

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-TWO

H.P. 1354 - L.D. 1821

An Act To Protect Public Election Officials

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

Sec. 1. 17-A MRSA §751, sub-§2, as amended by PL 1997, c. 351, §2, is further amended to read:

2. This section does not apply to:
 - A. Refusal by a person to submit to an arrest or detention; ~~or~~
 - B. Escape by a person from official custody, as defined in section 755; or
 - C. Intentional interference by a person under Title 21-A, section 674, subsection 2, paragraph E.

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §1, sub-§34, as enacted by PL 1985, c. 161, §6, is amended to read:

34. Public official. "Public official" means a person elected or appointed to serve the people, including but not limited to an election official, municipal clerk or registrar.

Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §101, sub-§9, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 415, §1 and affected by §5, is amended to read:

9. Training. The registrar ~~must~~ shall attend a training session that is approved by the Secretary of State at least once every 2 years in regard to the conduct of voter registration. The training must include, but is not limited to, training on the de-escalation of conflicts and the process for reporting threats to or harassment of public officials related to the conduct of federal, state or municipal elections to the Secretary of State.

Sec. 4. 21-A MRSA §505, sub-§7-A, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 415, §4 and affected by §5, is amended to read:

7-A. Training. Attend a training session that is approved by the Secretary of State at least once every 2 years in regard to the conduct of elections. The training must include, but is not limited to, training on the de-escalation of conflicts and the process for reporting threats to or harassment of public officials related to the conduct of federal, state or municipal elections to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State shall offer training

sessions regionally at least once every 2 years at no fee. The Secretary of State shall encourage municipalities to provide training biennially to all election officials; and

Sec. 5. 21-A MRSA §674, sub-§2, ¶A, as amended by PL 2003, c. 447, §16, is further amended to read:

A. Assists another person in voting, knowing that the other person is not eligible to vote; or

Sec. 6. 21-A MRSA §674, sub-§2, ¶E is enacted to read:

E. Intentionally interferes by force, violence or intimidation or by any physical act with any public official who is in fact performing or who the person believes is performing an official function relating to a federal, state or municipal election.

Sec. 7. 21-A MRSA §675 is enacted to read:

§675. Reports of threats or harassment

1. Reporting of threats or harassment. The Secretary of State shall accept and maintain a record of reports of threats to or harassment of public officials related to the conduct of federal, state or municipal elections in the State. The Secretary of State shall adopt routine technical rules, as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, regarding the process for submitting reports pursuant to this subsection.

2. Annual report. Beginning February 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of State shall report the number and type of reports of threats to or harassment of public officials received by the Secretary of State during the previous calendar year to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over election matters.