leave it to the Grantee (DHHS), their Administrative Agent (Shalom), and HUD to explore and work out all the details.

-Cullen asked if anyone was still leaning toward Tenant Based at this point or does everyone agree that it should be Sponsor Based?

-Donna said it should not be up the CoC to make that decision.

-Mike said that in spite of all the discussion and debate he still does not feel that he knows enough about the differences between TB and SB to make the call, and agreed with Chet’s suggestion to let them sort out the details.

-Cullen made a **MOTION** that MCOC send a letter to DHHS asking them to work with Shalom House to come up with a solution for using Shelter Plus Care Vouchers at Milbridge, looking at SB first and then TB. No second.

-Chet stated that this is not the motion we need. DHHS does not need approval from the CoC to talk to Shalom House. DHHS is requesting a letter from the CoC to HUD in support of using S+C vouchers at Milbridge Harbor.

-Ginny added that HUD has said they want the CoC to support waiving priorities in order to use SB S+C for this.

-Cullen made another **MOTION** that the COC write to HUD in Support of DHHS supporting the Assignment and Assumption of this Shelter Plus Care grant at Milbridge. Seconded.

-That would lock us into using the Shalom SB grant and takes TB off the table. For TB we would also need to waive our priorities.

-Cullen **withdrew** the previous motion and made another: **MOTION** that a letter from the CoC be sent to HUD supporting the assignment and assumption of a Sponsor Based Shelter Plus Care Grant from Shalom House to Milbridge Harbor. Seconded. No one opposed. **PASSED**.

-Vickey wanted add that it was extremely helpful to have received such a quick response from MaineHousing about STEP and HCV.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures:** The form has been updated to incorporate suggestions from the last CoC, Steering, and Consolidation committee meetings.

-**MOTION** to approve the M&E P&P document as presented. Seconded. **PASSED**.

-**MOTION** to table discussion of Priorities until we have more time. Seconded **PASSED**.

-PCOC and MCOC monitoring tools were similar, but not identical – how do we now monitor their performance – do we use two tools? Or apply criteria one set of projects was not expecting?

-The Consolidation Committee should look at this and make recommendations.

- **MOTION** that MCOC will accept the recommendations of the Consolidation Committee in regard to the Monitoring Tools. Seconded. **PASSED**.

**Chairs**: At the meeting last month it was agreed MCOC would keep all Chairs in place. After the meeting Melody and Ginny both submitted letters of resignation, and Jon is retiring this month, leaving just Vickey and Rob. Steering recommends the group seek nominations to get representation from Region 3.

-It seems like a good idea, to ensure balanced statewide representation, but what are the time frames for the staggered terms, and what about agencies that operate in more than one region?

-**MOTION** to open nominations for a Region 3 Chair to be voted on next month. Seconded and **PASSED**.

**State and Federal Updates:** (see attached Policy Committee notes for more details)

**Federal:** Senator King has voiced his opposition to the AHAC. Senator Collins has not yet stated her position. Everyone was encouraged to contact Senator Collin’s office to inform her of the devastating impact the Act could have on Maine citizens and encourage her to oppose it.

**State:** There are still disagreements regarding the budget and threats of a state government shut down. It seems likely a decision will be made on Saturday, though the Governor may veto it.

-Mary Mayhew has stepped down as DHHS Commissioner. The current Acting Commissioner is Ricker Hamilton and it seems likely he will be approved as the new Commissioner.

**Statewide Homeless Council:** (full minutes, once approved by SHC, will be posted at [www.mainehomelessplanning.org](http://www.mainehomelessplanning.org) )

-Jon Bradley is retiring. He was thanked for his many years of service, both on SHC and as a homeless service provider.

-More PHAs are stepping up and providing vouchers to homeless applicants.

-MaineHousing has proposed changes to the Homeless Rule to adjust funding. There will be a public hearing on the 20th and a 10 day comment period after that. Everyone is encouraged to attend and/or comment in support of the change.

-Section 8/HCV is still frozen.

-The RFP for Maine’s NHTF allocation has been issued.

-Revision of the Maine Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness is nearing completion.

-74 Homeless Veterans are currently on the new ‘By-Name’ list and it is working well.

