

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE  
SENATE  
109TH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

(Filing No. S-420)

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT" A " to S.P. 655, L.D. 1694, Bill,  
"AN ACT Relating to the Provision of Telephone Equipment  
by Telephone Companies to the Hearing Impaired and their  
Families."

Amend the bill by striking everything after the en-  
acting clause and inserting in its place the following:

'35 MRSA §2361 is enacted to read:

§2361. Telecommunication services for the Hearing Impaired

1. Toll call rates. The commission shall establish a rate for toll calls to and from deaf and hearing impaired persons who must rely on teletypewriters for telephone communications which rate takes into account the greater amount of time required for deaf persons to conduct a telephone conversation using such devices.

2. Moneys for telecommunication typewriters. The Bureau of Rehabilitation within the Department of Human Services, pursuant to any appropriation of moneys to the bureau for telecommunication typewriters for the hearing impaired, shall, upon request, provide up to 50% of the cost of telecommunication typewriters to any organization or municipality that makes available the remaining funds for this equipment in a manner satisfactory to the Director of the Bureau of Rehabilitation.'

Statement of Fact

This amendment requires the Public Utilities Commission to establish rates for toll calls to or from deaf and hearing impaired persons who must use teletypewriter equipment. Deaf people require over 5 times as long to conduct a telephone conversation using teletypewriter equipment that is required to speak the same conversation, with the result that they must pay 5 times as much for their toll calls. The impact to telephone company revenues of such a discount would be insignificant.

In addition, this amendment provides for a matching program to fund the cost of providing telecommunication typewriters to the hearing impaired. In the event that moneys are appropriated to the Department of Human Services to purchase this equipment, municipalities and organizations may fund 50% of the cost and receive state funds for 50% of the total cost to provide telecommunication typewriter equipment to the hearing impaired.

Reported by the Committee on Public Utilities.

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