MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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| 1 2 3 | (EMERGENCY) FIRST REGULAR SESSION |
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| 4 5 | ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH LEGISLATURE |
| 6 7 | Legislative Document No. 1320 |
| 8 | S.P. 494 In Senate, April 16, 1985 |
| 9 10 | Referred to the Committee on Utilities. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed. |
| 11 | JOY J. O'BRIEN, Secretary of the Senate |
| 2 | Presented by Senator Gill of Cumberland. Cosponsored by Senator Baldacci of Penobscot and Representative Nelson of Portland. |
| | STATE OF MAINE |
| | IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIVE |
| | AN ACT to Provide Toll-free Telephone Lines for Community Emergency Nonprofit Services. |
| | Emergency preamble. Whereas, Acts of the Legis- lature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and |
| | Whereas, local measured service may go into effect on July 1, 1985; and |
| | Whereas, the itemized billing accompanying local measured service removes the privacy of local calls; and |
| | Whereas, the loss of privacy may prevent some people from contacting needed emergency services for fear of reprisal; and |
| | Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of |

- the Constitution of Maine and require the following
- 2 legislation as immediately necessary for the preser-
- 3 vation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
- 4 therefore,

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- 5 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:
- 7 Sec. 1. 35 MRSA §2702 is enacted to read:
- 8 §2702. Toll-free telephone lines for emergency, non-profit services
- Toll-free incoming emergency telephone lines
 shall be provided by qualifying emergency services as
 follows.
- 1. Definition. For purposes of this section,
 the term "qualifying emergency service" includes local fire, police and emergency rescue operations,
 emergency services at nonprofit hospitals and emergency mental health programs at a licensed regional
 mental health service.
- 2. Toll-free emergency telephones. Each qualifying emergency service shall provide an emergency
 line for clients and other citizens to call the agency. The line shall be toll-free for calls originating within the area served by the qualifying emergency service.
 - 3. Rates. The Public Utilities Commission shall establish a special flat rate schedule for intrastate local and long distance calls to the toll-free emergency telephones covered by this section. The rates shall be reasonable as low as can be justified considering the marginal cost to the system of this service. The rates may differ from one service area to another, but they shall not be based on a per-call basis. They shall be flat rates and itemized billing is prohibited.
 - Sec. 2. Exempting from local measured service. Each qualifying emergency service as defined by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35, section 2702, subsection 2, shall be exempt from local mea-

sured service until the toll-free emergency telephone service required by that section is in operation at that agency.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act shall take effect when approved.

7 STATEMENT OF FACT

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The purpose of this bill is to remove barriers of telephone lines to call emergency the use The use of those services are encouraged services. by ensuring that designated units serving the community have incoming toll-free numbers for local intrastate long distance calls within their service Eligible agencies include local fire, police area. and rescue operations, hospital emergency rooms and licensed emergency mental health services. Only the published emergency telephone line at each unit would be covered under this program. A person could contact other agencies by using qualified units as a referral service.

This system protects the privacy of the caller because no bill is sent to their home or the agency with individual calls itemized. It also improves the availability of the service since the caller does not have to have the money available to pay for the call. The Public Utilities Commission establishs a special flat rate schedule at reasonable cost for this service. There could be different rates for different service areas.

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