**Long Term Stayers Update:** Portland has only 53 people remaining on their LTS list. Bangor is down to 5.

**Coordinated Entry:** The plan is to take the Region 3 outline and adapt it to Regions 1 & 2.

**PIT planning has begun –** Draft Methodology and Timeline documents were shared. The Resource Committee will work with the HMIS team to ensure everything lines up**.**

**All Committees** need to confirm or elect new Chairs, with a focus on getting Portland providers actively involved on all committees. MEHVAC has asked to be added to the MCOC Agenda.

**Other Business**: None.

**Next Meeting:** July 20th, 2017 from 1:00 to 4:00.

**Policy/Advocacy Update – 6/7/2017**

**Federal Legislation Update:**

**FY17 Appropriations – *No New Update* –** A final FY17 spending package has been enacted to fund the federal government through September. At more than $1.07 trillion, the final budget agreement upholds the bipartisan deal made in late 2015 to lift the spending caps required by Budget Control Act for defense and non-defense programs.

**HUD FY17 Appropriations – *No New Update*** – The FY17 spending bill funds most HUD programs at or above FY16 levels, but below the high-water marks provided in the draft versions. The only programs to see funding cuts compared to FY16 were the Public Housing Operating Fund ($4.4 billion in FY17 compared to $4.5 billion in FY16) and Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities ($146 million in FY17 compared to $151 million in FY16).

* **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance:**  The spending package provides $20.292 billion for tenant-based rental assistance, $18.355 billion of which is to renew previous contracts – it is estimated that this is enough to cover 97% of current contracts. The bill allocates $47 million for Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) which includes an additional investment of roughly 5,000 vouchers, $7 million of which is to serve Native American veterans. The bill also provides $10 million to support new Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers and $120 million for Section 811 mainstream vouchers.
* **Project-Based Rental Assistance:** The bill provides $10.816 billion to renew project-based rental assistance contracts for calendar year 2017, an increase of $186 million from the FY16 funding level.
* **Homeless Assistance Grants:** The bill increases funding for homeless assistance programs to $2.383 billion from $2.25 billion in FY16. The bill targets $43 million to address youth homelessness and waives the requirement that youth 24 years of age and under provide third-party documentation to receive housing and supportive services within the Continuums of Care. The bill extends the authorization for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which is set to expire this year, by one additional year.
* **HOME:** The bill would level-fund the HOME Investments Partnerships program (HOME) at $950 million.
* **CDBG:** The bill would level-fund the Community Development Block Grant program at $3 billion.
* **USICH:** The bill provides a one-year extension for the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

**President Trump’s proposed FY 18 budget (from CBPP & NLIHC) – *No New Update***: President Trump released his budget on 5/23. The $4.094 trillion FY 18 budget calls for cuts that hit Medicaid, food assistance and other anti-poverty programs. Over the next decade, the budget calls for slashing more than $800 billion from Medicaid, while cutting $192 billion from nutritional assistance, and $272 billion over all from welfare programs. The plan would cut by more than $72 billion the disability benefits. And, NDD programs, whose budgets are determined annually by Congress, would see funding cut by $57 billion, or 10.6%.

**The President’s FY 18 budget includes a $7.7 billion—or 7%—cut to HUD programs compared to FY17.** The proposed cuts could mean more than 250,000 people could lose their housing vouchers. It would also impose punitive measures that would jeopardize family stability.

**The budget proposal provides the HUD secretary with the authority to:**  Increase a tenant’s rent contributions from the current standard of 30% of their income to 35%; increase the minimum monthly rent for tenants to $50, beginning with a tenant’s first annual or interim authorization; prohibit tenants from receiving utility reimbursements used to cover the cost of heat and water; and not provide rent adjustments for properties receiving housing assistance. And, by 2019, the agency plans to present more comprehensive changes that include a “a path for work-able families to move toward self-sufficiency,” according to the proposal. The budget does not offer further details about how work requirements, which would require statutory change, would be introduced. Elsewhere in the budget, the administration requests that Congress grant it blanket authority to change statutory or regulatory requirements for HUD programs.

