

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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123rd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2008

Legislative Document

No. 2027

H.P. 1411

House of Representatives, December 21, 2007

**An Act To Provide Parents of Children with Disabilities Access to
Ombudsman Services**

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Clerk of the House on December 19, 2007. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative FLOOD of Winthrop.
Cosponsored by Senator SULLIVAN of York and
Representatives: CANAVAN of Waterville, GILES of Belfast, SAVIELLO of Wilton.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 303, sub-c. 4** is enacted to read:

3 **SUBCHAPTER 4**

4 **OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**

5 **§7351. Ombudsman program**

6 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
7 following terms have the following meanings.

8 **A. "Ombudsman" means the director of the program and persons employed or**
9 **volunteering to perform the work of the program.**

10 **B. "Program" means the ombudsman program established under this section.**

11 **2. Program established.** The ombudsman program is established as an independent
12 program within the Executive Department to provide ombudsman services to the children
13 and families in the State regarding special education programs and special education
14 services and to provide support to students with disabilities and their parents, guardians
15 and educators.

16 **3. Services.** The program shall provide services directly or under contract. The
17 program shall:

18 **A. Provide information to help families and educators understand state and federal**
19 **laws, rules and regulations regarding special education services and to access training**
20 **and support, technical information services and mediation services as appropriate;**

21 **B. Act as a liaison between parents and school administrative units; and**

22 **C. Help parties to a dispute explore options for resolving conflicts.**

23 **4. Report.** The ombudsman shall report to the Governor, the department and the
24 Legislature before January 1st each year on the activities and services of the program and
25 recommendations for changes in policy, rule or law to improve the provision of services.

26 **5. Oversight.** The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
27 over education matters shall review the operations of the program and may make
28 recommendations to the Governor regarding the services under this section. The joint
29 standing committee may submit legislation that it determines necessary to implement this
30 section.

31 **SUMMARY**

32 This bill creates an ombudsman program to provide services to children and families
33 in the State regarding special education programs and special education services and to
34 provide support to students with disabilities and their parents, guardians and educators.