

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

S.P. 434 - L.D. 1065

**An Act to Improve the Telecommunications Relay Services Council by Reducing Its Membership and Allowing for the Hiring of an Executive Director**

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

**Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §8704, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 408, §6, is further amended to read:

**1. Membership.** The council consists of ~~12~~ 11 voting members as follows:

A. The Director of the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Labor, or a designee;

B. The chair of the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened established by Title 5, section 12004-J, subsection 17, or a designee;

C. One member from the Public Utilities Commission, appointed by the commissioners;

C-1. One member from the Maine Connectivity Authority, as established in Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 33-H, appointed by the president of the authority;

D. One member from the office of the Public Advocate, appointed by the Public Advocate; and

E. ~~Eight~~ Six members appointed by the Governor as follows:

(1) One member from the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf;

(2) One member from a statewide association for the deaf;

(3) One member from a disability rights organization in this State;

(4) One member from the largest incumbent local exchange carrier providing telecommunications relay service in this State; and

~~(5) One member of a telephone association in this State, except that the representative under this subparagraph may not be a representative of the carrier under subparagraph (4);~~

(6) Two members from the general public who use telecommunications devices for the deaf that operate in connection with telecommunications relay services as their primary means of telecommunications; ~~and,~~

~~(7) One member representing a company that provides telecommunications relay services through the Internet, wireless telecommunications or cable telecommunications.~~

The executive director shall serve as a nonvoting member of the council in accordance with subsection 3-A, paragraph E.

**Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §8704, sub-§3-A** is enacted to read:

**3-A. Executive director.** The council shall, within its allowable annual budget established by subsection 6, hire a part-time executive director to assist in carrying out the powers and duties of the council. The executive director shall:

A. Assist in the preparation and submission of the budget of the council required pursuant to subsection 6;

B. Prepare and submit the report required pursuant to subsection 8;

C. Assist the council with contract negotiations;

D. Assist the council with processing invoices;

E. Serve as a nonvoting member of the council; and

F. Perform all other duties necessary to assist the council in performing its powers and duties pursuant to subsection 5.

**Sec. 3. 35-A MRSA §8704, sub-§4**, as amended by PL 2017, c. 408, §6, is further amended to read:

**4. Appointment Election of chair and vice-chair.** Every 2 years, the members shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from among the membership. The vice-chair shall serve as acting chair in the absence of the chair. The council shall meet at the call of the chair but no fewer than 4 times during the calendar year. The chair may delegate, as necessary, duties to members of the council, either individually or through the formation of subcommittees, to carry out the functions of the council.