

STATE OF MAINE

—  
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

—  
H.P. 1402 - L.D. 2087

**An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Licensure of American Sign Language Interpreters**

**Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas,** this legislation implements certain recommendations from the Transforming Interpreting Maine needs assessment report issued by the Department of Health and Human Services following the October 2023 Lewiston shooting; and

**Whereas,** this legislation would provide more opportunities for persons in need of American Sign Language interpreting to access these services, especially during an emergency; and

**Whereas,** immediate enactment of this legislation is necessary to expand access to American Sign Language interpreting in this State; and

**Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

**Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §1524-C, first ¶,** as enacted by PL 2019, c. 284, §12, is amended to read:

No more than one conditional license may be issued to a person who has completed the education requirements of this chapter. A conditional license may be held no more than 4 5 years, except that a ~~5th~~ 6th year may be granted by the director upon demonstration of extreme hardship.

**Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §1524-C, sub-§3, ¶A,** as enacted by PL 2021, c. 48, §5, is amended by amending subparagraph (1) to read:

(1) An associate degree or higher in any field, including an associate degree or higher in American Sign Language, American Sign Language interpreting or deaf studies, from an accredited college or university; or

**Sec. 3. 32 MRSA §1525-A, sub-§3** is enacted to read:

**3. Emergencies.** This chapter does not apply to a person providing communication assistance during an emergency. For purposes of this subsection, "emergency" means a determination by the director, after consultation with the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation, that a serious, unexpected and potentially dangerous situation is occurring, or did occur, that requires an immediate need for interpreting services to be provided as part of an emergency response.

**Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.