

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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E I G H T Y - E I G H T H L E G I S L A T U R E

Legislative Document

No. 598

S. P. 337

In Senate, February 16, 1937.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary and 500 copies ordered printed.
Sent down for concurrence.

ROYDEN V. BROWN, Secretary.

Presented by Senator Martin of Penobscot.

S T A T E O F M A I N E

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
THIRTY-SEVEN

AN ACT To Extend Suffrage to Qualified Voters in Unorganized Territory.

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

Sec. 1. Census; assessment of taxes; voting. It shall be the duty of the state tax assessor to procure annually on or as of April 1 through agents as hereinafter provided a sworn return enumerating all persons, male and female, 21 years of age and upwards, who are residents of the various unorganized units, government reservations excepted, of the unorganized territory as defined in section 133 of chapter 19 of the revised statutes. Said enumeration shall designate persons therein as qualified voters, aliens and others.

Said state tax assessor, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act, shall have the authority to appoint agents for the whole or any portion of the unorganized territory and said agents shall perform such duties, including the collection of the poll tax as hereinafter provided, as said assessor may authorize or delegate in each particular appointment. Said agents in the collection of the poll tax aforesaid shall have the same powers and may exercise the same methods as the collectors of

taxes in towns are authorized to exercise and use for the collection of personal and poll taxes committed to them. Said tax assessor may require, in his discretion, a filing of surety bonds by said agents in such amount as he deems necessary.

All male residents 21 years of age and upwards of the unorganized territory shall annually, on or as of April 1, be assessed by and shall pay to the said assessor or his duly authorized agent, a poll tax of \$3. The payment of said poll tax shall entitle the person so paying to the privilege of suffrage as hereinafter provided and any other privileges to which residents of towns are entitled by payment of such tax, not inconsistent with residence in the unorganized territory. Said assessor shall have authority to abate said tax in any case where conditions appear to warrant such action, and in such case the person whose tax is abated shall not forfeit any right or privilege to which payment of said tax would entitle him.

All said taxes so collected by agents shall be remitted by them to said tax assessor, who shall transfer such taxes to the treasurer of state. The balance of said taxes, after deducting costs of collection, shall be credited to the state school fund for the current year.

Said assessor shall give to male residents, 21 years of age and upwards of unorganized territory, upon payment of the poll tax, a receipt in proper form to secure any privilege to which he is entitled by the payment of said tax, and to female residents of the unorganized territory, 21 years of age and upwards, a certificate of residence, upon written application therefor on form provided for the purpose, for use in securing the privilege of suffrage hereinafter provided, and any other legal purpose.

Electors having legal residence in the unorganized territory may, upon presenting satisfactory evidence of such legal residence and of the legal qualifications of a voter to the proper officials of an adjacent town, vote in all county, state and national elections if such town is in the same county if not so situated, then only in state and national elections. Said town officials, before granting such privilege of voting, shall require the presentation by male electors of a receipt for payment of a poll tax in the unorganized unit of his residence and by female electors the presentation of a certificate of residence signed by said assessor as hereinbefore provided. Poll taxes collected of electors of the unorganized territory, who register in towns as voters, shall be paid by said assessor to said towns upon proper notice of the officials thereof of such registrations and such payment shall be considered as an assessment on said electors by said town officials. In case of unorganized units located in remote sections of the state, the secretary of state shall, upon written request of an

elector, designate the town wherein said elector may vote and notify the proper town officials thereof.

An elector who shall become a resident of the unorganized territory, or remove from 1 unorganized unit to another, shall have the privilege of voting in the town where previously registered for 3 months after such change of residence, and thereafter as a resident of the unorganized territory under the same conditions as heretofore provided.

Electors of the unorganized territory, who are unable to present themselves because of distance or other good and sufficient reasons in the adjacent town where registered as a voter, may vote by absentee ballot.

Any agent of said assessor who shall fail to remit poll taxes collected, to the said assessor within 3 months after collection, upon request therefor by the said assessor, shall be guilty of embezzlement and shall be punished accordingly.

Any person who certifies to a false statement relative to qualifications as a voter or residence of the unorganized territory for the purpose of securing the privilege of suffrage under this act, shall be punished for each offense by a fine of not more than \$100, or by imprisonment for not more than 6 months.

The selectmen of a town or the assessors of a plantation who wilfully refuse to permit an elector of the unorganized territory, who furnishes proper evidence of the legal qualifications of a voter and residence in the unorganized territory, to vote in accordance with the provisions of this act, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$100, or by imprisonment for not more than 6 months.

Sec. 2. Repealing clause. Paragraph 1 and the last sentence of section 139 of chapter 19 of the revised statutes, as amended; the words "an assessment of the school tax as provided in section 139" in lines 4 and 5 of section 138 of chapter 19 of the revised statutes; the words, "including the assessing and collecting of the school tax" and the further words "said agents in the collection of the school tax aforesaid shall have the same powers and may use the same methods as collectors of taxes in towns are authorized to exercise and use for the collecting of personal and poll taxes committed to them," in section 140 of the aforementioned chapter; and so much as relates to voters in unincorporated places and on islands as mentioned in section 76 of chapter 8 of the revised statutes and all other acts or parts of acts inconsistent herewith, are repealed.