

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the  
**LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**  
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied  
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

1 (New Draft of H.P. 144, L.D. 152)  
2 (New Title)

3 FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
4

---

5 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
6

---

7 Legislative Document

No. 1166

---

9 H.P. 913

House of Representatives, March 14, 1983

10 Reported by Representative Matthews from the Committee on Public  
11 Utilities and printed under Joint Rule 2.

12 EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

13  
14 STATE OF MAINE  
15

---

16 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
17 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE  
18

---

19 AN ACT Concerning Special  
20 Telecommunications Equipment for the  
21 Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Speech  
22 Impaired.  
23

---

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

26 Sec. 1. 35 MRSA §2361, as amended by PL 1981, c.  
27 416, is further amended to read:

28 §2361. Telecommunication services for the deaf,  
29 hearing impaired and speech impaired

30 1. Toll call rates. The commission shall estab-  
31 lish, within 30 days after the effective date of this  
32 Act, a 70% rate reduction for intrastate toll calls

1 from deaf and hearing impaired and speech impaired  
2 persons who must rely on teletypewriters for residen-  
3 tial telephone communications. To qualify for the  
4 reduction, a customer must file an affidavit, on a  
5 form approved by the Public Utilities Commission,  
6 with the telephone company, stating that, due to  
7 deafness or hearing impairment or speech impairment,  
8 he or a member of the household must rely on a tele-  
9 typewriter for telephone communications, and that  
10 such equipment is connected or acoustically coupled  
11 to his telephone.

12 2. Moneys for telecommunication typewriters. The  
13 Bureau of Rehabilitation within the Department of  
14 Human Services, pursuant to any appropriation of  
15 moneys to the bureau for telecommunication typewrit-  
16 ers for the deaf, hearing impaired and speech  
17 impaired, shall, upon request, provide up to 50% of  
18 the cost of telecommunication typewriters to any  
19 organization or municipality that makes available the  
20 remaining funds for this equipment in a manner satis-  
21 factory to the Director of the Bureau of Rehabilita-  
22 tion.

23 Sec. 2. 35 MRSA §2361, sub-§§3 and 4 are enacted  
24 to read:

25 3. Telecommunications Equipment Fund. A Tele-  
26 communications Equipment Fund is established. The  
27 Office of Deafness in the Bureau of Rehabilitation  
28 may accept any gifts or grants for the purposes of  
29 this section. These, and any authorized appropri-  
30 ations shall be deposited in the fund, and disbursed  
31 in accordance with this section. The fund may be  
32 used for purchase, lease, upgrading, installation,  
33 maintenance and repair of special telecommunications  
34 equipment for the deaf, hearing impaired or speech  
35 impaired. The Office of Deafness under the Bureau of  
36 Rehabilitation may draw on the fund in accordance  
37 with the Telecommunications Equipment Plan required  
38 under subsection 4. The commission shall include a  
39 progress report on this program in its annual report  
40 under section 17, subsection 2.

41 4. Telecommunications equipment plan. The  
42 Office of Deafness shall develop a plan to make spe-  
43 cial telecommunications equipment available to deaf,

1 hearing impaired and speech impaired persons, and to  
2 distribute moneys from the Telecommunications Equip-  
3 ment Fund. The plan shall be developed by the Office  
4 of Deafness and approved by the commission annually,  
5 not later than January 1st, after appropriate notice  
6 and hearing. The plan shall provide for the expendi-  
7 ture of moneys from the fund for the benefit of deaf,  
8 hearing impaired and speech impaired persons for the  
9 purchase, lease, upgrading, installation, maintenance  
10 and repair of special telecommunications equipment  
11 capable of serving their needs. Persons who are  
12 profoundly deaf or speech impaired so that they can-  
13 not use the telephone for expressive or receptive  
14 communications, as verified by a written report from  
15 an otologist, audiologist or physician are eligible  
16 for the assistance from the fund. The plan shall  
17 include specific criteria that will govern the prior-  
18 ities assigned to various persons who need this  
19 equipment. The criteria shall take into account  
20 household income, degree of impairment, need for  
21 emergency communications, living arrangements and  
22 other factors deemed relevant by the Office of Deaf-  
23 ness.

24           **Sec. 3. Appropriation.** The following funds are  
25 appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the  
26 purposes of this Act.

	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
27		
28		
	<b>BUREAU OF REHABILITATION</b>	
29		
	Office of Deafness	
30		
31		
	Telecommunications Equipment Fund	
32		
	All Other	\$40,000            \$40,000

33    **FISCAL NOTE**

34            Enactment of this new draft will require addi-  
35 tional appropriations from the General Fund of  
36 \$40,000 for the fiscal year 1983-84 and \$40,000 for  
37 the fiscal year 1984-85.

1 STATEMENT OF FACT

2 This new draft retains the purpose of the bill,  
3 to make telecommunication equipment available to  
4 serve the needs of deaf, hearing impaired and speech  
5 impaired persons.

6 It creates a special fund from which moneys can  
7 be taken by the Office of Deafness to provide,  
8 upgrade and service special telecommunications equip-  
9 ment used by deaf, hearing impaired and speech  
10 impaired persons. The fund, \$40,000 per year for  
11 fiscal year 1984 and 1985 will be supported by the  
12 General Fund. The fund will be administered accord-  
13 ing to a plan developed by the Office of Deafness and  
14 approved by the Public Utilities Commission.

15 The new draft adds details concerning the plan.  
16 Persons eligible would include those who are  
17 profoundly deaf or speech impaired so that they can-  
18 not use the telephone for expressive or receptive  
19 communication. The plan includes criteria for  
20 assigning priorities, taking into account income,  
21 degree of impairment, need for emergency communica-  
22 tions and living arrangements.

23 Because of the severe maintenance problems asso-  
24 ciated with the older-style equipment, the emphasis  
25 of the plan shall be on making available modern tele-  
26 communications equipment and upgrading old equipment.

27 2685030383