

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 8

H. P. 5

Office of the Clerk of the House

Filed November 29, 1976, under Joint Rule No. 6 by Mr. Talbot of Portland.
To be printed and delivered to the House of Representatives of the 108th
Legislature.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Talbot of Portland.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

**AN ACT to Appropriate Funds to the Maine Chapter of the Epilepsy
Foundation of America.**

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

Maine Chapter, Epilepsy Foundation of America; appropriation. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Maine Chapter, Incorporated, Epilepsy Foundation of America, the sum of \$10,000 for the fiscal year 1977-78 to be used to help support programs of patient services, advocacy, public and professional education and their allied services for Maine residents with epilepsy.

STATEMENT OF FACT

It is estimated that there is one child in every 50 in Maine public schools at the present time with some form of epilepsy that may be impeding his ability to learn and achieve his fullest potential. Due to the lack of proper information and training, much of this medical deterrent goes unnoticed. The additional fact of misunderstanding and half truths that has for so long stigmatized the person with epilepsy makes it more difficult to identify and begin to help this person. The person with epilepsy does not usually want others to know of his disorder due to public lack of knowledge; hence, he has his opportunities limited by this fear and misunderstanding.

At the present time, the Maine Chapter of the Epilepsy Foundation of America is serving only a small fraction of the population of Maine with

epilepsy due to a lack of public awareness of the existence of programs to help and the lack of adequate knowledge of the services that already exist to help a person with epilepsy. Only limited contact has been made with school authorities, the medical community, school nurses and others to begin to adequately inform them and in this way, help a person help himself.

The Maine Chapter of the Epilepsy Foundation of America is not able to adequately serve its client population through lack of knowledge, funds, volunteer and staff time. Literally thousands of Maine residents need to have a strong advocate in the form of a statewide organization to speak on their behalf. The Chapter supports medication programs, as well as making life insurance and basic information services available to the person with epilepsy and his family.

The funds appropriated here will be used to implement the Epilepsy School Alert program: A multimedia approach to informing school nurses and teaching staffs of the social management of, recognition of and first aid for epileptics. The funds will also be used to better inform the public as to what programs and services are available for the person with epilepsy and his family as well as to provide training for those who come into contact with the public extensively, such as teachers, police, fire and emergency personnel and others. Workshops of a highly specialized nature will be conducted to equip the public and these specific groups with the knowledge necessary to treat the person with epilepsy correctly when in a seizure situation as well as to provide more specialized training for the medical community and other audiences.

Only through proper education and the widespread distribution of the real facts on epilepsy can we adequately help our 20,000 Maine residents who are at this time laboring under misconceptions and misunderstandings which limit their lives and force many onto public assistance rolls when, in many cases, they can and should be productive citizens.