

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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NEW DRAFT.

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SEVENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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HOUSE

NO. 669

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*House of Representatives, March 23, 1917.*

*Printed under joint rules.*

*W. R. ROIX, Clerk.*

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STATE OF MAINE

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IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE  
HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

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An Act to Provide for Mothers with Dependent Children.

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Section 1. Every city and town shall, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, render suitable and needful aid to any mother residing therein, with a dependent child or children under the age of fourteen years, who needs and desires such aid to enable her to maintain herself and children in her home and who is fit and capable, mentally, morally and physically to bring up her children.

Sect. 2. This act shall apply to all mothers and their dependent children, whether or not they or any of them may have a settlement in this State, who shall have resided in the

4 state for not less than five consecutive years next prior to  
5 making application for aid. No mother nor any of her  
6 children shall acquire a settlement or be in process of ac-  
7 quiring a settlement while receiving aid nor be deemed a  
8 pauper by reason of receiving such aid.

Sect. 3. Such aid shall not exceed the value of ten dollars  
2 a month to a mother having but one child under the age of  
3 fourteen years, with a further allowance not exceeding four  
4 dollars a month in value for each additional child; the aid to  
5 be furnished hereunder may be furnished either in money or  
6 supplies or both.

Sect. 4. A State Board of Mother's Aid hereinafter re-  
2 ferred to as the "State Board" is hereby created to serve  
3 without compensation, and to consist of the members of the  
4 State Board of Charities and Corrections, ex officio. The  
5 Secretary of said State Board of Charities and Corrections  
6 shall be ex officio Secretary of the State Board of Mother's  
7 Aid, and serve without additional compensation as such.

In each city, town and plantation there shall be and hereby  
2 is created a Municipal Board of Mother's Aid, hereinafter  
3 referred to as the "Municipal Board" to consist of the Over-  
4 seers or Board of Overseers of the Poor ex officio, unless the  
5 city by ordinance or the town or plantation by vote upon  
6 warrant shall provide for a special board of not fewer than  
7 three persons, one of whom at least shall be a woman, ap-  
8 pointed or elected for three year terms, one term expiring  
9 each year, to serve as such "Municipal Board." The mem-

10 bers of such Municipal Board shall serve without compensa-  
11 tion as such. The Municipal Board shall keep a record of  
12 all applicants investigated, visit regularly or cause to be  
13 visited by some agent in their behalf the home of each  
14 mother aided hereunder; see that her children are actually  
15 living with her in her home, observe the conditions of the  
16 home and of the family and make and keep a record of such  
17 visits and any facts observed which bears upon the necessity  
18 or advisability of continuance of aid under this Act and re-  
19 port the same to the State Board.

Sect. 5. Any mother entitled thereto needing and desir-  
2 ing aid herein provided for may apply therefor personally or  
3 by letter to said Municipal Board. The Board shall there-  
4 upon cause the applicant to fill out and sign an application  
5 blank or shall fill out the same from information furnished  
6 by the applicant who shall sign it, in which shall be stated:  
7 First, name of the applicant and that of her husband, the  
8 time and place of her marriage, and whether her husband is  
9 living or deceased; Second, the names and ages of her chil-  
10 dren, whether those under compulsory school attendance are  
11 attending and what school, and if not, the reason of such non  
12 attendance; Third, her present residence and address, the  
13 length of time she has been a resident of this state and where  
14 she has resided therein; Fourth, the nature and amount of  
15 any property possessed by herself or her husband, if living,  
16 and her children, and the extent and source of their in-  
17 come and hers; Fifth, the name and addresses of her near

18 relatives and those of her husband, and of one or more per-  
10 sons to whom reference may be made for information;  
11 Sixth, a statement that the applicant will agree to employ all  
12 aid received by her under this Act solely for the support of  
13 herself and her children under the age of fourteen years, and  
14 for their proper upbringing in her home. The Board may,  
15 if it deems proper, require any such application and the  
16 statements made therein to be substantiated by the oath or  
17 affirmation of the applicant.

Any person who shall knowingly, wilfully and with intent  
2 to deceive make any false statement in said application blank  
3 shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred  
4 dollars or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both.

Sect. 6. When such application has been made to the  
2 Municipal Board, it shall forthwith make careful investiga-  
3 tion by personally interviewing the mother in her home,  
4 looking up her references, and pursuing such other sources  
5 of information as are available, for the purpose of determin-  
6 ing, first, the truth of the statements contained in her appli-  
7 cation; second, whether she is a fit and capable person to  
8 bring up her children, and whether the inmates and sur-  
9 roundings of her household are such as to render it suitable  
10 for her children to reside at home; third, whether the child  
11 or children of the applicant are attending school, and if not  
12 why; fourth, whether under all the circumstances, consider-  
13 ing her own resources and the ability of any member of her  
14 family to contribute to her support, the possibility of receiv-

15 ing aid from other relatives, individuals, agencies, or child  
16 welfare organizations, and the possibility of compelling con-  
17 tributions by any person under legal obligation so to do, such  
18 mother is in need of aid under the provisions of this act, and  
19 if so, in what amount.

