

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 327

H. P. 273

House of Representatives, January 23, 1975

Referred to the Committee on Human Resources. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. Pert, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Henderson of Bangor.

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STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-FIVE

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**AN ACT to Protect Families with Children and Recipients of Certain  
Benefits Against Discrimination in Rental Housing.**

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

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA, § 4582, as last amended by PL 1973, c. 705, § 8, is further amended by adding 2 new paragraphs at the end to read:

For any person to refuse to rent residential property to families having children, or single parent families, or to restrict the rental of a residential unit to a number of related persons less than can comfortably and safely occupy such unit because of the status of such families or persons as having children or being a single parent family;

For any person furnishing rental premises to refuse to rent or impose different terms of tenancy to any individual who is a recipient of federal, state or local public assistance, including medical assistance and housing subsidies because of such individual's status as such a recipient.

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA, § 4583, as last amended by PL 1973, c. 705, § 9, is further amended to read:

§ 4583. Application

Nothing in this Act shall be construed in any manner to prohibit or limit the exercise of the privilege of every person and the agent of any person having the right to sell, rent, lease or manage a housing accommodation to set up and enforce specifications in the selling, renting, leasing or letting thereof or in the furnishings of facilities or services in connection therewith which are not based on the race, color, sex, physical handicap, religion or country

of ancestral origin, **family size or composition, or the receipt of public assistance payments** of any prospective or actual purchaser, lessee, tenant or occupant thereof. Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed in any manner to prohibit or limit the exercise of the privilege of every person and the agent of any person making loans for or offering financial assistance in the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, repair or maintenance of housing accommodations, to set standards and preferences, terms, conditions, limitations or specifications for the granting of such loans or financial assistance which are not based on the race, color, sex, physical handicap, religion or country of origin, **family size or composition, or the receipt of public assistance payments** of the applicant for such loan or financial assistance or, of any existing or prospective owner, lessee, tenant or occupant of such housing accommodation.

#### STATEMENT OF FACT

One of the largest housing problems in the State of Maine relates to discrimination by potential landlords against families receiving public assistance. The problem manifests itself in the form of the refusal of landlords to rent to such families. Such refusals to rent are discriminatory because they are made not with reference to the tenant's personal responsibility and integrity; but only on the general misapprehension that a family on public assistance is automatically an undesirable tenant. The purpose of this bill is to enable those citizens of Maine most in need of housing to have a fair and equal chance at obtaining it.