

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2026

Legislative Document

No. 2087

H.P. 1402

House of Representatives, January 7, 2026

An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Licensure of American Sign Language Interpreters

Submitted by the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative MATHIESON of Kittery.

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

Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §1524-C, first ¶, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 284, §12, is amended to read:

No more than one conditional license may be issued to a person who has completed the education requirements of this chapter. A conditional license may be held no more than 4 5 years, except that a 5th 6th year may be granted by the director upon demonstration of extreme hardship.

Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §1524-C, sub-§3, ¶A, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 48, §5, is amended by amending subparagraph (1) to read:

(1) An associate degree or higher in any field, including an associate degree or higher in American Sign Language, American Sign Language interpreting or deaf studies, from an accredited college or university; or

Sec. 3. 32 MRSA §1525-A, sub-§3 is enacted to read:

3. Emergencies. This chapter does not apply to a person providing communication assistance during an emergency. For purposes of this subsection, "emergency" means a determination by the director, after consultation with the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation, that a serious, unexpected and potentially dangerous situation requires an immediate need for interpreting services to be provided as part of an emergency response.

SUMMARY

This bill addresses certain recommendations from the Transforming Interpreting Maine (TIME) needs assessment report issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in 2024 in the wake of the October 2023 Lewiston shooting. The bill authorizes an exemption to American Sign Language interpreter licensure during emergencies, creates a broader educational pathway to licensure and extends the period of conditional licensure from 4 to 5 years, with a 6th year granted in cases of extreme hardship.