

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 438

S. P. 133

In Senate, January 30, 1975

Referred to Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

HARRY N. STARBRANCH, Secretary

Presented by Senator Curtis of Penobscot.

Cosponsor: Senator Marcotte of York.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-FIVE

**AN ACT to Provide Funds to Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc.,
for Continued Legal Representation for those in Need.**

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

Appropriation. There is appropriated to Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc., from the General Fund the sum of \$185,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1976, to carry out the purposes of the corporation in providing legal representation of persons unable to afford such representation.

STATEMENT OF FACT

Pine Tree Legal Assistance has been in existence for 7 years. During that time over 35,000 poor and low income citizens of Maine have received legal help for their problems. Over the last 5 years Pine Tree has had to operate with no increase in the funds it receives from the Federal Government. This has resulted in the closing of 2 offices, Lewiston and Skowhegan, because of inflationary pressures which could not be met. In addition, staffs in both the Portland and Bangor offices have been reduced.

The result of these cutbacks is that over 1,000 poor and low income people in each of the last 2 years have not received the help they need. The number of cases Pine Tree can handle each year has dropped from over 5,000 to less than 4,000.

There are no foreseeable increases in federal funds until 1976-77 and even then it is uncertain if appropriations will be increased. Because of this,

Pine Tree is turning to the State of Maine for help in restoring the level of service to its previous high. Pine Tree is requesting \$185,000, which would enable it to reopen 2 offices fully staffed and to return the staffs in Portland and Bangor to the prior levels. These funds will be used in their entirety for staff and office service to individuals in need of legal assistance, but unable to afford an attorney.