

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 354

H. P. 282

House of Representatives, January 24, 1973

Referred to the Committee on Election Laws. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

E. LOUISE LINCOLN, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Snowe of Auburn.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-THREE

AN ACT Relating to Accessible Polling Places for Persons with Physical Limitations.

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

Sec. 1. R. S., T. 21, § 604, additional. Title 21 of the Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new section 604, to read as follows:

§ 604. Definitions

As used in this section and section 605, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

1. Local authority. "Local authority" means the local authority having jurisdiction over the selection of polling sites for voter elections;

2. Physical limitations. "Physical limitations" means limitations resulting from sight disabilities, hearing disabilities, disabilities of incoordination, disabilities resulting from the normal aging process and any other disability that significantly reduces mobility, flexibility, coordination or perceptiveness.

Sec. 2. R. S., T. 21, § 605, additional. Title 21 of the Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new section 605, to read as follows:

§ 605. Polling places

The local authority shall designate as polling places only those buildings which are accessible to all eligible voters, including those with physical limitations. Existing polling places may be modified by employing a portable ramp with a slope of gradient not exceeding one inch of rise for each 12 inches of length; or 8.33%; or 4°, 50' to bypass steps or any abrupt change

in surface levels, including any curb existing between parking accommodations and the polling place.

When modifications of any existing polling site is impractical, the local authority shall designate an alternate, practical site for voters with physical limitations.

STATEMENT OF FACT

State and Federal laws now require that buildings financed by public moneys be made accessible to persons with physical limitations. However, not all polling places are located in public buildings constructed under the requirements of these recent laws. As a result, narrow doorways, flights of stairs, revolving doors and other architectural barriers must be challenged every time a handicapped or elderly person goes to vote.