

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
20th Legislative Day
Tuesday, May 27, 2025

The House met according to adjournment and was called to order by the Speaker.

Prayer by Father Michael Seavey, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland.

National Anthem by Cony High School Concert Choir, Augusta.

Pledge of Allegiance.

The Journal of Thursday, May 22, 2025 was read and approved.

Under suspension of the rules, members were allowed to remove their jackets.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH** with the exception of matters being held.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from York, Representative Sargent, who wishes to address the House on the record.

Representative **SARGENT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in salute of 3G-T Robotics Team, the VEX State Champions for the Middle School Division from York, Maine. They're visiting us today.

This team is one of nine robotic teams from York. They work from September to May. They design, build and code their own robot. They participated in over five tournaments this year, including recently a trip to the World Championships in Dallas. York is very proud of these young people, who work so hard and demonstrate their creativity and their diligence as they have succeeded in this competition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The following items were taken up out of order by unanimous consent:

ENACTORS
Emergency Measure

An Act to Extend the Period of Time a Dentist May Operate the Practice of a Deceased or Incapacitated Dentist

(S.P. 37) (L.D. 23)
(C. "A" S-87)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 116 voted in favor of the same and 1 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Allow Coastal Seawalls to Be Raised by up to 2 Feet in Order to Accommodate Predicted Sea Level Rise

(H.P. 151) (L.D. 228)
(C. "A" H-164)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 118 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Allow the Public Advocate to Obtain Information from Public Utilities, Competitive Electricity Providers and Standard-offer Service Providers

(H.P. 546) (L.D. 860)
(C. "A" H-204)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 121 voted in favor of the same and 1 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes

(S.P. 440) (L.D. 1022)
(C. "A" S-99)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed.

Representative FREDETTE of Newport **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newport, Representative Fredette.

Representative **FREDETTE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, it is oftentimes my experience in practicing in district court that oftentimes I am dealing with; whether it be State attorneys who are representing clients in evictions, sometimes in divorces and whatnot; that are provided for by the State. The request in increased funding here to me just seems; in a period of time when funding issues, revenues seem to be challenged, that this is not something, based on my experience, that fits within a priority. I will not be voting for the measure and ask you to follow my light. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Enacted. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken.

ROLL CALL NO. 180

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Poirier, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Simmons, Skold, Underwood, Wood S.

Yes, 78; No, 65; Absent, 8; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

78 having voted in the affirmative and 65 voted in the negative, with 8 being absent, and accordingly the Bill **FAILED PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED** and was sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Modernize the Formulary for Naturopathic Doctors

(H.P. 747) (L.D. 1128)
(C. "A" H-178)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 124 voted in favor of the same and 1 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Continue the Exemption for Polystyrene Foam Disposable Food Service Containers Prepackaged at Wholesale

(S.P. 536) (L.D. 1306)
(C. "A" S-92)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 118 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act Regarding the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and Registration Fees Exemption for Certain Veterans

(H.P. 1039) (L.D. 1581)
(C. "A" H-152)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 125 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Sex Offender Management and Risk Assessment Advisory Commission Regarding Tier II Offenses

(S.P. 718) (L.D. 1836)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 118 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, to Direct the Governor's Energy Office to Conduct a Study Regarding the Future of Electric Transmission Infrastructure in the State

(S.P. 84) (L.D. 197)
(C. "A" S-126)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 96 voted in favor of the same and 45 against, and accordingly the Resolve **FAILED FINAL PASSAGE** and was sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Assess Its Current Meat and Poultry Inspection Programs

(S.P. 487) (L.D. 1198)
(C. "A" S-90)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 122 voted in favor of the same and 3 against, and accordingly the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, to Expand Child Assertive Community Treatment

(H.P. 935) (L.D. 1426)
(C. "A" H-206)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 115 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Dedicated Family Court in Maine

(H.P. 1072) (L.D. 1618)
(C. "A" H-199)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 107 voted in favor of the same and 12 against, and accordingly the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Acts

An Act Regarding the Term of Appointment of Judicial Officers

(S.P. 20) (L.D. 8)
(C. "A" S-106)

An Act Regarding the First Judicial District and the District Court Locations in the Judicial Divisions of Androscoggin and Western Aroostook

(S.P. 33) (L.D. 20)
(C. "A" S-105)

An Act to Update the Provision of Law Concerning Student Codes of Conduct in Order to Reflect Best Practices Regarding Behavioral Threat Assessment and Response

(S.P. 34) (L.D. 21)

An Act to Update the Laws Governing Education in the Unorganized Territory

(S.P. 35) (L.D. 22)
(C. "A" S-111)

