

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 927

H.P. 592

House of Representatives, March 11, 2025

An Act to Require Chaplains in School Administrative Units

Received by the Clerk of the House on March 5, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative PAUL of Winterport.
Cosponsored by Senator HAGGAN of Penobscot and
Representatives: EDER of Waterboro, FLYNN of Albion, FOSTER of Dexter, WHITE of
Guilford, Senators: CYRWAY of Kennebec, HARRINGTON of York, MARTIN of Oxford.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1056** is enacted to read:

3 **§1056. School chaplains**

4 **1. School chaplains.** A school administrative unit shall employ or accept as a
5 volunteer one or more chaplains to provide support, services and programs as assigned by
6 the school board of that school administrative unit for students, staff and parents of students
7 of the school administrative unit.

8 **2. Qualifications.** A school chaplain under this section:

9 A. Must be certified, licensed or ordained by a faith organization recognized by the
10 United States Department of Defense;

11 B. Must consent to be fingerprinted and submit to a criminal background check under
12 Title 22, chapter 1691;

13 C. May not be registered as a sex offender under Title 34-A, chapter 15 or 17 or a
14 comparable registry in another jurisdiction; and

15 D. Is not required to be certified under chapter 501 or 502.

16 **3. Limitation of liability.** Except for an act or statement maliciously, willfully and
17 deliberately intended to cause harm or intimidate a person seeking support, services or
18 programs under subsection 1, a cause of action may not be maintained against a school
19 chaplain for any act taken or statement made in providing support, services or programs
20 under this section.

21 **SUMMARY**

22 This bill requires school administrative units to employ or accept as volunteers at least
23 one chaplain to provide support, services or programs to students, staff or parents of
24 students of the school administrative unit. A school chaplain must be certified, licensed or
25 ordained by a faith organization recognized by the United States Department of Defense
26 but is not required to be certified by the Department of Education. A school chaplain must
27 undergo fingerprinting and a criminal background check and may not be listed on a sex
28 offender registry in this State or another jurisdiction. A school chaplain is immune from
29 civil liability for acts and statements made as a school chaplain except for malicious, willful
30 and deliberate acts or statements intended to cause harm or intimidate.