

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 769

H. P. 628

House of Representatives, March 8, 1977

Referred to Committee on Health and Institutional Services. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

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 Facilitate Return of Children to their Parents.

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

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA § 3793, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 396, § 1, is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph to read:

The suitable person, children's institution, child welfare organization or the department into whose custody the child has been committed, shall maintain contact with the parent or guardian of such child during their period of custody of such child. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, the parents or guardian shall be promptly notified in writing of the residence of such child and any change in such residence and of all hospitalization, injuries or medical care received by such child. The parents or guardian shall be afforded ample opportunity to visit with and be visited by such child, subject to only such restrictions or conditions as may be ordered by the court or by the Department of Human Services.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA § 3793-A is enacted to read:

§ 3793-A. Return to family workers

In order to carry out the function required in the preceding section, the Commissioner of Human Services is authorized to designate "return to family" workers in each region of the department whose function shall be to maintain contact with families of children who are in state custody for purposes of assisting those families to become rehabilitated so that children may be safely returned to their custody. When a child is placed for adoption pursuant to Title 19, section 532, the Department of Human Services shall indi-

cate to the court specific departmental efforts to comply with the preceding section.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to strengthen the ability of the department to work towards the eventual return of the child to his parents or to place the child for adoption pursuant to Title 19, section 532 in order to foster permanence for the child. The number of children in the custody of the Department of Human Services is approximately 2,400.