An Act to Amend and Simplify Certain Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Licensing and Permitting Laws

(S.P. 42) (L.D. 27)
(C. "A" S-108)

An Act to Increase Oversight of Fatalities of and Serious Injuries to Adults Subject to Public Guardianship

(H.P. 15) (L.D. 51)
(C. "A" H-208)

An Act to Update the Definition of "Coastal Wetlands" Under the Natural Resources Protection Act and the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Laws

(H.P. 29) (L.D. 65)
(C. "A" H-161)

An Act to Establish Minimum Standards for Certain Urgent Care Facilities

(H.P. 31) (L.D. 67)
(C. "A" H-189)

An Act Concerning the Filing of Marriage Licenses and the Recording of Intentions as Part of the Electronic Vital Records System

(H.P. 47) (L.D. 83)
(C. "A" H-198)

An Act to Authorize the Release of Military Records to the Office of Chief Medical Examiner for the Purposes of Suicide Reporting and Prevention

(H.P. 73) (L.D. 108)
(C. "A" H-154)

An Act to Amend Certain Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Laws

(H.P. 90) (L.D. 157)
(C. "A" H-232)

An Act to Establish a Date to Begin Voting by Absentee Ballot in the Presence of the Clerk

(H.P. 91) (L.D. 158)
(C. "A" H-150)

An Act to Require Motor Vehicle Certificates of Registration to Include a Space to List an Emergency Contact

(H.P. 92) (L.D. 159)
(C. "A" H-153)

An Act to Provide 2 Hearing Aids to MaineCare Members with Diagnosed Hearing Loss

(H.P. 100) (L.D. 167)
(C. "A" H-190)

An Act to Increase the Number of Children a Child Care Provider May Care for Without Having to Be Licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services

(S.P. 89) (L.D. 202)
(C. "A" S-101)

An Act to Establish a Take-back and Disposal Program for Firefighting and Fire-suppressing Foam to Which Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Have Been Added

(H.P. 145) (L.D. 222)
(C. "A" H-160)

An Act to Allow Retail Pharmacies to Operate Remote Dispensing Sites in Rural Areas

(S.P. 105) (L.D. 239)
(C. "A" S-85)

An Act to Authorize the Public Utilities Commission to Approve Rate Adjustments for Low-income Water Utility Ratepayers

(S.P. 107) (L.D. 241)
(C. "A" S-82)

An Act to Update Certain Medical Examiner Fees

(S.P. 116) (L.D. 249)
(C. "A" S-98)

An Act to Support Mobile Home Residents in Purchasing Their Mobile Home Parks

(S.P. 122) (L.D. 255)
(C. "A" S-121)

An Act to Update Major Policy-influencing Positions Within the Maine Human Rights Commission

(H.P. 184) (L.D. 284)
(C. "A" H-165)

An Act to Enact the Safe Cosmetics Act

(H.P. 217) (L.D. 317)
(C. "A" H-193)

An Act to Increase the Size and Balance of Jury Pools

(H.P. 238) (L.D. 338)
(C. "A" H-159)

An Act to Establish a Primary Election Period for Unenrolled Candidates in Order to Receive Campaign Contributions in Amounts Equal to Amounts Allowed for Enrolled Candidates in the Same Period

(S.P. 176) (L.D. 390)
(C. "A" S-117)

An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Self-administered Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Collection Kits

(H.P. 266) (L.D. 412)
(C. "A" H-246)

An Act Regarding the Domestic Violence Advocate Privilege

(S.P. 191) (L.D. 458)
(C. "A" S-104)

An Act to Require the State to Pay Medicare Part B Premiums for Certain Retired State Employees
(S.P. 205) (L.D. 467)
(C. "A" S-113)

An Act Regarding the Substance Use Disorder Services Commission
(S.P. 221) (L.D. 503)
(C. "A" S-110)

An Act to Address the Rise in Rabies in Animals by Appointing Certified Rabies Vaccine Administrators
(H.P. 347) (L.D. 528)
(C. "A" H-250)

An Act to Eliminate a Rebuttable Presumption Against the Admission of Certain Applicants to the Bar
(H.P. 349) (L.D. 530)
(C. "A" H-166)

An Act to Amend Maine's Prescription Drug Labeling Law by Allowing the Removal of the Name of a Prescriber of Mifepristone, Misoprostol and Their Generic Alternatives
(H.P. 357) (L.D. 538)
(C. "A" H-179)

An Act to Support Outdoor, Agricultural-based and Hands-on Experiential Learning in Public Schools
(S.P. 202) (L.D. 550)
(C. "A" S-91)

An Act to Update Reimbursement Rates for Transportation of Deceased Persons by Funeral Homes When the Transport is at the Request of the Chief Medical Examiner
(S.P. 241) (L.D. 562)
(C. "A" S-103)

An Act to Support Informed Community Self-determination in Emergency Medical Services Planning
(S.P. 266) (L.D. 583)
(C. "A" S-97)

An Act to Extend Funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program
(S.P. 277) (L.D. 593)
(C. "A" S-83)

An Act to Raise the Salary Threshold for Overtime Pay
(S.P. 283) (L.D. 599)
(C. "A" S-114)

An Act to Ensure Access to Concurrent Methadone Treatment and Intensive Outpatient Programs
(H.P. 372) (L.D. 604)
(C. "A" H-239)

An Act to Allow the Secretary of State to Collect Excise Taxes on Motor Vehicles Owned by Residents Who Are Unhoused
(H.P. 379) (L.D. 611)
(C. "A" H-151)

An Act to Prevent Domestic Violence by Providing Adequate Funding Support for Court-ordered Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Programs
(H.P. 434) (L.D. 666)
(C. "A" H-170)

An Act to Increase Support for Statewide Emergency Broadcast Messaging
(S.P. 309) (L.D. 692)
(C. "A" S-107)

An Act to Bolster the Maine Teacher Residency Program
(S.P. 313) (L.D. 696)
(C. "A" S-112)

An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine
(S.P. 315) (L.D. 698)
(C. "A" S-124)

An Act to Expand Access and Reduce Barriers to Access to Naloxone Hydrochloride and Other Opioid Overdose-reversing Medications
(H.P. 449) (L.D. 710)
(C. "A" H-207)

An Act to Prohibit Municipalities from Barring the Creation of Homeless Shelters
(H.P. 473) (L.D. 731)
(C. "A" H-176)

An Act to Promote an Innovation-driven Economy by Increasing Research and Development Spending
(S.P. 348) (L.D. 788)
(C. "A" S-120)

An Act Regarding the Retired County and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Municipal Firefighters Health Insurance Program
(H.P. 534) (L.D. 848)
(C. "A" H-216)

An Act to Establish the Community Partnerships with Public School Systems Grant Program
(H.P. 633) (L.D. 973)
(C. "A" H-181)

An Act to Require a Person Operating a Watercraft for Recreational Purposes to Ensure All Children Under 13 Years of Age Wear United States Coast Guard Approved Personal Flotation Devices
(H.P. 671) (L.D. 1042)
(C. "A" H-233)

An Act to Support Access to General Assistance at Municipal General Assistance Offices and Designated Places
(H.P. 703) (L.D. 1081)
(C. "A" H-191)

An Act to Provide Water Service Infrastructure to Fairfield Residents Affected by Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances
(H.P. 730) (L.D. 1111)
(C. "A" H-158)

An Act to Provide Funding for MaineCare-related Services for Public Schools
(H.P. 742) (L.D. 1123)
(C. "A" H-183)

An Act to Clarify Standards for Defendants' Post-judgment Motions for Relief from Protection from Abuse Orders
(H.P. 748) (L.D. 1129)
(C. "A" H-245)

An Act to Expand Appliance Energy and Water Standards
(H.P. 763) (L.D. 1158)
(C. "A" H-157)

An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Advisory Board
(H.P. 827) (L.D. 1252)
(C. "A" H-249)

An Act to Authorize the Commissioner of Marine Resources to Add Limited-access Area Fishing Days During the Scallop Season
(H.P. 828) (L.D. 1253)
(C. "A" H-219)

An Act Regarding Eligibility for Historic Preservation Bond Proceeds
(S.P. 510) (L.D. 1282)
(C. "A" S-96)

An Act to Establish the Maine-Aomori Sister-state Advisory Council
(H.P. 871) (L.D. 1336)
(C. "A" H-234)

An Act to Establish the Municipal Stream Crossing Fund
(S.P. 555) (L.D. 1340)
(C. "A" S-116)

An Act to Preserve Traditional Driver's Licenses and Nondriver Identification Cards
(H.P. 883) (L.D. 1360)

An Act to Update the Maine Self-service Storage Act
(H.P. 913) (L.D. 1391)

An Act to Modify the Laws Regarding Driver's License Applications
(H.P. 933) (L.D. 1411)

An Act to Amend Laws Governing Hearing Aid Dealers to Allow an Exception to Certain Hearing Examination Requirements
(S.P. 552) (L.D. 1413)
(C. "A" S-86)