Specifically, the HUD budget:

* ***Eliminates:* CDBG, HOME, Choice Neighborhoods, the National Housing Trust Fund, and funding for USICH.**
* **Public housing:** Capital fund reduced from $1.942 billion in FY 17 to 628 million – a 68% cut. The operating fund would fall from $4.4 billion in FY 17 to $3.9 billion.
* **Housing Choice Vouchers:** Funded at $19.318 billion, a 5% cut compared to FY 17 funding. NLIHC (and other outlets) estimates this equates to more than 250,000 vouchers being lost.
* **Project-Based Section 8:** Funded at $10.351 billion, a cut of $465 million vs. FY 17 funding. This is not sufficient to cover existing contracts.
* **Homeless Assistance Grants:** Reduced from $2.383 billion in FY 17 to $2.25 billion.
* **HUD 811:** Cut by $25 million
* **Family Unification Program and HUD-VASH:** Funding zeroed out (except for $7 million for HUD-VASH targeting Native Americans).
* **HOPWA:** Funding reduced from $356 million in FY 17 to $330 million.
* **USDA Rural Housing** – Rental Housing: $60 million cut to Section 521 rural rental assistance; eliminates funding for the Multi-Family Preservation and Revitalization demonstration. RD: Elimination of the Section 504 Rural Housing Assistance Grants.

Other Agencies:

* The budget would also eliminate LIHEAP and Community Services Block Grants through DHHS.
* Cut Medicaid by nearly 25%, or $839 billion over a decade – on top of the $800 billion cut included in the House AHCA.

**Effect of the President’s FY 18 HUD budget cuts on Maine (per CBPP analysis - updated):**

| **State** | **Vouchers Cut** | **Public Housing Funding Cut** | **CDBG Funding Cut** | **HOME Funding Cut** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ME** | **-1,395** | **-$5,989,305** | **-$16,416,154** | **-$4,237,285** |

**National Housing Trust Fund – *No New Update*:**  Congress must ensure that all affordable housing programs—including the HTF—are fully funded. The HTF is the only federal program designed to build and preserve housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes. We must ensure that the program is protected – not eliminated.

**The Affordable Care Act (ACA):** The House Republican health plan, “The American Health Care Act,” unveiled on 3/6 and then pulled from the House floor before a vote could take place, was revamped for reconsideration in Congress. It has passed the House and has been sent to the Senate for consideration. According to CBPP, the newly released Meadows-MacArthur amendment does nothing to mitigate the American Health Care Act’s (AHCA) coverage losses of 24 million people, $839 billion in Medicaid cuts, or large increases in premiums and out-of-pocket costs for moderate-income and older individual-market consumers. It does, however, eliminate key Affordable Care Act (ACA) protections for people with pre-existing conditions. The Meadows-MacArthur amendment would largely restore pre-ACA rules for people with pre-existing conditions. Just like before the ACA, insurers could discriminate based on medical history, eliminate coverage for key health services, and impose annual and lifetime limits on benefits. The Senate is supposedly working on its own ACA repeal/replace which could be unveiled in the coming weeks. It has been alluded to that the Senate wishes for the process to go slower than it did in the House.

**S. 743: A Bill to Strengthen the United Stated Interagency Council on Homelessness *No New Update.*** Senators Collins and Reed introduced legislation on 3/28 to strengthen and eliminate the sunset for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). Referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

**Senate Democrats Unveil Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan, Affordable Housing Included *No New Update.*** Senate Democrats unveiled their infrastructure plan, a $1 trillion plan aiming to create over 15 million jobs, and addresses issues including broadband internet, downtown revitalization, water and sewer, schools, roads and bridges, and also includes investments for public and affordable housing.

**H.R. 161: Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act – *No New Update.*** Sponsored by Representative Hastings (Florida). This bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to provide supportive services in permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families, and for other purposes. Referred to the House Energy and Commerce committee.

**H.R. 948: The Common Sense Housing Investment Act, to help end homelessness and housing poverty through comprehensive tax reform. – Referred to House Ways and Means, Financial Services committee *No New Update.*** According to the NLIHC the [*Common Sense Housing Investment Act*](http://cqrcengage.com/nlihc/app/thru?ep=AAAAC2Flc0NpcGhlcjAxBuGrlqP3Tp_K3rEdOWjgZeJ_hryGlWg6W1-Ie7x-bYwgcrCzEvvjb3EyWJGKtkq4DRQja4hjOcWqz23UlCVubtpNTPbYa70emTvSF167-1pXOTkBF64RLMTUxap557_93WQOGSGjLVaPdtfEZaxL3FiKksM3qt8yiGwSRimIg3UbuvAzrzb7xo0bboFv55pXZbMPQ9mQpjGZJEkn-8nCj9CVpJTW5ZcspS596EsAZ6s&lp=0) calls for modest reforms to the mortgage interest deduction, a $70 billion tax write-off that largely benefits America's highest-income households, and reinvests the significant savings into providing affordable housing for people with the greatest needs. The bill would boost funding for the Housing Trust Fund, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, public housing, and rental assistance solutions-without adding any costs to the federal government.

