

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 1726

S.P. 571

In Senate, May 19, 2021

An Act To Increase Transparency in Political Communications

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by President JACKSON of Aroostook.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1014, sub-§3-B**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 443, Pt. A, §9,
3 is further amended to read:

4 **3-B. Newspapers.** A newspaper may not publish a communication described in
5 subsections 1 to 2-A without including the disclosure required by this section. For purposes
6 of this subsection, "newspaper" includes any printed material intended for general
7 circulation or to be read by the general public, including a version of the newspaper
8 displayed on a website owned or operated by the newspaper. "Newspaper" does not include
9 a communication under subsection 5-A. When necessary, a newspaper may seek the advice
10 of the commission regarding whether or not the communication requires the disclosure.

11 **Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1014, sub-§5-A** is enacted to read:

12 **5-A. Communication in the guise of news.** A communication in the guise of news
13 that otherwise meets the criteria of subsection 1, 2 or 2-A or Internet and e-mail activities
14 costing less than \$100, as excluded by rule of the commission, published or paid for by an
15 individual who is not required to register or file campaign finance reports with the
16 commission and who is employed by a candidate, candidate's authorized campaign
17 committee, party committee, political action committee or ballot question committee or an
18 agent of a candidate, candidate's authorized campaign committee, party committee,
19 political action committee or ballot question committee must disclose in an audio or video
20 communication or at the top of the page of a printed, e-mail or Internet post communication
21 "PAID FOR BY (insert name of employer)." If the communication is a printed, e-mail or
22 Internet post communication, the disclosure must be in capital letters and in at least 12-
23 point bold font.

24 SUMMARY

25 This bill provides that a political communication that is in the guise of news that
26 otherwise meets the criteria of political communication or is an Internet or e-mail activity
27 costing less than \$100 published or paid for by an individual employed by a candidate,
28 candidate's authorized campaign committee, party committee, political action committee
29 or ballot question committee or an agent of a candidate, candidate's authorized campaign
30 committee, party committee, political action committee or ballot question committee must
31 disclose in an audio or video communication or at the top of the page of a printed, e-mail
32 or Internet post communication "PAID FOR BY (insert name of employer)." If the
33 communication is a printed, e-mail or Internet post communication, the disclosure must be
34 in capital letters and in at least 12-point bold font.