

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# SEVENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

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SENATE.

No. 184

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## STATE OF MAINE.

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RESOLVE, in favor of the Children's Protective Society of  
Portland.

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*Resolved:* That the sum of five hundred dollars for the  
2 year nineteen hundred nine and five hundred dollars for  
3 the year nineteen hundred ten be and hereby is appropriated  
4 to be paid the Children's Protective Society of Portland, to  
5 assist the said society in its work in the protection and care  
6 of dependent and neglected children.



## STATEMENT OF FACTS

**ORGANIZATION:** The society was originally organized in 1902 under the name of Children's Protective Board, as a branch of the Associated Charities of Portland, but owing to the growth of its work and in order that it might have a more definite legal status for purpose of Court procedure, it was re-organized on the 18th of February, 1908, as a charitable corporation under the provisions of Chapter 53 of the Revised Statutes of 1903, for the following purposes:

**PURPOSES:** The purposes of this society are to aid in all appropriate ways destitute, neglected or delinquent children, and to protect them, when necessary, against cruelty and abuse, to seek out and investigate cases requiring attention, to find permanent homes for such children in private families, to assist in the enforcement of existing legislation for the benefit of such children and to secure additional legislation in their behalf when the same shall be required.

**WORK:** During the last two years nearly one thousand cases have been investigated by the society, principally through its agent, Mary S. Burnham, and nearly five hundred of these cases were dealt with during the year last past. The work done by the society is of two kinds, first; work outside the court by investigation, friendly intervention, mediation and advice; secondly, cases that have to be brought into court by legal process and disposed of by order of court placing the children in some appropriate institution or suitable private family. The work outside the court includes such work as inducing a father to provide for his family by paying a weekly sum to wife or agent, inducing parents by solicitation or through fear of legal action to place their children with relatives or in an institution temporarily until home conditions can be bettered bringing about reconciliations between parents for the benefit of the children, inspecting factories and stores to ascertain if the compulsory

school laws are being violated, visiting dance halls and causing their discontinuance if objectionable, investigating dives and causing the police department to close them and rescuing young girls therefrom.

As to cases in court the following may serve to illustrate the nature of the work accomplished:

A girl of twelve found helplessly intoxicated in the public street requiring medical treatment to save her life, the liquor being obtained in her own home where parent and sister of thirteen were addicted to it. Girl was placed temporarily in institution and afterwards restored to parents; whole family was reformed.

An infant six weeks old, the second illegitimate child of a young woman who was a confirmed inebriate with a police court record and utterly devoid of the moral sense, the child neglected in every way, with its eyes closed by a foul sexual disease and in immediate danger of total blindness, the mother refusing the aid of a physician. The City Physician sent a prescription for the eyes which the mother did not have filled. The child was sent to the hospital, its eyes treated and saved, and it was then placed in a home where it is now doing well.

A young girl sixteen years old turned away from her home by her parents, living alone in a deserted house, living a life of vice, weakened and sick, without change of clothing or food except such as was brought or obtained by the men who visited her for immoral purposes. Placed temporarily in an institution and finally restored to her family.

A six year old boy living with a man and woman who proved to be unmarried, the child being illegitimate, placed with them to board by its father, boy was being cruelly abused, beaten over the head and had one eye nearly closed as the result of a blow. Boy removed to a home and is now happy and thriving.

Two little girls, mother dead, father away all day, left to care for themselves and younger brothers, no food in the house, conditions filthy, immoral and indecent, one of the girls requiring treatment at the temporary home, from which she was placed out in a family and is now becoming a good and useful woman.

So we might go on with many other cases equally striking and pathetic. The rights of parents are fully appreciated and respected by the society and its agent; the action of the society is

conservative and separation of the child from the parents only compelled as a last resort, children often being restored to their parents after being removed temporarily to an institution. Is not a society which influences the lives of nearly five hundred children to such an extent in a single year, deserving of the hearty support of the community in which it exists?

The society is in need of funds for the following purposes: In many cases where children are first discovered by the agent in a needy and destitute condition immediate assistance is required for the child in the way of food, clothing or medicine. Some of the most distressing cases which are brought to the attention of the charitable workers in our city or county have been discovered by the agent in this way, and at times the society is without the necessary funds to furnish these immediate supplies. Again, the society has received no State aid heretofore and has no established home or institution. Frequently no existing institution can be found ready at once to take a child whose surroundings by reason of cruelty or neglect require his immediate removal to a proper home and no private family can be found willing to adopt the child. Consequently for some days and sometimes weeks, the child has to be entrusted temporarily to the care of the agent who has no suitable place in which to keep it. Funds are needed, therefore, to pay the board of such children in temporary receiving homes, that is in families who agree with the society to take a certain number of children in such emergency cases and board them for short periods of time at low rates till permanent homes can be found; also after permanent homes have been found in private families, careful supervision and inspection is necessary in order to ascertain whether the child is being properly supported, cared for and educated. This work also necessitates the expenditure of money for travelling expenses and services of an agent.

It is the aim and purpose of the society to avoid and do away with institutions and institutional work in the care of dependent and neglected children so far as possible, and to follow the modern and approved methods exemplified in the work of the Children's Aid Society of Boston, Massachusetts. The officers of the society do not intend to establish any home or institution for the carrying on this work or to call upon the State in future for money for such purposes. The society has never before

asked for any State aid and does not favor in general the State subsidy system and does not intend to ask for State aid in the future if its work can possibly be maintained by private contribution as we hope and believe it can be. But the sum requested of \$750.00 per annum is greatly needed by the society at the present time and is no more than is necessary to enable it to carry out and illustrate in the State of Maine the Massachusetts System of direct placing of children in homes, as much as possible, and it is believed that the adoption and extension of this practice in the State of Maine will result in the future in a great financial saving as well as great improvement in the method of caring for dependent children by eliminating the effects of institutional life and restoring such children to the atmosphere of the home and the normal life of the community.

ROBERT T. WHITEHOUSE,  
A. G. PETTENGILL,  
SCOTT WILSON,  
PERCIVAL P. BAXTER,  
CHARLES F. FLAGG,  
MISS JEAN CRIE,  
MRS. WILLIAM H. LOONEY.

*Directors of the Children's Protective Society of Portland.*





STATE OF MAINE.

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IN SENATE,

February 15, 1909.

Reported by Mr. IRVING from Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and laid on table to be printed under joint rules.

F. G. FARRINGTON, *Secretary*.