

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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115th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1991

Legislative Document

No. 668

H.P. 474

House of Representatives, February 19, 1991

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed Pert".

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative GEAN of Alfred.

Cosponsored by Senator CONLEY of Cumberland, Representative MANNING of Portland and Representative LEBOWITZ of Bangor.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-ONE

Resolve, to Direct the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to Develop a Plan to Provide Appropriate Services for Severely Mentally Ill Persons Who Are Living in Homeless Shelters.

(EMERGENCY)



2 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, Acts and resolves of the
Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after
adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

4 Whereas, the Maine Coalition for the Homeless estimates that
6 approximately 1/3 of those sheltered in homeless shelters have a
severe mental illness, a large percentage of these are members of
8 the Augusta Mental Health Institute consent decree class, and the
number of homeless mentally ill is increasing; and

10 Whereas, homeless shelters are not equipped to provide
12 adequate or appropriate services for persons with severe mental
illness and a homeless shelter does not represent an appropriate
14 residential setting for the severely mentally ill in any event;
and

16 Whereas, the fact that severely mentally ill people are
18 increasingly being sheltered in homeless shelters reflects the
failure of the State's mental health system to provide
20 appropriate and adequate services for this population; and

22 Whereas, there is a need for immediate action to assess the
nature and scope of the problem and to develop a plan to address
24 it; and

26 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts
create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of
28 Maine and require the following legislation as immediately
necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
30 safety; now, therefore, be it

32 **Department duties. Resolved:** That the Department of Mental
Health and Mental Retardation shall:

34 1. Develop a plan to provide appropriate services,
36 including residential alternatives, for homeless mentally ill
persons;

38 2. Report its recommendations to the Joint Standing
40 Committee on Human Resources and the Joint Standing Committee on
Appropriations and Financial Affairs by January 15, 1992; and

42 3. Consult with the Maine Coalition for the Homeless and
44 the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness and Housing
Opportunities in all phases of the planning process.

46 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the
48 preamble, this resolve takes effect when approved.

50

STATEMENT OF FACT

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4 This resolve requires the Department of Mental Health and
6 Mental Retardation to develop a plan to provide appropriate
8 services, including residential programs, to meet the needs of
10 homeless mentally ill individuals and report its recommendations
12 to the Legislature.

8

10 The purpose of this bill is to facilitate the development of
12 appropriate community services to meet the needs of severely
 mentally ill people so that they do not become homeless.

12