**H.R. 6378: To amend the Public Health Service Act to revise the amount of minimum allotments under the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Program. *– No new update.*** Sponsor: Rep. Peter Welch [D-VT], co-sponsor Rep. Cramer, Kevin [R-ND].

**H.R. 4888: Ending Homelessness Act of 2016** **– *No New Update.***Introduced on 3/23 by House Financial Services Committee Ranking Member Maxine Waters (D-CA).

**S.993/H.R.1854, The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act – *No New Update.*** Introduced by Senators Franken (D-MN) - Cornyn (R-TX) and Representatives Collins (R-GA)-Scott (D-VA).

**State Legislation Update: New updates are underlined**

**-Governor LePage’s Biennial Budget - targets many areas of DHHS’ spending, with a stated goal of “stabilizing DHHS.”**

**Areas of interest include:**

* Eliminating eligibility of "able-bodied parents" with earnings over 40% of the Federal Poverty Level from Medicaid. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
* Eliminating eligibility of 19 & 20 year-olds from MaineCare. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed but with the recognition that the department needs to submit language to accompany this initiative.**
* Eliminating the General Assistance Program. (Part ZZZ). **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative (as well as the initiative that would eliminate the program for non-citizens, part HHHH); the minority voted of the Committee voted for both sets of initiatives as proposed.**
	+ **General Assistance Minority vote:** Six members of the HHS Committee voted to include additional changes to the General Assistance program. This minority initiative would do the following: (1) eliminate GA for an individual that has timed off of TANF until a period of 5 years has passed and (2) make an applicant for GA who voluntarily abandons or refuses to use an available resource without just cause ineligible for 120 days from the date of abandoning the resource.
* Reducing the maximum lifetime cap for TANF, from 60 to 36 months. (PART FFFF). **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative, as well as the initiative to eliminate coverage for individuals with drug felony convictions (Part EEEE) removing most good cause exemptions; the minority voted of the Committee voted for Part FFFF as proposed, but amended Part EEEE to allow an individual to qualify for TANF after a period of 10 years has passed since the completion of incarceration for a drug felony conviction.**
* Repealing the provision that requires DHHS to provide a food supplement program for non-citizens, who would otherwise be eligible for SNAP benefits but for their immigration status. (Part KKKK). **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
* Repealing the provision that requires DHHS to provide supplemental security income for non-citizens, who would otherwise be eligible for Supplemental Security Income but for their immigration status. (Part KKKK). **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
* Repealing the provision that requires DHHS to provide a financial assistance to non-citizens, who would otherwise be eligible for TANF benefits but for their immigration status. (Part KKKK). **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
* Full funding for the HOME Fund – Following a joint hearing with the Appropriations Committee, the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development (LCRED) Committee voted unanimously to support full funding for the HOME Fund in the coming biennium. If this proposal is ultimately adopted, it will likely lead to the Fund’s highest level of funding in decades.

**Bills of note:**

* **LD 136**, **An Act Regarding the Eviction Process**, sponsored by Sen. Scott Cyrway (R-Kennebec), would expand the causes for a 7-day notice of termination of tenancy listed in 14 MRSA §6002 to include the following three additional reasons:
	+ The tenant or the tenant's guest or invitee is the perpetrator of violence, a threat of violence or sexual assault against another tenant, a tenant's guest, the landlord or the landlord's employee or agent;
	+ The person occupying the premises is not an authorized occupant of the premises; or
	+ The tenant provided false information on the tenant's rental application.

