

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1713

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H. P. 1417

House of Representatives, April 7, 1975

On Motion of Mr. Cooney of Sabattus, referred to Committee on State Government. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mrs. Saunders of Bethel.

Cosponsors: Mr. Rolde of York, Mr. McKernan 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 Creating the State of Maine Commission on the Status of Women.

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

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA c. 19 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 19

STATE OF MAINE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

§ 401. Membership

The State of Maine Commission on the Status of Women shall be composed of 17 members, 7 to be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, 5 to be appointed by the President of the Senate and 5 to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

In making appointments to the commission, the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall consider citizens who have a knowledge of problems facing Maine women and who are currently providing leadership in programs intended to improve the status of women on state and local levels. The membership shall be chosen from throughout the State and shall include representatives of minority, low income, youth, elderly and other groups in our State with special needs and concerns relating to the status of women.

Members shall be appointed for 2-year terms, except of those members first appointed, 4 appointed by the Governor, 3 appointed by the President of the Senate and 3 appointed by the Speaker of the House shall be appointed for 2-year terms, and the remainder shall be appointed for one year terms. The

term of office of each member shall be designated at the time of appointment. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which his or her predecessor was appointed shall serve only for the remainder of that term.

Members may serve after the expiration of their terms until their successors have been appointed, qualified and taken office. The Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House may terminate the membership of their respective appointees for good and just cause, and the reason for the termination shall be communicated in writing to each member so terminated. The appointment of any member of the commission shall be terminated if the member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings without communicating good and just cause to the chairperson.

Any vacancy on the commission shall not affect its powers and shall be filled in the same manner by which the original appointment was made.

#### § 402. Meetings

Each year the first meeting of the commission shall be held in Augusta on the 2nd Tuesday in July and members of the commission shall be notified of that meeting by the Office of the Secretary of State. A chairperson and a vice-chairperson shall be elected from among the members of the commission at that meeting and shall serve for one year.

Subsequent meetings of the commission shall be held at the call of the chairperson and not fewer than 3 times a year.

Members shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for necessary expenses incurred in the work of the commission at the same rate as state employees.

#### § 403. Staff, consultants and contracts

The commission is authorized to employ staff and consultants. The commission is authorized to make contracts.

#### § 404. Subcommittees

The chairperson is authorized to appoint subcommittees.

#### § 405. Powers and duties

The commission shall have the powers and duties to advise, consult and assist the Governor and the Legislature in improving the status of Maine women by:

- A. Carrying out whatever research and programs are necessary to determine the status of Maine women;
- B. Promoting and coordinating activities designed to meet the problems of women on state and community levels;
- C. Serving as an advocate for Maine women by making recommendations on proposed budgetary, legislative and policy actions to the Governor,

Legislature and to other officials of national and State Government with respect to state and federal policies, programs and other activities affecting or relating to the women of Maine;

D. Informing the public so as to develop a better understanding of the current status of Maine women;

E. Conducting public hearings, conferences, workshops and other such meetings to obtain information about, discuss and publicize the needs of and solutions to problems of women;

F. Making an annual report to the Governor and Legislature concerning the work and interest of the commission.

§ 406. Expiration

This Act shall expire June 30, 1980.

Sec. 2. **Appropriation.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State of Maine Commission on the Status of Women the sum of \$9,730 to carry out the purposes of this Act during 1975-77. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1975-76	1976-77
STATE OF MAINE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN		
All Other	\$4,630	\$5,100

STATEMENT OF FACT

In 1963, in response to a growing recognition of discriminatory practices against American women, President John F. Kennedy urged all states to form advisory councils on the status of women. Maine became the first north-eastern state to form such a council, doing so in 1964. Forty-nine councils exist nationwide. This bill clarifies the duties, powers and operation of the State of Maine Commission on the Status of Women.

The funding requested pays primarily for travel expenses for commission members to attend meetings, stationery, postage, printing, publications, telephone, costs of public hearings and workshops, dues to the Interstate Association of Commissions on the Status of Women, and other incidental expenses.