

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 122nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2005

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Legislative Document

No. 637

H.P. 470

House of Representatives, February 8, 2005

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**An Act To Allow Qualified Health Centers To Obtain  
Telecommunications Education Access Funding**

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

*Millicent M. MacFarland*  
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND  
Clerk

Presented by Representative BLISS of South Portland.  
Cosponsored by Representative PERRY of Calais, Senator BARTLETT of Cumberland and  
Representatives: FLETCHER of Winslow, PINGREE of North Haven, SMITH of Monmouth.

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

4 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§1, ¶D** is enacted to read:

6 D. "Qualified health center" means a federally qualified  
8 health center or a health center that provides free public  
10 access to health care services in medically underserved  
12 areas if the commission determines, in consultation with the  
14 Department of Health and Human Services, that including the  
16 health center as a qualified health center is in the public  
18 interest.

20 **Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2001, c.  
22 522, §1, is further amended to read:

24 **2. Authority.** Pursuant to the authority granted in section  
26 7104 and in order to carry out the policy goals established by  
28 section 7101, subsections 1, 2 and 4, the commission shall  
establish a telecommunications education access fund, referred to  
in this section as the "fund," and require all telecommunications  
carriers offering telecommunications services in the State and  
any other entities identified by the commission pursuant to  
subsection 8 to contribute to the fund. The fund must be  
available, with any accumulated interest, to qualified libraries,  
qualified schools, qualified health centers and the Raymond H.  
Fogler Library at the University of Maine to assist in paying the  
costs of acquiring and using advanced telecommunications  
technologies.

30 **Sec. 3. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2001, c.  
32 522, §2, is further amended to read:

34 **4. Use of fund.** The fund must be used to provide discounts  
36 to qualified libraries, qualified schools, qualified health  
centers and the Raymond H. Fogler Library at the University of  
Maine for the following:

- 38 A. Telecommunications services;
- 40 B. Internet access;
- 42 C. Internal connections;
- 44 D. Computers;
- 46 E. Training; and
- 48 F. Content.

2           **Sec. 4. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§5, ¶A,** as enacted by PL 1999,  
c. 409, §2, is amended to read:

4           A. To ensure a basic level of connectivity for all of the  
qualified schools and, qualified libraries and qualified  
6           health centers in the State;

8           **Sec. 5. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§5, ¶B,** as amended by PL 2001,  
c. 522, §2, is further amended to read:

10           B. To ensure that all qualified schools, qualified  
12           libraries, qualified health centers and the Raymond H.  
Fogler Library at the University of Maine are capable of  
14           using the advanced technology equipment obtained through the  
fund;

16           **Sec. 6. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§5, ¶G,** as amended by PL 2001,  
18           c. 522, §2, is further amended to read:

20           G. To provide for the establishment of computer technology  
training programs in schools to provide training to students  
22           in areas such as, but not limited to, electronic commerce,  
Internet proficiency and World Wide Web-enabled systems; and

24           **Sec. 7. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§5, ¶H,** as enacted by PL 2001,  
26           c. 522, §2, is further amended to read:

28           H. To provide for electronic database content to be used  
for the purposes of accessing information by schools  
30           and, libraries, and qualified health centers; and

32           **Sec. 8. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§5, ¶I** is enacted to read:

34           I. To provide for the telecommunications equipment and  
increased bandwidth necessary to support electronic health  
36           records and telemedicine in rural, medically underserved  
areas.

38           **Sec. 9. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§7,** as amended by PL 2001, c.  
40           522, §2, is further amended to read:

42           **7. Coordination with existing facilities.** Any existing  
facilities developed to provide services to qualified schools,  
44           qualified libraries, qualified health centers and the Raymond H.  
Fogler Library at the University of Maine, as directed by the  
46           commission under this section, must continue to provide services  
to qualified schools, qualified libraries, qualified health  
48           centers and the Raymond H. Fogler Library at the University of  
Maine at rates that reflect the incremental costs to use those  
50           facilities.

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## SUMMARY

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6           This bill defines "qualified health center" and adds  
8 qualified health centers to the list of entities eligible to  
10 receive funding from the telecommunications education access  
12 fund. It also adds to the guidelines for the Public Utilities  
Commission to use in allocating money from the fund the provision  
of telecommunications equipment and increased bandwidth necessary  
to support electronic health records and telemedicine in rural,  
medically underserved areas.