**Signed into public law.**

* **LD 1620, An Act To Reform Welfare for Increased Security and Employment,** presented by Rep. Fredette (Governor’s bill). This bill makes a number of changes to the statutes relating to programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. **Divided report out of Committee.**

According to the bill summary:

* + The bill makes changes to the laws relating to electronic benefits transfer cards by allowing the department to place photographs on the cards and to restrict the number of replacement cards issued. It removes reference to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or AFDC, program in the laws relating to electronic benefits transfer cards.
	+ The bill requires reporting by the department on welfare fraud, electronic benefits transfer card transactions, provider contracts, grant funding, department out-of-state travel costs and spending in the MaineCare program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, the statewide food supplement program and municipal general assistance.
	+ The bill also requires the Attorney General to report information on welfare fraud cases.
	+ The bill provides for annual eligibility evaluations under the MaineCare program.
	+ The bill allows the department to withhold municipal reimbursement for general assistance if a municipality is found to have committed a violation that includes improper expenditures.
	+ The bill changes the statewide food supplement program eligibility requirements as they relate to felony drug offenders, certain felons convicted of violent crimes and sexual assault, noncooperation with child support collection and certain lottery and gambling winners.
	+ The bill ensures the asset test for the statewide food supplement program eligibility remains in effect and is not waived. It also ensures the federal work requirement and time limit provisions for able-bodied adults without dependents are in effect and not waived.
	+ The bill limits eligibility for the federally funded food supplement program to citizens and individuals with qualified noncitizen status as determined by the United States Department of Agriculture.
	+ Under current law, the lifetime limit on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families assistance is 60 months. This bill reduces that limit to 36 months, absent hardship.
	+ The bill repeals the laws governing the food stamp standard utility allowance.
	+ The bill makes individuals convicted of the crimes of theft or fraud in connection to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, the statewide food supplement program or child care subsidies ineligible to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families assistance.
	+ Finally, the bill requires education programs paid for through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to be for occupations that have at least an average job outlook as determined by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**GA BILLS**

* **LD 36**, **An Act To Create a 9-month Time Limit on General Assistance Benefits for Certain Persons**, sponsored by Sen. Brakey, **Voted ought not to pass out of Committee – bill is dead.**
* **LD 10 "An Act To Build Greater Accountability into the General Assistance Program by Increasing the Penalty for Falsely Representing Information on an Application for General Assistance."** Sponsored by Representative Picchiotti. **The House voted on 6/7 to accept the Majority Ought Not to Pass report.**
* **LD 219 "An Act To Prioritize Use of Available Resources in General Assistance Programs."** Sponsored by Senator Brakey. ***Senate moved to accept the minority report Ought to Pass as Amended. Senate passed to be engrossed in a vote of 29-3 (3 excused); the House voted on 6/7 to accept the majority Ought Not to Pass report in non-concurrence with the Senate. Sent for concurrence.***
* **LD 220 "An Act To Align Time Limits in the Municipal General Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program."** Sponsored by Senator Brakey. ***Senate moved to accept the minority report Ought to Pass as Amended; the House voted on 6/7 to accept the majority Ought Not to Pass report in non-concurrence with the Senate. Sent for concurrence.***
* **LD 221 "An Act To Amend the Laws Regarding the Municipality of Responsibility for General Assistance Applicants Released from a State Correctional Facility or County Jail Facility."** Sponsored by Senator Gratwick. **P*assed to be enacted on 5/24.***
* **LD 1109 "An Act To Improve General Assistance Reimbursements."** Sponsored by Senator Chipman. **Divided report out of Committee.**

