

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 152

6
7 H.P. 144

House of Representatives, January 12, 1983

8 Reference to the Committee on Public Utilities suggested and ordered
9 printed.

10 EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative Matthews of Winslow.

Cosponsors: Representative Joseph of Waterville, Senator Kany of
11 Kennebec and Senator Hichens of York.

12 STATE OF MAINE
13

14 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
15 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE
16

17 AN ACT Concerning Special
18 Telecommunications Equipment for
19 the Deaf and Hearing and Speech
20 Impaired.
21

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

24 Sec. 1. 35 MRSA §2361, sub-§§3 and 4 are enacted
25 to read:

26 3. Availability of telecommunications equipment
27 for the deaf and hearing and speech impaired. Each
28 telephone company authorized to do business in this
29 State shall make special telecommunications equipment
30 capable of serving the needs of deaf and hearing and
31 speech impaired persons available for loan to these
32 persons and be responsible for the maintenance and
33 repair of any of the equipment it provides. The
34 Public Utilities Commission shall establish condi-

1 tions of service, maintenance and repair of this
2 equipment. This subsection shall apply only to the
3 extent consistent with federal law.

4 4. Telecommunications equipment fund; uses. Each
5 telephone company authorized to do business in this
6 State, having at least 100,000 local exchange custom-
7 ers, shall pay into a special telecommunications
8 equipment fund \$40,000 not later than January 1,
9 1984, and every year thereafter, until and including
10 January 1, 1989. The special telecommunication fund
11 shall be held in trust by the Office of Deafness.
12 The Public Utilities Commission shall include all
13 incomes and payments made by a company into the fund
14 as operating expenses of the company. The Office of
15 Deafness shall invest all moneys within the fund in
16 accordance with established investment practices and
17 return all interest earned by these investments to
18 the fund.

19 The Office of Deafness under the Bureau of Rehabili-
20 tation may draw on each fund in accordance with a
21 plan developed by the Public Utilities Commission,
22 and approved by the joint standing committee of the
23 Legislature having jurisdiction over public utili-
24 ties. The plan shall be developed and adopted annu-
25 ally, not later than January 1st, after appropriate
26 notice and hearing. The plan shall provide for the
27 distribution of moneys from the funds to deaf and
28 hearing and speech impaired persons for the
29 upgrading, maintenance and repair of special telecom-
30 munications equipment capable of serving their needs
31 or to vendors providing equipment or servicing. The
32 plan shall also provide that not more than 10% of the
33 moneys annually paid into each fund shall be allo-
34 cated to the Public Utilities Commission to carry out
35 its responsibilities under this subsection and not
36 more than 5% of the moneys annually paid into a fund
37 by a telephone company shall be allocated to that
38 company to carry out its responsibilities under sub-
39 section 3. All moneys allocated to the commission
40 shall be paid to the Treasurer of State for deposit
41 in the General Fund.

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STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill provides that telephone companies make telecommunication equipment capable of serving the needs of deaf and hearing and speech impaired persons available for loan and be responsible for its maintenance and repair.

The bill also creates a fund from which moneys can be taken by the Office of Deafness to provide, upgrade and service special telecommunications equipment used by deaf and hearing and speech impaired persons.

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