

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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House Legislative Record
of the
One Hundred and Eighteenth Legislature
of the
State of Maine

Volume II

First Special Session

May 16, 1997 - June 20, 1997

Second Regular Session

January 7, 1998 - March 18, 1998

Unanimous reports 44
 Ought to Pass 2
 Ought to Pass as Amended 21
 Ought Not to Pass 21
 Divided reports 9
 Carry Over 3

Respectfully submitted,
 S/Richard J. Carey S/Kyle W. Jones
 Senate Chair House Chair
 Was read and ordered placed on file.

The following Communication: (H.C. 324)

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0001

June 2, 1997

To the Honorable Members of the 118th Legislature:

Enclosed please find HP 1338, LD 1887, "An Act Regarding Health and the Prevention of Smoking," which I am returning without my signature or approval.

The most serious health problem facing our young people today is cigarette addiction. The evidence from other states clearly shows that the best way to deter young people from getting hooked on nicotine is to increase the excise tax on cigarettes and implement an aggressive anti-tobacco campaign. In my State of the State Address last January, I proposed doubling the tax on cigarettes as a way to reduce smoking among young people. Doing so, I believe, is the single most important thing we can do for children's health care in Maine. It would also fulfill a personal promise I made 23 years ago to do what I could to keep kids off cigarettes.

But I made another promise when I ran for governor. I promised the people of Maine that I would do everything I could to reverse the long, agonizing downward slide of the Maine economy, caused, at least in part, by one of the highest tax burdens in the nation.

LD 1887 puts these promises in conflict.

The people of Maine did not send us here to repeat the mistakes of the 1980s when every available dollar in additional revenue was spent on new or expanded government programs. Signing LD 1887 would break faith with the people of Maine who believe that it is finally time for our government to live within its means. That's why my proposal would have returned the money raised by the increased cigarette excise tax to Maine people. It would have eliminated 150,000 of the lowest income taxpayers from the tax rolls, and given everyone else a cut in their income taxes. Because the increased cigarette tax would have a greater impact on those who can least afford it, my proposal would have returned the money to those who most deserve it. This tax was never intended to raise revenue for the state. It was designed to attack the most critical health problem in Maine today, cigarette smoking among young people.

Unfortunately, the current debate is not over the importance of raising the cigarette tax but on how to spend the money the tax will generate. So let's save that debate for another day. I have sent you legislation that will double the cigarette tax, support a comprehensive anti-tobacco prevention program, and allocate the bulk of the money to the Tax Relief Fund established in the budget passed in March. We can decide at a later date how that relief shall be provided. I urge you to give this bill careful consideration. It would be unfortunate in the extreme

if we miss this opportunity to do something good for Maine children.

I am committed to improving the health of Maine children; my advocacy of the doubling of the cigarette tax is evidence of this fact. I also stand ready to work with members of the Legislature and others to improve access to health care for Maine children, outside of the context of this bill. The best health care program of all is good jobs with good benefits - including family health benefits - and increasing the tax burden will only detract from that goal.

I respectfully urge you to sustain this veto and move to swift enactment of the bill described above. The only losers in this course will be the tobacco companies. The winners will be the children.

Sincerely yours,
 S/Angus S. King, Jr.
 Governor

Was read and ordered placed on file.

The accompanying Bill "An Act Regarding Health and the Prevention of Smoking (H.P. 1338) (L.D. 1887) (S. "B" S-412 to H. "C" H-723)

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor? All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 381V

YEA - Ahearne, Bagley, Baker CL, Berry RL, Bolduc, Bouffard, Brennan, Brooks, Bull, Bunker, Chartrand, Clark, Colwell, Cowger, Desmond, Driscoll, Dutremble, Etnier, Farnsworth, Fisher, Frechette, Fuller, Gagne, Gagnon, Gamache, Hatch, Jones KW, Jones SL, Kane, Kerr, Kontos, LaVerdiere, Lemaire, Lemke, Mailhot, McKee, Meres, Mitchell JE, Morgan, Muse, O'Neal, O'Neil, Pieh, Powers, Quint, Richard, Rines, Rowe, Samson, Sanborn, Saxl JW, Saxl MV, Shannon, Shiah, Sirois, Skoglund, Stanley, Tessier, Thompson, Townsend, Tripp, Tuttle, Usher, Volenik, Watson, Wright, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Barth, Belanger DJ, Belanger IG, Berry DP, Bigl, Bodwell, Bragdon, Bruno, Buck, Bumps, Cameron, Campbell, Carleton, Chick, Chizmar, Cianchette, Clukey, Cross, Dexter, Donnelly, Dunlap, Fisk, Foster, Gerry, Gieringer, Goodwin, Gooley, Honey, Jones SA, Joy, Joyce, Joyner, Kasprzak, Kneeland, Labrecque, Layton, Lindahl, Lovett, MacDougall, Mack, Madore, Marvin, Mayo, McAlevey, McElroy, Murphy, Nass, Nickerson, O'Brien, Ott, Pendleton, Perkins, Perry, Pinkham RG, Pinkham WD, Plowman, Povich, Savage, Snowe-Mello, Spear, Stedman, Taylor, Tobin, Treadwell, True, Underwood, Vedral, Vigue, Waterhouse, Wheeler EM, Wheeler GJ, Winglass, Winn, Winsor.

ABSENT - Davidson, Green, Jabar, Lane, Lemont, Paul, Peavey, Poulin, Stevens.

Yes, 67; No, 74; Absent, 9; Excused, 0.

67 voted in favor of same and 74 against, and accordingly the veto was sustained.

The following Communication: (H.C. 325)

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0001

June 10, 1997

To the Honorable Members of the 118th Legislature: