

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 223

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H. P. 213

House of Representatives, February 9, 1977

Reported by Mrs. Berube from the Joint Select Committee on County Government, pursuant to H. P. 1670 and 1,800 printed under Joint Rules No. 17.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Filed by the Joint Select Committee on County Government, under Joint Rule 17, pursuant to House Paper 1670.

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STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-SEVEN

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AN ACT to Strengthen the Counties' Role in Human Services.

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

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA § 7 is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence.

In dividing the State into any other administrative units or establishing regions for governmental purposes or in creating special purpose governmental units, county boundaries shall be considered with all other factors and shall not be ignored.

Sec. 2. 30 MRSA c. 1, sub-c. 2, art. 9 is enacted to read:

ARTICLE 9. HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATOR

§ 441. Human services coordinator; appointment; compensation

The county commissioners of all counties may appropriate funds to hire a county human services coordinator and may appoint some suitable person to serve as coordinator or designate a county official to undertake the coordinator's duties. The human services coordinator shall serve at the pleasure of the county commissioners and they shall determine the compensation to be paid to an appointed coordinator.

§ 442. Powers and duties

The county human services coordinator shall have the following powers and duties.

1. **Coordination.** He shall coordinate the activities of the county in funding human service agencies.

2. **Recommendations.** He shall make recommendations to the county commissioners and, with their approval, to private agencies receiving county funds to provide human services within the county. These recommendations shall relate to the coordination of agencies providing human services within the county and shall seek to reduce confusion and duplication of services, to reduce a multiplicity of reporting forms and application documents and to insure that the county's actual needs are being met.

3. **Budget.** He shall review and make recommendations to the county commissioners about any request for county funds from private human service agencies.

4. **County human services board.** He may be appointed by the county commissioners to the county human services board, as a county representative.

5. **Information.** He may gather information about the need for county human services and the operations of private human service agencies within the county.

6. **Report.** He shall keep the county commissioners informed about the use of county appropriations to private human service agencies, and shall annually prepare a report for inclusion in the county report, about county human service expenditures, direct or indirect human services and actual needs.

Sec. 3. 30 MRSA c. 11 is enacted to read:

## CHAPTER 11

### HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

#### § 1401. Establishment

Each county that expends county funds under sections 412, 412-A, 419 or 420, or under Title 34, sections 2052, 2097 or 2133, or for health or social services under sections 63 or 255, shall establish a County Human Services Board. Every other county may establish a County Human Services Board.

#### § 1402. Membership, term and compensation

The County Human Services Board shall be composed of 9 members. The terms of the members shall begin on July 1st. Three members shall be appointed by the county commissioners for 2-year terms and shall be county officials. Three members shall be elected by the municipalities of the county in accordance with section 1403 for one-year terms and shall be municipal officers. Three members shall be elected by majority vote of the other 6 members of the board from nominations received from agencies in accordance with section 1403, for one-year terms. The board shall elect its own chairman annually.

**§ 1403. Municipal members, election; agency members, nomination**

1. Election of municipal members. Each municipality within the county shall have one vote for each member in the election of municipal members to the board. This vote shall be cast in writing, signed by the chief municipal officer and shall be delivered or mailed to the county commissioners so as to reach them on or before June 1st. On the first Monday in June, the commissioners in a public meeting shall tabulate and announce the results of the election. The 3 municipal officers receiving the highest number of votes shall become the municipal members. In the case of a tie vote for any member's seat, a run-off election between the candidates receiving equal votes shall be held in the same manner on the 2nd Monday in June.

2. Nomination of agency members. Each human service agency that has requested county or municipal funds for human services prior to June 1st for that year or the next year, may nominate one person for membership on the board. The nomination shall be made in writing and signed by the chief executive officer of the agency. The nominations shall be delivered or mailed to the county commissioners so as to reach them on or before June 1st. All nominations shall be delivered to 6 members of the board during their first meeting after July 1st. The 6 members of the board shall, by majority vote, elect 3 members from those nominated at their first meeting, which shall be held during July.

**§ 1404. Clerical assistance**

The county commissioners shall provide the clerical assistance, office expenses, suitable rooms and expenses as are necessary, just and proper to the performance of the board's official duties.

**§ 1405. Duties**

1. Evaluations. The board shall establish a system for obtaining information from each human service agency requesting county or municipal funds. The information obtained shall include the services offered by the agency, the organization of the agency, the funding from all sources and such other information as the board deems necessary. The board shall annually review and evaluate the information it receives and prepare a report on each agency. That report shall include an evaluation and any recommendations on the efficiency, accountability, services and budget request of each agency. The report shall be communicated to each municipality and to the county prior to October 1st.

2. Assessment. The board may establish a system for regularly assessing the needs of the county for particular human services, and shall regularly study and report on such needs assessment to the municipalities and county.

3. Conferences and recommendations. The board shall regularly confer with appropriate state departments and bureaus and private agencies about human service programs and needs, and shall provide them with all reports of the board. The board may make recommendations to state departments and bureaus and to agencies seeking funds about the administration, financing or services of an agency seeking funds.

4. Rules or regulations. After a public hearing, the board may adopt or amend rules or regulations relating to its duties or powers under this section.

§ 1406. Board as county department

The board shall be deemed a department of county government and all costs of operations and expenses shall be paid from the county treasury as authorized by the county budget. The costs and expenses of the board shall be a separate line item of the county budget.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to implement the recommendations of the study on county government by the Joint Standing Committee on Local and County Government. A detailed statement of the intentions, purposes and provisions of this bill is contained in the committee's narrative report. Generally, this bill does the following:

1. Requires each county that appropriates funds to human service agencies to establish a County Human Services Board. The board is authorized to assess the needs for human services in the county and to evaluate the agencies requesting county or municipal funds;
2. Requires county boundaries to be considered in establishing substate districts or special districts; and
3. Authorizes counties to appoint a human service coordinator to coordinate county human service activities.