

CHAPTER 337-B
CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

§4681. Violations of constitutional rights; civil action by Attorney General

1. Interference with rights; action by Attorney General. The Attorney General may bring a civil action for injunctive or other appropriate equitable relief in order to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of the rights secured by the United States Constitution or the laws of the United States or of the rights secured by the Constitution of Maine or the laws of the State whenever any person, whether or not acting under color of law:

- A. Violates section 4684-B; or [PL 2023, c. 287, §1 (NEW).]
- B. Intentionally interferes or attempts to intentionally interfere with the exercise or enjoyment by any other person of those secured rights by:
 - (1) Physical force or violence against a person;
 - (2) Damage or destruction of property or trespass on property;
 - (3) Threatening physical force or violence against a person;
 - (4) Threatening damage or destruction of property or trespass on property; or
 - (5) Engaging in any conduct that would cause a reasonable person to suffer emotional distress or to fear death or bodily injury to that person or to a close relation. For purposes of this subparagraph, "close relation" and "emotional distress" have the same meanings as in Title 17-A, section 210-A, subsection 2, paragraph B and paragraph D, respectively. [PL 2023, c. 287, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 287, §1 (AMD).]

2. Place and name of action. A civil action under subsection 1 must be brought in the name of the State and instituted in the Superior Court for the county where the alleged violator resides or has a principal place of business or where the alleged violation occurred.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §1 (NEW).]

3. Jury trial. There is a right to a jury at the trial of an action on the merits under this section, but there is no right to a jury at the hearing of an application for a preliminary injunction or a temporary restraining order.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §1 (NEW).]

4. Civil penalty for violation. Each violation of this section is a civil violation for which a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each defendant may be adjudged. These penalties must be applied by the Attorney General in carrying out this chapter.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §1 (NEW).]

5. Service of order or injunction. Each temporary restraining order or preliminary or permanent injunction issued under this section must include a statement describing the penalties provided in this section for a knowing violation of the order or injunction. The clerk of the Superior Court shall transmit one certified copy of each order or injunction issued under this section to the appropriate law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over locations where the defendant is alleged to have committed the act giving rise to the action, and service of the order or injunction must be accomplished pursuant to the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, service must be made by the delivery of a copy in hand to the defendant.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §1 (NEW).]

6. Violation of restraining order or injunction. A person who knowingly violates a temporary restraining order or preliminary or permanent injunction issued under this section commits a Class D crime.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 582 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 821, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 442, §1 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 417, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 50, §1 (RPR). PL 2023, c. 287, §1 (AMD).

§4682. Violations of constitutional rights; civil actions by aggrieved persons

1. Remedy.

[PL 1991, c. 821, §2 (RP).]

1. (REALLOCATED TO T. 5, §4682, sub-§1-A) Interference with rights; private actions.

[RR 2001, c. 1, §11 (RAL).]

1-A. (REALLOCATED FROM T. 5, §4682, sub-§1) Interference with rights; private actions.

A person whose exercise or enjoyment of the rights secured by the United States Constitution or the laws of the United States or of the rights secured by the Constitution of Maine or the laws of the State has been interfered with, or attempted to be interfered with, may institute and prosecute in that person's own name and on that person's own behalf a civil action for legal or equitable relief whenever any person, whether or not acting under color of law:

A. Violates section 4684-B; or [PL 2023, c. 287, §2 (NEW).]

B. Intentionally interferes or attempts to intentionally interfere with the exercise or enjoyment by any other person of those secured rights by:

(1) Physical force or violence against a person;

(2) Damage or destruction of property or trespass on property;

(3) Threatening physical force or violence against a person;

(4) Threatening damage or destruction of property or trespass on property; or

(5) Engaging in any conduct that would cause a reasonable person to suffer emotional distress or to fear death or bodily injury to that person or to a close relation. For purposes of this subparagraph, "close relation" and "emotional distress" have the same meanings as in Title 17-A, section 210-A, subsection 2, paragraph B and paragraph D, respectively. [PL 2023, c. 287, §2 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 287, §2 (AMD).]

2. Place of action. The action under subsection 1 must be instituted in the Superior Court for the county where the alleged violator resides or has a principal place of business.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §2 (NEW).]

3. Jury trial. There is a right to a jury at the trial of an action on the merits under this section, but there is no right to a jury at the hearing of an application for a preliminary injunction or a temporary restraining order.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §2 (NEW).]

4. Service of order or injunction. Each temporary restraining order or preliminary or permanent injunction issued under this section must include a statement describing the penalties provided in this section for a knowing violation of the order or injunction. The clerk of the Superior Court shall transmit one certified copy of each order or injunction issued under this section to the appropriate law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over locations where the defendant is alleged to have committed the act giving rise to the action, and service of the order or injunction must be accomplished

pursuant to the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, service must be made by the delivery of a copy in hand to the defendant.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §2 (NEW).]

5. Violation of restraining order or injunction. A person who knowingly violates a temporary restraining order or preliminary or permanent injunction issued under this section commits a Class D crime.

[PL 2001, c. 50, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 582 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 821, §2 (RPR). PL 1993, c. 442, §2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 417, §2 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 50, §2 (RPR). RR 2001, c. 1, §11 (COR). PL 2023, c. 287, §2 (AMD).

§4683. Attorney's fees and costs

In any civil action under this chapter, the court, in its discretion, may allow the prevailing party, other than the State, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and the State shall be liable for attorney's fees and costs in the same manner as a private person. [PL 1989, c. 582 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 582 (NEW).

