

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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(EMERGENCY)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 795

H.P. 584 House of Representatives, March 17, 1987
Reference to the Committee on Appropriations and
Financial Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative RYDELL of Brunswick.

Cosponsored by Senators BERUBE of Androscoggin, THERIAULT
of Aroostook and Representative NORTON of Winthrop.

STATE OF MAINE

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

1 AN ACT to Provide for Continued Treatment and
2 Support of Incest Victims and
3 Survivors.
4

5 Emergency preamble. Whereas, Acts of the Legis-
6 lature do not become effective until 90 days after
7 adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

8 Whereas, funding for the nonprofit public service
9 agency "Looking Up" will terminate on June 30, 1987,
10 resulting in termination or severe limitation of the
11 Looking Up Program for incest victims and survivors
12 unless this Act takes effect on July 1, 1987; and

13 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature,
14 these facts create an emergency within the meaning of

1 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,

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

7 **Appropriation.** The following funds are appropri-
8 ated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes
9 of this Act.

10		<u>1987-88</u>	<u>1988-89</u>
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11	<u>MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL</u>		
12	<u>RETARDATION, DEPARTMENT OF</u>		

13	Bureau of Mental Health		
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14	All Other	\$88,769	\$98,000
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15 Provides funds for
16 treatment and sup-
17 port of incest vic-
18 tims and survivors
19 through "Looking
20 Up," an organization
21 whose functions in-
22 clude outdoor chal-
23 lenge activities,
24 creative expression
25 workshops,
26 therapeutic confer-
27 ences, training pro-
28 grams and community
29 action involvement
30 projects.

31 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited
32 in the preamble, this Act shall take effect on July
33 1, 1987.

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STATEMENT OF FACT

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This bill provides essential funding for a highly successful statewide service agency working with hundreds of incest affected individuals, families and professionals.

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Sexual abuse of children is so common as to be epidemic in numbers and overwhelming in ramifications. National statistics continue to state that one in 4 to one in 3 women and one in 6 men or more will be sexually abused by the age of 18 years old. In this State, this easily translates to well over 200,000 survivors of sexual abuse. Estimates of how many incidents are actually reported are between only 6% and 10%.

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Recovery from chronic acute trauma, such as incest, frequently becomes a lifetime process with a successful outcome far from guaranteed. Studies show that the negative effects resulting from such a trauma are severe and longlasting. Adults who experience a single acute trauma, such as rape, have reported post traumatic stress symptoms more than 4 years later. Children who experience a single acute trauma also show symptoms more than 4 years later, which include no trust in safety in the world and a sense of lost possibilities for the future. Ultimately, children who are victims of chronic acute trauma, such as the common situation with incest cases, integrate the victimization into their self-identity, belief that it happened because they were bad, chronic terror and little or no self-esteem.

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The State has been creative and courageous in addressing these problems. Its assembled laws working to intervene and assist on the behalf of victims as well as to create preventive programs is one of the most highly acclaimed packages in the country. This has resulted in a response systems overload. Futhermore, inherent in the practical delivery of those services is the limitation of time, staff and money. Immediate and extreme crises take priority, sometimes to the detriment of ongoing needs. There are still many areas in the State that have few or no services geared specifically towards incest survivors

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1 and many others that have long waiting lists.

2 "Looking Up" is a public nonprofit service agency
3 which, for the past 3 years, had offered a variety of
4 direct services specifically addressing incest is-
5 sues. The organization has provided the State with a
6 desperately needed service for the ongoing needs of
7 incest victims, survivors, service providers and con-
8 cerned individuals. It offers statewide support
9 counseling, referral services, outdoor challenge ac-
10 tivities, creative expression workshops, educational
11 publications, training, conferences, professional
12 consultation and more.

13 "Looking Up" has directly served 475 male and fe-
14 male survivors of incest of all ages in 1986 alone,
15 and an additional 353 service providers, including
16 many state-funded agencies, and concerned individu-
17 als. There had been a nearly 100% increase in re-
18 quests over the last 6 months of 1986, with that
19 trend continuing in 1987. Over 5,000 hours of direct
20 service were given by "Looking Up" in 1986. Its work
21 and publications have received national attention,
22 with requests for information on its work coming from
23 35 states, Puerto Rico and Canada. Its programs are
24 filled months prior to registration deadlines and new
25 requests for assistance average a minimum of 60 each
26 month.

27 The major success of this agency and the rapidly
28 increasing demand for its services have pushed it far
29 beyond its grassroots beginnings. If its work is to
30 continue at all, this appropriation must be granted.

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