Sect. 7. The Municipal Board shall thereupon file with  
2 the State Board a copy of said application and a written  
3 report embodying the results of their investigation and their  
4 recommendations thereon, and the State Board shall deter-  
5 mine all matters in question, and communicate in writing its  
6 decision to the Municipal Board. If the applicant is held en-  
7 titled to aid, the State Board shall determine its character  
8 and amount, which may be less than, but shall not exceed,  
9 the amount recommended by the Municipal Board. The town  
10 shall thereupon, pursuant to such decision, pay the same in  
11 money or its value to the applicant, or to some person desig-  
12 nated by the State Board upon the recommendation of the  
13 Municipal Board, who shall expend it for the purposes and  
14 in the manner set forth in the decision. The State Board  
15 may revive its decision whenever it deems it necessary or  
16 equitable so to do, but shall not increase the amount of aid  
17 previously awarded except with the consent of the Muni-  
18 cipal Board, nor decrease it without giving said Board oppor-  
19 tunity to be heard.

Sect. 8. If the said Municipal Board shall fail for thirty  
2 days to act upon and report upon said application, the said  
3 mother may make application for aid to the State Board who

4 shall communicate with the Municipal Board, and if the  
5 Municipal Board shall thereafter neglect or fail to act for a  
16 period of ten additional days the State Board itself shall  
17 proceed to investigate the merits of said application and to  
18 determine what, if any, aid shall be awarded the applicant,  
19 and the decision of said State Board shall be of the same  
20 effect and validity as if the Municipal Board had in the first  
21 instance proceeded according to sections 5, 6 and 7 of this  
22 act. The expenses incurred by the State Board by reason of  
23 the default of the Municipal Board shall be audited by the  
24 State Auditor and paid by the State Treasurer, who shall  
25 collect said amount of the town in which the Municipal  
26 Board so failing to act as aforesaid is located, by an action  
27 at law in the name of the state.

Sect. 9. In any case when application for aid hereunder  
2 is made by a mother who has a husband living, who is able  
3 by means of his property or labor to contribute to her sup-  
4 port and that of her children, but who wilfully neglects or  
5 refuses so to do, or who has deserted her or her children, it  
6 shall be the duty of the Municipal Board of the town where  
7 the applicant resides to advise the mother in making com-  
8 plaint to compel such husband to contribute to the support of  
9 his said wife and children, under the provisions of sections  
10 38 to 41 inclusive of Chapter 120 of the Revised Statutes, or  
11 in filing a petition under the provisions of section 9 of chap-  
12 ter 66 of the Revised Statutes; and until such proceedings  
13 have been begun, and are being prosecuted in good faith to

14 the satisfaction of the Municipal and State Boards, and until,  
15 in cases of desertion at least one year has elapsed from date  
16 of commencement of such desertion, no aid shall be given  
17 under the provisions of this act.

Sect. 10. The State Board shall have general supervision  
2 over the administration of the provisions of this act, and  
3 shall prescribe appropriate forms for application, reports and  
4 other proceedings required by the act; said Board shall keep  
5 a record of all cases reported to it hereunder and action  
6 taken by it in relation to the same; and shall keep on file all  
7 reports made to it by Municipal Boards; it shall see that  
8 families aided hereunder are visited as herein required and  
9 shall have access to any records of the Municipal Boards or  
10 of the Overseers of the Poor relating to any proceedings  
11 hereunder. In order to aid the State Board in determining  
12 any questions presented to it for decision by a Municipal  
13 Boards under the provisions of this act, it may, in addition  
14 to their reports, make further investigation in such manner  
15 as it may deem best. It shall embody a statement concerning  
16 the work done hereunder in the annual report of the State  
17 Board of Charities and Corrections.

Sect. 11. Any city or town rendering aid under the pro-  
2 visions of this act, shall be reimbursed by the State for one-  
3 half of the amount given after approval by the State Board  
4 and State Auditor of the bills. If the mother so aided has  
5 no settlement the city or town shall be reimbursed for the  
6 total amount of the aid given after approval of the bill as



7 aforesaid, but one-half of such reimbursement shall be made  
8 from the appropriation for support of state paupers. If the  
9 mother so aided has a lawful settlement in another city or  
10 town, the amount of such aid rendered may be recovered by  
11 the city or town giving it in an action against the city or  
12 town liable therefor, provided the city or town so liable was  
13 notified in accordance with the requirements of section 33 of  
14 chapter 29 of the Revised Statutes, or against the kindred of  
15 the mother and children so aided in the manner provided by  
16 section 33.

Sect. 12. For the purpose of reimbursing the cities or  
2 towns as provided in this act, there is hereby appropriated  
3 from the State Treasury, the sum of thirty-five thousand  
4 dollars, ten thousand dollars for the year nineteen hundred  
5 and seventeen and twenty-five thousand dollars for the year  
6 nineteen hundred and eighteen, provided that any unex-  
7 pended balances of the amount appropriated for nineteen  
8 seventeen may be expended for the purpose of this act in  
9 nineteen hundred eighteen.

Sect. 13. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent herewith  
2 are hereby repealed.