

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **CONCEPT DRAFT**

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

5 This bill would implement a comprehensive strategy to keep the cost of public
6 postsecondary education in the State affordable, thereby increasing the graduation rate
7 from state public institutions of higher education. The comprehensive strategy may
8 include, but is not limited to:

9 1. Adoption of Oregon's "Pay Forward, Pay Back" pilot project's model of funding
10 public postsecondary education, under which a student enrolled in a public institution of
11 higher education, in lieu of paying tuition or fees, contracts to pay to the State a certain
12 percentage of the student's annual income upon graduation for a specified number of
13 years;

14 2. Scholarships to provide incentives for degree completion with agreements to
15 remain in the State after graduation for specified periods. Under this program, a full
16 scholarship for the 4th and final year of school at a public institution of higher education
17 will be provided to students who agree to work in the State for a certain period of time
18 following graduation;

19 3. Tuition guarantees that ensure that students will pay the same tuition for 4 years
20 while attending one of the State's public institutions of higher education;

21 4. Low interest rates for student loans issued by the State for students meeting
22 certain criteria, such as financial need, academic merit, graduating within 4 years or
23 agreeing to work in public service for a certain period after graduation;

24 5. Adoption of performance-based higher education funding that links the level of
25 funding of a state public institution of higher education to a metric such as the graduation
26 rate of that state public institution of higher education;

27 6. Transition from the provision of tax credits for higher education to the provision of
28 state grants and other forms of financial aid for higher education;

29 7. Increased funding to the State of Maine Grant Program;

30 8. Facilitation of expedient graduation through establishment of dual enrollment
31 programs and so-called 3 plus 1 programs, in which students attend community colleges
32 for 3 years and transfer for the final year to a 4-year program at another of the State's
33 public institutions of higher education; and

34 9. Expansion of online learning opportunities, including the use of online course
35 providers to develop online courses.