§4684. Application includes interference by private parties

For the purposes of this chapter and Title 17, section 2931, rights secured by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the United States and by the Constitution of Maine and the laws of the State include rights that would be protected from interference by governmental actors regardless of whether the specific interference complained of is performed or attempted by private parties. [PL 1991, c. 821, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 821, §3 (NEW).

§4684-A. Civil rights

For purposes of this chapter and Title 17, section 2931, a person has the right to engage in lawful activities without being subject to physical force or violence, damage or destruction of property, trespass on property, the threat of physical force or violence, damage or destruction of property or trespass on property or any conduct that would cause a reasonable person to suffer emotional distress or to fear death or bodily injury to that person or a close relation motivated by reason of race, color, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. For purposes of this section, "close relation" and "emotional distress" have the same meanings as in Title 17-A, section 210-A, subsection 2, paragraph B and paragraph D, respectively. [PL 2023, c. 287, §3 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 379, §1 (NEW). PL 2021, c. 366, §23 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 287, §3 (AMD).

§4684-B. Additional protections

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Building" means any structure having a roof or a partial roof supported by columns or walls that is used or intended to be used for shelter or enclosure of persons or objects regardless of the materials of which it is constructed. [PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW).]

B. "Health service" means any medical, surgical, laboratory, testing or counseling service relating to the human body. [PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW).]

B-1. "Medical safety zone" means an area extending 8 feet from the center of the entrance of a building in which patients receive health services. [PL 2021, c. 640, §1 (NEW).]

C. "Physical obstruction" means rendering impassable ingress to or egress from a building or rendering passage to or from a building unreasonably difficult or hazardous. [PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 640, §1 (AMD).]

2. Intentional violation. It is a violation of this subsection for any person, whether or not acting under color of law, to intentionally interfere or attempt to intentionally interfere with the exercise or enjoyment by any other person of rights secured by the United States Constitution or the laws of the United States or of rights secured by the Constitution of Maine or laws of the State by any of the following conduct:

A. Engaging in the physical obstruction of a building; [PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW).]

B. Making or causing repeated telephone calls to a person or a building, whether or not conversation ensues, with the intent to impede access to a person's or building's telephone lines or otherwise disrupt a person's or building's activities; [PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW).]

C. Activating a device or exposing a substance that releases noxious and offensive odors within a building; or [PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW).]

D. During the posted hours of operating after having been ordered by a law enforcement officer to cease such noise, at any time after the order, intentionally making noise that can be heard within a building and with the further intent either:

(1) To jeopardize the health of persons receiving health services within the building; or

(2) To interfere with the safe and effective delivery of those services within the building. [PL 2021, c. 640, §2 (AMD).]

Violation of this subsection is a Class E crime.

[PL 2021, c. 640, §2 (AMD).]

3. Knowing violation. It is a violation of this subsection for any person to knowingly enter into, remain in or create an obstruction in a medical safety zone during the posted hours of operation of the provider of a health service, with the following exceptions:

A. A person entering or leaving the building; [PL 2021, c. 640, §3 (NEW).]

B. A person using the public sidewalk or street right-of-way adjacent to the building solely for the purpose of reaching a destination other than the building; [PL 2021, c. 640, §3 (NEW).]

C. A law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical services provider, employee of a construction company or a utility or employee of a public works department or other municipal service acting in the course of employment; or [PL 2021, c. 640, §3 (NEW).]

D. An employee or agent of the health service or the operator of the building acting in the course of employment. [PL 2021, c. 640, §3 (NEW).]

Violation of this subsection is a Class E crime.

[PL 2021, c. 640, §3 (NEW).]

4. Demarcation. At the request of the provider of a health service, a municipality shall mark the boundary of the medical safety zone for the building in which the provider of a health service operates by painting lines or placing temporary markers. The municipality shall mark the boundary not later than the 30th day after the date the municipality receives a request under this subsection. The provider

of a health service shall post or cause to be posted at least one sign at the boundary of the medical safety zone that contains:

A. The following notice written in a clear and conspicuous manner: "HEALTH CARE FACILITY – NO STANDING IN THIS ZONE"; and [PL 2021, c. 640, §4 (NEW).]

B. A reference to subsection 3. [PL 2021, c. 640, §4 (NEW).]
[PL 2021, c. 640, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1995, c. 417, §3 (NEW). PL 2021, c. 640, §§1-4 (AMD).

§4684-C. Civil rights officers

1. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Civil rights officer" means a law enforcement officer who has received special training approved by the Attorney General in identifying and investigating civil rights violations. [PL 2023, c. 368, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

B. "Law enforcement agency" means an agency in the State charged with enforcement of state, county, municipal or federal laws or laws of a federally recognized Indian tribe, with the prevention, detection or investigation of criminal, immigration or customs laws or with managing custody of detained persons in the State and includes, but is not limited to, a municipal police department, a sheriff's department, the State Police, a university or college police department and the Department of Public Safety. [PL 2023, c. 368, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

C. "Law enforcement officer" means a state, county or municipal official or an official of a federally recognized Indian tribe responsible for enforcing criminal, immigration or customs laws, including, but not limited to, a law enforcement officer who possesses a valid certificate issued by the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy pursuant to Title 25, section 2803-A. [PL 2023, c. 368, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 368, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

2. Required civil rights officer. A law enforcement agency shall select, assign and secure training for a civil rights officer, notify the Attorney General of the name and contact information for the civil rights officer and notify the Attorney General of any change in assignment of the civil rights officer as soon as practicable after the change is made. The law enforcement agency shall make the contact information for the civil rights officer publicly available. [PL 2023, c. 368, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2023, c. 368, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).

§4685. Short title

This chapter may be known and cited as the "Maine Civil Rights Act." [PL 1991, c. 821, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 821, §3 (NEW).

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