

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE  
117TH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

BILL SUMMARIES  
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON  
JUDICIARY

AUGUST 1995

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Sen. Joan M. Pendexter  
Sen. Sean F. Faircloth*

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**ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

**SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION BEFORE  
THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES**

**AUGUST 1995**

This document is a compilation of the bill summaries prepared by this office for the Joint Standing Committees of the Maine Legislature. The volume is organized alphabetically by committee; within each committee, the summaries are arranged by LD number. A subject index is provided at the beginning of each committee's summaries. The publication, History and Final Disposition of Legislative Documents, is helpful in determining to which committee any particular bill was referred.

In this document, the committee report or reports, the prime sponsor for each bill and the lead co-sponsor in each house if one has been designated are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are listed, by paper number, together with the sponsor for floor amendments. Final action on each bill is listed to the right of the title. Various categories of final action are abbreviated as follows:

<i>CARRIED OVER</i>	<i>Bill carried over to Second Session</i>
<i>CON RES XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses</i>
<i>CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE</i>	<i>Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED BETWEEN BODIES</i>	<i>House &amp; Senate disagree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED ON ADJOURNMENT</i>	<i>Action incomplete when session ended; bill died</i>
<i>EMERGENCY</i>	<i>Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days</i>
<i>FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>FAILED ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill failed to get majority vote</i>
<i>FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>INDEF PP</i>	<i>Bill Indefinitely Postponed</i>
<i>ONTP</i>	<i>Ought Not to Pass report accepted</i>
<i>P&amp;S XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Private &amp; Special Law</i>
<i>PUBLIC XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Public Law</i>
<i>RESOLVE XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Resolve</i>
<i>UNSIGNED</i>	<i>Not signed by Governor within 10 days</i>
<i>VETO SUSTAINED</i>	<i>Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto</i>

These summaries were prepared by the analyst or analysts assigned to the committee. If more detailed information is needed on a bill, contact the committee analyst.

5581LHS

**LD 423 An Act to Establish a Limit on Noneconomic Damages in Medical Malpractice Actions**

CARRIED OVER

<b>SPONSOR(S)</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REPORT</b>	<b>AMENDMENTS ADOPTED</b>
KIEFFER		

**SUMMARY**

This bill proposes to set a limit of \$250,000 on noneconomic damages in medical liability actions. Under this bill, a plaintiff is still entitled to the full economic loss, including all medical expenses, rehabilitation services, custodial care, loss of earnings and earning capacity, loss of income and any other verifiable monetary losses.

**LD 434 An Act to Improve Access to Public Records**

ONTP

<b>SPONSOR(S)</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REPORT</b>	<b>AMENDMENTS ADOPTED</b>
PENDEXTER	ONTP	

**SUMMARY**

This bill would have provided that public records relating to traffic infractions are not exempt from the laws granting public access to public records under the exception for records within the scope of a privilege against discovery or use as evidence in a court of law.

**LD 454 An Act Revising the Liability for the Storage and Distribution of Natural Gas**

PUBLIC 299

<b>SPONSOR(S)</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REPORT</b>	<b>AMENDMENTS ADOPTED</b>
PLOWMAN	OTP-AM	H-431

**SUMMARY**

This bill amends the law dealing with the liability standards of gas pipeline companies.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-431) replaces the bill and corrects the title to more accurately reflect the purpose and effect of the bill as amended. This amendment revises the liability of natural gas companies and natural gas pipeline companies when escaping gas causes fire or explosions and people are hurt or killed or property is damaged. This amendment holds a company liable for the acts and omissions of the company's employees and agents that cause the deaths, injuries and damages. The company is also liable for deaths, injuries and damages caused by defects in the portion of the distribution system in the company's control. The plaintiff does not need to prove that the company was negligent in these fact situations. There is a rebuttable presumption that any fire or explosion caused by escaping gas is caused by a defect in the portion of the storage or distribution system within the control of the company. This amendment specifies exceptions to a company's liability, and also provides for the indemnification of the company by the third party who is liable.

**LD 461 An Act to Ensure Children's Rights Concerning Visitation and Access**

PUBLIC 172

<b>SPONSOR(S)</b>	<b>COMMITTEE REPORT</b>		<b>AMENDMENTS ADOPTED</b>
LANE	OTP-AM	MAJ	H-211
	ONTP	MIN	