

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

Legislative Document

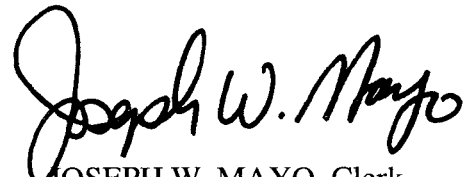
No. 1771

H.P. 1242

House of Representatives, March 9, 1999

**An Act to Establish a Limit on Noneconomic Damages in Medical
Malpractice Actions.**

Reference to the Committee on Judiciary suggested and ordered printed.


JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative PLOWMAN of Hampden.
Cosponsored by Representative DUNLAP of Old Town,
Senator MITCHELL of Penobscot and
Representatives: SHIELDS of Auburn, WATERHOUSE of Bridgton, Senators: BENOIT of
Franklin, BERUBE of Androscoggin.

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

4 **Sec. 1. 24 MRSA c. 21, sub-c. XI is enacted to read:**

6 **SUBCHAPTER XI**

8 **LIMITS ON NONECONOMIC DAMAGES**

10 **§2991. Limits on noneconomic damages**

12 **1. Definitions.** As used in this subchapter, unless the
context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the
following meanings.

14 **A. "Noneconomic damages"** means subjective, nonpecuniary
damages arising from pain, suffering, inconvenience,
physical impairment, disfigurement, mental anguish,
emotional stress, loss of society and companionship, loss of
consortium, injury to reputation, humiliation, other
nonpecuniary damages and any other theory of damages such as
fear of loss, illness or injury.

22 **2. Limitation.** In an action for professional negligence as
defined in section 2502, the noneconomic damages awarded to a
prevailing party may not exceed \$250,000. If the trial of the
action is by a jury, the jury may not be informed of the damage
award limitation established in this section. If the jury awards
total damages in excess of \$250,000, the court shall direct the
jury to establish the portion of the total damages awarded that
is noneconomic damages. If the portion that is noneconomic
damages exceeds \$250,000, the court shall reduce the noneconomic
damages awarded to that amount, unless a further reduction is
warranted by exercise of the powers described in subsection 3.

34 **3. Court's powers.** Nothing in this section is intended to
eliminate the court's powers of additur and remittitur with
regard to all damages, except to the extent that the power of
additur is limited with regard to noneconomic damages beyond the
limitation established in subsection 2.

40 **4. Application.** This section applies to all cases in which
notices of claim are filed after the effective date of this
section.

46 **SUMMARY**

48 This bill sets a limit of \$250,000 on noneconomic damages in
50 medical liability actions. Under this bill, a plaintiff is still
entitled to the full economic loss, including all medical

2 expenses, rehabilitation services, custodial care, loss of earnings and earning capacity, loss of income and any other verifiable monetary losses.