

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 973

H.P. 722 House of Representatives, March 26, 1987  
Reference to the Committee on Appropriations and  
Financial Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk  
Presented by Representative MURPHY of Kennebunk.  
Cosponsored by Speaker MARTIN of Eagle Lake, Senators  
CLARK of Cumberland and PEARSON of Penobscot.

STATE OF MAINE

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

1 AN ACT to Improve Funding for Communicatively  
2 Impaired Maine Residents Served by  
3 Community-based, Private Nonprofit  
4 Speech and Hearing Centers.  
5

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

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

11 1987-88 1988-89

12 HUMAN SERVICES,  
13 DEPARTMENT OF

14 Bureau of Rehabilitation

1	All Other	\$500,000	500,000
2	These funds will be		
3	distributed to private,		
4	nonprofit		
5	community-based speech		
6	and hearing centers		
7	through grant-in-aid,		
8	fees for service and		
9	other funding mecha-		
10	nisms used by the De-		
11	partment of Human Ser-		
12	vices, Bureau of Reha-		
13	bilitation.		

14 STATEMENT OF FACT

15 In the State, there is an increasing number of  
16 persons suffering from speech-language and hearing  
17 disorders who cannot avail themselves of services due  
18 to costs or availability of trained professionals.  
19 This growing population includes: Low birth weight  
20 infants; traumatically brain injured; persons suffer-  
21 ing from debilitating nervous system diseases and  
22 stroke; hearing-impairment or deafness; mental retar-  
23 dation; and preschoolers with histories of physical  
24 and sexual abuse.

25 Attempting to meet the needs of these diverse  
26 groups is a statewide system of private, nonprofit,  
27 community-based speech and hearing centers. It has  
28 been increasingly difficult for these centers to re-  
29 cruit and retain staff due to salaries which, com-  
30 pared nationally and regionally, are below the 5th  
31 percentile. This problem is particularly acute in  
32 the free-standing centers located in Aroostook Coun-  
33 ty, Bangor, Bath, Portland and York County.  
34 Turnover now approaches 80% every 2 years and the va-  
35 cancy period is approximately 3 to 4 months. Most  
36 centers have not had full staff complements in over 2  
37 years. To maintain financial viability, and especial-  
38 ly to offer minimally competitive salaries, Maine's  
39 speech and hearing centers are being compelled to  
40 provide services to individuals with the best finan-

1 cial resources. This is contrary to their historical  
2 mission of serving all referred for care regardless  
3 of ability to pay.

4 This bill will provide money within the Bureau of  
5 Rehabilitation to be used by private, nonprofit  
6 community-based speech and hearing centers to fund  
7 services provided to residents of Maine suffering  
8 from speech and hearing disorders.

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