**TANF BILLS**

* **LD 33**, **An Act To Adjust the Lifetime Limit for the Receipt of TANF Benefits**, sponsored by Sen. Eric Brakey (R-Androscoggin), would change the lifetime limit on receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits from 60 months to 36 months. **Voted Ought Not to Pass – bill is dead.**
* **LD 477 An Act To Prevent Long-term Welfare Dependency,** sponsored by Rep. Deborah Sanderson**.** **Committee voted Ought Not to Pass – bill is dead.**
* **LD 1017 An Act To Strengthen Work Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program,** sponsored by Rep. Deborah Sanderson**. Committee voted Ought Not to Pass; bill is dead.**
* **LD 1052 An Act To Allow Drug Testing Prior to Providing Welfare Benefits,** sponsored by Rep. Jeffery Hanley– would allow DHHS to require an applicant for TANF benefits to complete a written screening tool to determine the applicant's likelihood of current illegal drug or controlled substance use. Based on the results of the screening tool or interactions with a TANF applicant or recipient, the department may require the applicant or recipient to submit to a drug test as a condition of receiving benefits if the department has a reasonable suspicion that the applicant or recipient is using an illegal drug or controlled substance. **Committee voted Ought Not to Pass – bill is dead.**
* **LD 1075 An Act To Eliminate Drug Use among Welfare Recipients,** sponsored by Rep. Karleton Ward. **Committee voted Ought Not to Pass – bill is dead.**
* **LD 336 An Act To Amend the Requirements of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program** sponsored by Rep. Dale Denno–Increases special housing allowance and removes some barriers for 2-parent families. **On 6/7 the House unanimously voted Passed to be Engrosses as Amended. Goes to the Senate for consideration.**
* **LD 481 An Act To Promote Workforce Participation,** sponsored by Rep. Harold Stewart– Summary: This bill increases the amount of income earned by recipients of benefits under the TANF program that is disregarded in determining the amount of benefits they receive. The amount of the disregard is lowered over time as recipients make the transition to stable employment. – in effect helps to eliminate to “TANF-cliff” for people attempting to work so they don’t immediately lose benefits upon receiving earned income. **On 6/7 the House voted Passed to be Engrosses as Amended. Goes to the Senate for consideration.**
* **LD 1302 An Act To Increase Workforce Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and Other Assistance Programs,** sponsored by Rep. Colleen Madigan– Summary: This bill requires DHHS to administer a program to provide financial assistance to families receiving TANF benefits or statewide food supplement program benefits for motor vehicle repairs, registration, and inspection when the motor vehicle is needed for employment purposes. Under the bill, the program must be supported with federal block grant funding under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. **On 6/7 the House voted Passed to be Engrosses as Amended. Goes to the Senate for consideration.**
* **LD 1408 An Act To Establish an Independent Citizens Oversight Committee on Maine's Welfare Programs,** sponsored by Senator Nathan Libby– Summary: Requires DHHS to collect data related to performance measures of the TANF program. Also, requires the Department to set benchmarks to measure improvement and the success of the TANF program. Establishes the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee to monitor DHHS programs with respect to meeting benchmarks. **Divided report out of Committee. Listed as unfinished business in the Senate.**

**Other Bills:**

* **LD 970, An Act To End Homelessness by Expanding Housing Support Services**, sponsored by Rep. Erik Jorgensen (D-Portland), would establish the Housing First Assistance Program at MaineHousing. **Passed as amended in the House, Senate placed it on the Special Appropriations Table pending Enactment. The amendment, which was the majority report of the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee, reduces the funding provided for the Housing First Assistance Program from $675,000 to $300,000 per fiscal year.**
* **LD 832, An Act To Carry Out the Will of the People of the State of Maine by Ensuring the Issuance of Bonds To Support the Independence of Maine's Seniors (EMERGENCY)**, sponsored by Sen. Roger Katz (R-Kennebec), a bill similar to his LD 382, calls for the $15M in senior housing bonds approved by the voters in November 2015 to be issued. The bill would remove the requirement that the State Treasurer issue the bonds at the discretion of the Governor. There are conditions under which the bonds would not be issued, e.g., if issuance would adversely impact the State’s credit. **Passed to be enacted (as amended) on 5/24. Vetoed by the Governor on 6/2. The Senate voted 26-9 to override the veto on 6/7. The House is anticipated to vote on 6/8.**
* **LD 1560, An Act Regarding Veteran Homelessness,** sponsored by Rep. Harold Stewart. This bill proposes to address Veteran homelessness in this State in a comprehensive and collaborative manner by implementing strategies recommended in the "Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Veteran Homelessness" prepared by the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services. **Committee voted ought not to pass on 5/25 – the bill is dead.**

**Other items of interest:**

* **DHHS 1115 Waiver Application – No new update** – Among the reforms the waiver application requests are changes for “able-bodied” adults:  Work requirements, monthly premiums, eliminating presumptive eligibility for hospitals, co-pays, charges for missed appointments, “non-emergency” ER visits (where the person is not admitted) results in a copay, asset tests and limitations, eliminating retroactive eligibility. **DHHS hosted two public hearings and had a 30-day public comment period, which ended on May 25, 2017.**