

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 440

S. P. 164

In Senate, February 16, 1977

Referred to the Committee on Health and Institutional Services. Sent down for concurrence and 2,000 ordered printed.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary

Presented by Senator Conley of Cumberland.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

AN ACT to Provide for the Immediate Issuance of Food Stamps
for Needy Families.

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

22 MRSA § 3104, as last repealed and replaced by PL 1973, c. 674, § 1, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

The Department of Human Services at the time of receiving an application for food stamps shall determine whether or not there exists a need for immediate food assistance. An applicant shall be deemed to be in immediate need if circumstances are such that the applicant appears to be eligible at the zero purchase rate. If it appears that the applicant is so eligible, and an affidavit to this effect signed by the applicant is on file, a preliminary certification for food stamp coupons pending verification shall be authorized for one month, and an authorization to purchase card for one month's issuance shall be granted that same day. The applicant shall provide all necessary verification to the department within 30 days of initial application. If this verification confirms the applicant's zero purchase level the issuance of authorization to purchase card shall continue without interruption through the month following the 30 days of initial application. Further recertifications shall be performed in accordance with current policy.

STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill would require the immediate issuance of food stamps to families who initially apply for food stamps and who are eligible to receive them at no cost. Presently, families must wait up to 30 days to be initially certified as

eligible for food stamps, and must wait up to 2 additional weeks to receive the ATP cards necessary to obtain the food stamps. This present waiting period places an intolerable burden on those families with absolutely no resources to purchase food. By permitting such families to receive food stamps pending final certification this bill would save money for municipalities by reducing the number of general assistance food orders. The entire cost of the food stamps is borne by the Federal Government.