

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH LEGISLATURE
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 1383

6
7 H.P. 962

House of Representatives, April 25, 1985

8 Reference to the Committee on Human Resources suggested and ordered
9 printed.

10 EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative Brodeur of Auburn.

Cosponsored by Representative Carroll of Gray.

11
12 STATE OF MAINE
13

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

17 AN ACT to Fund Community Response Programs to
18 Address Child Sexual Abuse in Maine
19 Communities.
20

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

23 34-B MRSA c. 3, sub-c. V is enacted to read:

24 SUBCHAPTER V

25 COMMUNITY RESPONSE PROGRAMS

26 §3901. Legislative finding

27 The Legislature finds that there is a need to de-
28 velop programs to provide the kinds of innovative
29 strategies and services which will ameliorate, reduce
30 and ultimately eliminate the trauma of child sexual
31 abuse. The Legislature further finds that a communi-
32 ty treatment approach to incest and child sexual mo-
33 lestation is an effective means of treating and pre-

1 venting child sexual abuse. This approach must in-
2 volve all officially responsible members of the com-
3 munity, including law enforcement officers, child
4 protective workers, substitute care workers, mental
5 health workers, probation officers, the judicial sys-
6 tem, rehabilitation counselors and community
7 volunteers.

8 The Legislature finds that insufficient resources
9 are currently available to treat and prevent sexual
10 abuse. Accordingly, the Legislature determines that
11 community volunteers are essential in this effort and
12 that self-help groups, including victims and parents,
13 in coordination with professionals and volunteers,
14 are critical in providing intervention, treatment,
15 emotional support and practical assistance in resolv-
16 ing this problem.

17 §3902. Community response programs established;
18 functions and goals

19 The department shall establish a community re-
20 sponse program to treat and prevent sexual abuse of
21 children in this State. The functions and goals of
22 the program shall include, but shall not be limited
23 to, the following:

24 1. Counseling; practical assistance. To provide
25 counseling and practical assistance by onsite profes-
26 sionals to sexually abused children and their fami-
27 lies;

28 2. Respond to individual physical, emotional and
29 social needs of clients. To respond to the individu-
30 al physical, emotional and social needs of clients so
31 that support services are individually tailored and
32 applied as long as necessary;

33 3. Self-help groups. To facilitate and coordi-
34 nate the establishment of self-help groups and pro-
35 vide guidance to their membership, such as training
36 in counseling, self-management and intrafamily commu-
37 nication techniques, and training in locating commu-
38 nity resources;

39 4. Coordinate development of community response
40 program. To coordinate development of the community

1 response program with other agencies responsible for
2 the sexually abused child and his family to ensure
3 comprehensive, supportive case management;

4 5. Services. To encourage the development of or
5 to establish such services as:

6 A. Counseling to aid in the growth of coping
7 patterns dealing with the frustrations of child
8 rearing;

9 B. Psychological support and peer counseling for
10 parents;

11 C. Referrals to existing services in the commu-
12 nity and follow-up on the outcome of the
13 referrals; and

14 D. A switchboard for crisis calls 24 hours a
15 day, 7 days a week; and

16 6. Information; training materials. To develop
17 informational and training materials and seminars em-
18 phasizing the program's stress on cooperation and co-
19 ordination with all appropriate elements of the crim-
20 inal justice system and law enforcement system.

21 §3903. Coordination with other agencies

22 The department shall coordinate its planning ef-
23 forts in establishing and maintaining the community
24 response programs with the Department of Human Ser-
25 vices.

26 §3904. Community support and acceptance; volunteers

27 The community response program shall attempt to
28 achieve community support and acceptance of the pro-
29 gram by advocating the program to community represen-
30 tatives and groups within the community. Volunteers
31 shall be trained and used to maximum capacity in the
32 delivery of services.

1 STATEMENT OF FACT

2 Sexual abuse of children is one of the most critical
3 mental health problems in Maine. Recent studies
4 indicate that one in 3 children are molested and that
5 one child in 6 is molested by family members. These
6 traumatic effects carry on into adulthood in the form
7 of alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, depression,
8 psychosis and inability to form lasting familial relationships,
9 including a high probability of repeating these behaviors
10 of molestation and incest as adults. It is very likely that a high percentage
11 of individuals with serious mental health problems
12 are sexually abused as children. In Maine, at least
13 25% of all verified child abuse situations involved
14 sexual abuse. Effective treatment and prevention of
15 child sexual abuse requires a coordinated approach,
16 involving all legal, judicial, protective and mental
17 health treatment resources. More important is the
18 involvement of community self-help groups and
19 volunteers, working with parents of sexually abused
20 children, the children themselves, available treatment
21 resources and legal resources to support victims
22 and family during the crisis period, and assist them
23 to learn attitudes and skills needed to live socially
24 and responsibly and to avoid the cycle perpetuating
25 this most damaging of social ills.
26

27 This bill provides an additional 2,500 hours of
28 community mental health treatment resources to the
29 over 1,200 new cases of sexual abuse expected to be
30 reported in fiscal year 1985 and fiscal year 1986.
31 It assists in setting up community self-help and volunteer
32 groups to assist professionals in treatment
33 intervention; victims in recovering from the trauma
34 of sexual abuse; and perpetrators, during and after
35 the judicial system has taken its course, in learning
36 socially acceptable behaviors and productive life
37 skills.

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