

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

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Legislative Document

No. 1162

S.P. 348

In Senate, February 28, 2001

**An Act to Ensure Telecommunications Protections for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing People.**

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Reference to the Committee on Utilities and Energy suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator TREAT of Kennebec.  
Cosponsored by Representative SAVAGE of Buxton and  
Senators: FERGUSON of Oxford, KILKELLY of Lincoln, NUTTING of Androscoggin,  
Representatives: BLISS of South Portland, COWGER of Hallowell, FULLER of Manchester,  
GREEN of Monmouth, LEMOINE of Old Orchard Beach.

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

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Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §7302, sub-§1-A is enacted to read:

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1-A. Wireless telecommunications service providers. A cellular or wireless telecommunications service provider shall provide a 70% discount on all charges collected by the provider for intrastate calls from certified deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired persons who must rely on teletypewriters for residential telephone communications and for all calls using the state telecommunications relay service. This discount must be provided to any noncertified user making calls to a certified user if the noncertified user informs the mobile telecommunications service provider or toll provider of the relevant billed calls made during each billing period. This discount must also be provided for intrastate toll calls made by agencies certified by the Division of Deafness in the Department of Labor as eligible to receive a discount while providing vocal relay services to deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired persons, as well as to community service centers serving deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired persons certified by the Division of Deafness as eligible to receive a discount.

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Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §7302, sub-§2, as amended by PL 1993, c. 275, §1, is further amended to read:

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**2. Customers qualifying for the reduction.** To qualify for the reduction, a customer must file an affidavit, on a form approved by the Public Utilities Commission, with the telephone utility or cellular or wireless telecommunications service provider, stating that, due to deafness, hearing impairment or speech impairment, the customer or a member of the household must rely on a teletypewriter for telephone communications and that the equipment is connected or acoustically coupled to the customer's telephone.

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## SUMMARY

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Under current law, telephone utilities must provide a 70% rate reduction for intrastate toll calls made on lines used for making calls from certified deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired persons who must rely on teletypewriters for residential telephone communications. The 70% rate reduction also applies to calls using the state telecommunications relay service. Upon request, this discount is also provided to any noncertified user making calls to a certified user, provided the

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2 noncertified user informs the local exchange carrier or toll  
provider of the relevant billed calls made during each billing  
period.

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6 This bill extends these same discounts to charges imposed by  
cellular or wireless telecommunications service providers.