

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 461

H.P. 358 House of Representatives, February 20, 1987
Reference to the Committee on Utilities suggested and
ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative BAKER of Portland.

Cosponsored by Representative HOLT of Bath.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN

AN ACT to Establish a Universal Telephone
Service Program.

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

35 MRSA §74-A is enacted to read:

§74-A. A program to ensure universal telephone ser-
vice

1. Program implementation. The Department of Hu-
man Services is responsible for the administration of
a targeted state universal telephone service program
and shall provide, in conjunction with the Division
of Community Services, applications for this program
to all households receiving assistance under any of
the programs listed in subsection 3.

1 Telephone companies shall deduct \$2 from the monthly
2 bill of each household eligible for this program.

3 Within 60 days of the effective date of this section,
4 the department shall begin receiving applications
5 from households for verification of eligibility.
6 Within 120 days, the Department of Human Services,
7 with the cooperation of the Division of Community
8 Services, shall furnish an initial master list of
9 participating households to telephone companies for
10 use in extending credit under this program. The de-
11 partment shall update the master list on a quarterly
12 basis.

13 The department shall reimburse telephone companies
14 for credit extended under this program.

15 2. Amount of assistance per eligible household.
16 Assistance to each eligible household shall be \$2
17 each month.

18 3. Eligibility. Eligibility for this program
19 shall be limited to households who qualify for any
20 one of the 5 following programs:

21 A. Aid to Families with Dependent Children;

22 B. Supplemental Security Income;

23 C. Medicaid;

24 D. Food stamps; or

25 E. Home energy assistance.

26 To apply for the monthly credit available under this
27 program, eligible households shall declare their eli-
28 gibility and furnish such additional necessary infor-
29 mation as the department may require to administer
30 the program. Upon verification of eligibility, the
31 department shall add the applicant's name to the next
32 quarterly listing of participating households sent to
33 telephone companies.

34 5. Funding. In order to maintain universal ser-
35 vice and to maintain the financial integrity of the
36 telephone companies, there is established a nonlaps-

1 ing Universal Telephone Service Account to be com-
2 posed of revenues from the General Fund.

3 Money from this account shall be used to reimburse
4 telephone companies for the amounts credited under
5 this program, under subsection 1.

6 6. Relationship to any joint state-federal uni-
7 versal telephone service or lifeline programs. This
8 program shall be coordinated to the fullest extent
9 possible with any joint state-federal universal tele-
10 phone service or lifeline programs to reduce adminis-
11 trative costs and inconvenience to the public.

12 STATEMENT OF FACT

13 This bill establishes a credit for certain low-
14 income users in order to help them continue to have
15 basic telephone service.

16 The Federal Communications Commission now imposes
17 a \$2 per month access charge for residential custom-
18 ers. The Federal Communications Commission will
19 waive the \$2 charge for low-income customers if a
20 state provides a matching \$2 per month for each eli-
21 gible customer. The total state-federal reduction is
22 \$4 per month.

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