

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 856

H.P. 633 House of Representatives, March 20, 1987
Reference to the Committee on Appropriations and
Financial Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Speaker MARTIN of Eagle Lake.

Cosponsored by Representative CONNOLLY of Portland.

STATE OF MAINE

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

1 AN ACT to appropriate funds to create a Pilot
2 Employment Program for Refugees.
3

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

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

| | <u>1987-88</u> | <u>1988-89</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 10 <u>LABOR, DEPARTMENT OF</u> | | |
| 11 All Other | \$67,500 | \$67,500 |

1 Funds to be used to
2 contract with Diocesan
3 Human Relations Ser-
4 vice, Inc. to provide a
5 program of employment
6 training for refugees
7 for approximately 50
8 persons.

9 STATEMENT OF FACT

10 Most employable refugees who are resettled in
11 Maine could be more successfully and permanently in-
12 tegrated if, fairly soon after their arrival, they
13 could be placed in positions which would fully uti-
14 lize their aptitudes or skills.

15 To this point, refugee resettlements have been
16 limited, in the majority of cases, to making place-
17 ments far below the refugees' skills or aptitudes.
18 This has resulted in great inefficiency of staff en-
19 ergy since such placements are often temporary or are
20 of such quality that multiple placements of the same
21 client are needed. Often a lost position is not fol-
22 lowed immediately by a new placement and access to
23 some maintenance assistance is needed. There is also
24 a resistance factor when jobs offered are not meeting
25 the expectations of the client, especially if receiv-
26 ing cash assistance and medicaid is much more at-
27 tractive and provides a sense of security.

28 The Joint Training Partnership Act programs which
29 normally address this problem with the general popu-
30 lation do not favor training for refugees. The major
31 obstacle is not discrimination, but the refugees lack
32 of ability to communicate in English.

33 This bill provides funds to the Department of La-
34 bor, to be used by the Diocesan Human Relations Ser-
35 vices, Inc., to operate a specialized parallel train-
36 ing program to address the very specific needs of the
37 refugees.

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