§451. Perjury

1. A person is guilty of perjury if he makes:

A. In any official proceeding, a false material statement under oath or affirmation, or swears or affirms the truth of a material statement previously made, and he does not believe the statement to be true; or [PL 1975, c. 740, §61 (AMD).]

B. Inconsistent material statements, in the same official proceeding, under oath or affirmation, both within the period of limitations, one of which statements is false and not believed by him to be true. [PL 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 1975, c. 740, §61 (AMD).]

2. In a prosecution under subsection 1, paragraph B, it need not be alleged or proved which of the statements is false but only that one or the other was false and not believed by the person to be true.
[PL 1999, c. 13, §1 (AMD).]

3. It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that the defendant retracted the falsification in the course of the official proceeding in which it was made, and before it became manifest that the falsification was or would have been exposed.
[PL 1981, c. 317, §12 (AMD).]

3-A. In a prosecution under subsection 1, paragraph A, evidence that the allegedly false testimony in the prior official proceeding was contradicted by evidence in that proceeding may not be a sufficient basis by itself to sustain a conviction for perjury.
[PL 1981, c. 317, §13 (NEW).]

4. It is not a defense to prosecution under this section that the oath or affirmation was administered or taken in an irregular manner or that the declarant was not a competent witness in making the statement or was disqualified from doing so. A document purporting to be made upon oath or affirmation at any time when the actor presents it as being so verified shall be deemed to have been duly sworn or affirmed.
[PL 1975, c. 740, §62 (AMD).]

5. As used in this section:

A. "Official proceeding" means any proceeding before a legislative, judicial, administrative or other governmental body or official authorized by law to take evidence under oath or affirmation including a notary or other person taking evidence in connection with any such proceeding; [PL 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW).]

B. "Material" means capable of affecting the course or outcome of the proceeding. [PL 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW).]

6. Perjury is a Class C crime.
[PL 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW). PL 1975, c. 740, §§61,62 (AMD). PL 1979, c. 512, §27 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 317, §§12,13 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 13, §1 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Special Session of the 132nd Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2026. The text

is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.