

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
JANUARY 7, 2026 to APRIL 29, 2026

THE GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE FOR
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
NONEMERGENCY LAWS IS
JULY 29, 2026

PUBLISHED BY THE REVISOR OF STATUTES
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MAINE REVISED STATUTES,
TITLE 3, SECTION 163-A, SUBSECTION 4.

Augusta, Maine
2026

The fee for inactive status licensure is set under section 7056. The holder of an inactive status license is required to renew the license annually and pay the renewal fee as set under section 7056, but is not required to meet the continuing education requirement of this chapter and the rules adopted under it.

~~In addition to the other requirements of this section, a licensed social worker must:~~

~~1. **Not employee of Department of Health and Human Services.** If not employed by the Department of Health and Human Services, provide documentation of 96 hours of consultation as determined by the board during the first 3,200 hours of social work employment in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years. For purposes of fulfilling the requirement of 96 hours of consultation during the first 3,200 hours of social work employment, a licensed social worker who practiced social work and obtained social work consultation hours in a long-term care setting and who held a valid license as of September 13, 2003 may count consultation hours that were obtained prior to August 3, 2004, whether the consultation hours were obtained in individual or group settings, if the consultation was provided by a licensed social worker, regardless of the group size and the eligibility requirements of the consulting licensed social worker; or~~

~~2. **Employee of Department of Health and Human Services.** If employed by the Department of Health and Human Services, provide documentation of either:~~

~~A. A minimum of 96 hours of consultation with a licensed social worker who has been licensed for at least 4 years or a licensed master social worker. This consultation must be concurrent with the first 3,200 hours of social work employment occurring in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years; or~~

~~B. A minimum of 96 hours of consultation concurrent with the person's first 3,200 hours of social work employment occurring in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years with a licensed social worker who has been licensed for at least 2 years, has been designated by the department as a supervisor trainee and is concurrently receiving 48 hours of consultation with a licensed master social worker.~~

A person who submits an application for license renewal more than 2 years from the date of expiration of the license is subject to all requirements governing new applicants under this chapter, except that the board may in its discretion, giving due consideration to the protection of the public, waive examination, consider consultation and work experience obtained under this chapter and require evidence of completing continuing professional education.

Sec. 14. Continued review of licensing for social work profession. The Director of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation within the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, after consultation with the State Board of Social Worker Licensure and stakeholders, shall continue review of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 32, chapter 83 and any laws associated with the provisions of that chapter that began before the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature to recommend changes to update the licensure provisions for the social work profession, including changes to the educational and examination requirements for initial licensure and to the consultation requirements, and to recommend alternative pathways for licensure. The director shall review and identify best practices from similar efforts in other states. The director shall report any recommendations from the review conducted under this section to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health coverage, insurance and financial services matters on or before February 15, 2027. The joint standing committee may report out a bill to the 133rd Legislature in 2027 based on the review.

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

Effective March 23, 2026.

CHAPTER 585

H.P. 1402 - L.D. 2087

An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Licensure of American Sign Language Interpreters

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

Whereas, this legislation implements certain recommendations from the Transforming Interpreting Maine needs assessment report issued by the Department of Health and Human Services following the October 2023 Lewiston shooting; and

Whereas, this legislation would provide more opportunities for persons in need of American Sign Language interpreting to access these services, especially during an emergency; and

Whereas, immediate enactment of this legislation is necessary to expand access to American Sign Language interpreting in this State; 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:

Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §1524-C, first ¶, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 284, §12, is amended to read:

No more than one conditional license may be issued to a person who has completed the education requirements of this chapter. A conditional license may be held no more than 4 5 years, except that a ~~5th~~ 6th year may be granted by the director upon demonstration of extreme hardship.

Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §1524-C, sub-§3, ¶A, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 48, §5, is amended by amending subparagraph (1) to read:

(1) An associate degree or higher in any field, including an associate degree or higher in American Sign Language, American Sign Language interpreting or deaf studies, from an accredited college or university; or

Sec. 3. 32 MRSA §1525-A, sub-§3 is enacted to read:

3. Emergencies. This chapter does not apply to a person providing communication assistance during an emergency. For purposes of this subsection, "emergency" means a determination by the director, after consultation with the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation, that a serious, unexpected and potentially dangerous situation is occurring, or did occur, that requires an immediate need for interpreting services to be provided as part of an emergency response.

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

Effective March 23, 2026.

CHAPTER 586

H.P. 1423 - L.D. 2108

An Act to Establish the Suicide Mortality Review Panel

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

Whereas, Maine has one of the highest suicide rates in New England, with a suicide rate consistently above the national average; and

Whereas, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for Maine residents who are 10 to 24 years of age,

highlighting an urgent need to identify targeted prevention efforts for youth and young adults; and

Whereas, Maine recently completed a comprehensive, cross-sector planning process, jointly funded by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, to plan for the implementation of a panel designed to conduct thorough and thoughtful retrospective case reviews of individuals who died by suicide in an effort to identify policy and systems gaps that, if addressed, could reduce the incidence of death by suicide in Maine; and

Whereas, Maine has several retrospective mortality review panels, but none focused specifically on deaths by suicide, and establishing such a panel as soon as possible is essential to strengthening the State's suicide prevention efforts by providing a deeper understanding of the factors leading to these deaths; 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:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §266 is enacted to read:

§266. Suicide Mortality Review Panel

1. Panel established. The Suicide Mortality Review Panel is established to review deaths by suicide.

2. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Director" means the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

B. "Next of kin" means a living relative of a deceased individual, as determined in accordance with the order of priority established under applicable state law for purposes of inheritance or notification. "Next of kin" includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) A surviving spouse or domestic partner;
- (2) An adult child;
- (3) A parent; and
- (4) An adult sibling.

"Next of kin" may also include a legal guardian or any other individual identified as a primary contact person or personal representative of the deceased individual.

C. "Panel" means the Suicide Mortality Review Panel established in subsection 1.