

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1621

S. P. 514

In Senate, March 28, 1973

Referred to the Committee on Judiciary. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

HARRY N. STARBRANCH, Secretary

Presented by Senator Katz of Kennebec.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-THREE

AN ACT Relating to Sudden Infant Death.

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

Sec. 1. R. S., T. 22, § 3026, amended. Section 3026 of Title 22 of the Revised Statutes, as enacted by section 2 of chapter 534 of the public laws of 1967, is amended by adding a new paragraph to read as follows:

Whenever any child who has not attained his or her 3rd birthday shall die without medical attendance, the medical examiner who examines the body shall make special written report of the death to the Chief Medical Examiner of the State within 72 hours of the time of death and shall include in the report the circumstances surrounding the death, the gross findings at autopsy, or the reasons why an autopsy was not performed, the cause of death as listed on the death certificate, and any other information the Chief Medical Examiner may specify. The report shall be submitted on a form and in a format specified by the Chief Medical Examiner. The Chief Medical Examiner may specify that such reports be directed to the Director of Health, Department of Health and Welfare.

Sec. 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner the sum of \$20,000 from the General Fund to defray the costs of autopsies required to fulfill the intent of this Act and other costs. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1973-74	1974-75
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER		
All Other	\$10,000	\$10,000

STATEMENT OF FACT

"Sudden Infant Death Syndrome" is the most common cause of death among children between the ages of two weeks and one year and accounts for the death of approximately 60 perfectly healthy and potentially productive children in Maine every year. Medical research has identified many facts about the cause and effects of this problem which is not presently preventable. The greatest impact of this problem is the emotional problems it creates for the surviving parents. Compassionate counseling of parents has been shown to prevent many emotional problems. This legislation would serve to: (1) Further medical knowledge about the problem by creating a reporting mechanism and (2) Allow for rapid identification of parents in need of counsel.