

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1764

AN ACT TO REVISE THE
GENERAL ASSISTANCE LAWS

Sen. Carpenter

HSE-ENACT.
SEN-ENACT.
GOV-SIGNED
PL 83, c. 577

SUMMARY: The new draft, replacing LD 554 and other bills involving general assistance, retained the reorganization of the statutes and incorporated many new definitions.

Every municipality must establish a general assistance program, through ordinance. Municipalities are authorized to establish standards for eligibility, including work requirements and use of available resources, but need remains the sole criterion on the first application. District offices may be established by several municipalities, but they must be accessible by a toll-free telephone call, and open for a specific period; local offices must post the times they are open to take applications.

The Department of Human Services is to have copies of all municipal ordinances, reimburse municipalities with general assistance costs above .0003 of the municipality's 1981 valuation (unchanged formula), as long as claims are submitted within 90 days and provide information to municipalities on applicants. In addition, the Department is to review ordinances annually and review programs "regularly" and in response to complaints, assist municipalities in administration of the program, and to penalize municipalities which do not correct violations of provisions of the law. Finally, the Department is to report to the 1st Regular Session of the 112th Legislature.

A Senate Amendment (S-212) corrected some technical errors.

1776

AN ACT TO AMEND THE STATUTES
REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH AND
MENTAL RETARDATION

Rep. Nelson

OTP
HSE-ENACT.
SEN-ENACT.
GOV-SIGNED
PL 83, c. 580

SUMMARY: This bill was generally referred to as the "substantive Amendments for Mental Health and Mental Retardation" to the recodification of Title 34.

The amendments could not be printed as a bill until LD 832 had been signed by the Governor, but they were presented to the Committee at public meetings, and discussed through various work sessions. The Committee voted that the proposed amendments ought to pass, but the printed bill was engrossed without reference to a Committee. It is effective on January 16, 1984, one day after the recodification bill (LD 832).

Among the major provisions: allowing disclosure of confidential information to the Department of Human Services, if in connection with public guardianship; establishing the Office of Community Support Systems; removing the causal link between a person's mental retardation and their behavior as a basis for judicial commitment,