

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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126th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2013

Legislative Document

No. 95

H.P. 77

House of Representatives, January 24, 2013

**Resolve, To Create the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual
Abuse of Children**

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative MAKER of Calais.
Cosponsored by Senator HASKELL of Cumberland and
Representatives: CASSIDY of Machias, DION of Portland, ESPLING of New Gloucester,
MacDONALD of Old Orchard Beach, NELSON of Falmouth, TURNER of Burlington, VOLK
of Scarborough, Senator: BURNS of Washington.

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

3 **Whereas,** this resolve creates the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of
4 Children to study and recommend policies addressing sexual abuse of children; and

5 **Whereas,** the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that
6 the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next
7 legislative session; and

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

12 **Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved:** That the Task Force on the
13 Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is
14 established; and be it further

15 **Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved:** That the task force consists of 13
16 members appointed as follows:

- 17 1. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 18 2. A representative of an organization representing law enforcement, appointed by
19 the President of the Senate;
- 20 3. A representative of a statewide professional teachers organization, appointed by
21 the President of the Senate;
- 22 4. A representative of a statewide coalition against sexual assault, appointed by the
23 President of the Senate;
- 24 5. A representative of a community-based organization serving youth, appointed by
25 the President of the Senate;
- 26 6. Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the
27 House;
- 28 7. A representative of a sexual assault crisis and support center involved in the
29 prevention of child sexual abuse, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 30 8. A person who is a victim of child sexual abuse, appointed by the Speaker of the
31 House;
- 32 9. A representative of an organization representing public school administration,
33 appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 34 10. The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee; and

1 11. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services, or the commissioner's
2 designee; and be it further

3 **Sec. 3. Compensation. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, public
4 members of the task force are not entitled to reimbursement for their expenses; and be it
5 further

6 **Sec. 4. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate
7 chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the task
8 force; and be it further

9 **Sec. 5. Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved:** That all
10 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
11 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
12 Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members,
13 the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force. If 30 days or more
14 after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been
15 made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority
16 for the task force to meet and conduct its business; and be it further

17 **Sec. 6. Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall study and develop
18 recommendations for preventing child sexual abuse. In developing those
19 recommendations, the task force shall:

20 1. Gather information concerning child sexual abuse throughout the State;

21 2. Solicit and receive reports and testimony from individuals, state and local agencies,
22 community-based organizations and other public and private organizations; and

23 3. Recommend policies to prevent and address sexual abuse of children, including
24 age-appropriate curricula for students in prekindergarten to grade 5; methods for
25 increasing teacher, student and parent awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of
26 children, including the provision of information concerning warning signs indicating that
27 a child may be a victim of sexual abuse; actions that a child who is a victim of sexual
28 abuse may take to obtain assistance and intervention; and available counseling options for
29 children affected by sexual abuse; and be it further

30 **Sec. 7. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the
31 Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force; and be it
32 further

33 **Sec. 8. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than December 4, 2013, the task force
34 shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested
35 legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. That joint
36 standing committee is authorized to introduce a bill to the Second Regular Session of the
37 126th Legislature related to the subject matter of the report.

38 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this
39 legislation takes effect when approved.

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SUMMARY

This resolve establishes the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children, which is directed to study issues regarding child sexual abuse in Maine and to recommend policies to address those issues. The policies may include age-appropriate curricula for school children from prekindergarten to grade 5 and methods to increase teacher, student and parent awareness of the issues regarding child sexual abuse. The task force is also directed to submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, and the joint standing committee is authorized to introduce a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 126th Legislature based on that report.