An Act to Update and Clarify Provisions Related to 9-1-1 Services
(H.P. 945) (L.D. 1436)
(C. "A" H-203)

An Act to Amend the Maine Uniform Probate Code
(H.P. 949) (L.D. 1440)
(C. "A" H-200)

An Act to Create a Green Crab Only Wholesale Dealer License
(H.P. 987) (L.D. 1503)
(C. "A" H-221)

An Act to Promote Firewood Banks in Maine
(H.P. 1010) (L.D. 1525)
(C. "A" H-248)

An Act to Support Farmland Conservation
(S.P. 612) (L.D. 1528)
(C. "A" S-84)

An Act to Extend a One-year Lobbying Prohibition to Partisan and Nonpartisan Staff of the Legislature
(H.P. 1034) (L.D. 1576)

An Act to Provide Relocation Assistance to Crime Victims
(H.P. 1056) (L.D. 1598)
(C. "A" H-195)

An Act to Protect Groundwater and Surface Waters from Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances from Landfill Leachate
(S.P. 641) (L.D. 1604)
(C. "A" S-128)

An Act to Eliminate Requirements for Drivers to Surrender Their Physical Driver's Licenses During a Temporary Suspension
(H.P. 1070) (L.D. 1616)

An Act to Allow the Keeping of Chickens on Private Residential Property
(H.P. 1096) (L.D. 1655)
(C. "A" H-173)

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right to Know Advisory Committee Concerning Denials of Public Records Requests
(H.P. 1203) (L.D. 1797)

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right to Know Advisory Committee Concerning State Boards and Commissions
(H.P. 1214) (L.D. 1813)
(C. "A" H-163)

An Act to Protect the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information in Records of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Tribal Populations
(H.P. 1221) (L.D. 1826)
(C. "A" H-197)

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right to Know Advisory Committee Concerning Public Records Requests
(H.P. 1222) (L.D. 1827)
(C. "A" H-244)

Were reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Resolves

Resolve, to Convene a Working Group to Examine the Classification of and Access to Public Records Maintained by Certain State Agencies
(H.P. 66) (L.D. 101)
(C. "A" H-231)

Resolve, Directing the Bureau of Financial Institutions to Issue Guidance Related to the Charging of Multiple Fees for Attempted Withdrawals Involving Insufficient Funds
(S.P. 78) (L.D. 142)
(C. "A" S-94)

Resolve, to Direct the Governor's Energy Office to Study Expanding the Use of Hydroelectric Power and the Development of a Geothermal Power Plant in the State
(H.P. 200) (L.D. 300)
(C. "A" H-201)

Resolve, Directing the Board of Pesticides Control to Prohibit the Use of Rodenticides in Outdoor Residential Settings
(S.P. 142) (L.D. 356)
(C. "A" S-88)

Resolve, Directing the Department of Education to Collect Data on Secondary School Mathematics Requirements
(S.P. 162) (L.D. 370)
(C. "A" S-109)

Resolve, to Require the Preparation of Preapproved Building Types
(H.P. 365) (L.D. 546)
(C. "A" H-235)

Resolve, to Require the Maine State Housing Authority to Submit a Report on the Pilot Project to Improve Access to Credit for Low-income Individuals
(H.P. 475) (L.D. 733)
(C. "A" H-236)

Resolve, to Conduct a Study to Update Flood Hazard Data in the Sandy River Watershed
(S.P. 291) (L.D. 758)
(C. "A" S-89)

Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Need to Codify or Recodify Laws Regarding Residential Community Ownership Associations by Adopting the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act
(S.P. 301) (L.D. 760)
(C. "A" S-122)

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Design a Mentoring Program for Youth Who Have Extended Care and Support Agreements with the Department
(H.P. 509) (L.D. 802)
(C. "A" H-172)

Resolve, Requiring the Maine Health Data Organization to Develop a Plan for Measuring Gaps in Home and Community-based Services

(H.P. 637) (L.D. 977)
(C. "A" H-175)

Resolve, Directing the Secretary of State to Study Providing Access to Absentee Ballots for Municipal Elections to Uniformed Service Voters or Overseas Voters in the Same Manner as Absentee Ballots for Statewide Elections

(H.P. 753) (L.D. 1148)
(C. "A" H-188)

Resolve, to Study the Public Health and Environmental Risks from Synthetic Turf

(H.P. 782) (L.D. 1177)
(C. "A" H-240)

Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Enhance Youth Hunting Participation

(H.P. 857) (L.D. 1322)
(C. "A" H-202)

Resolve, Directing the Department of Marine Resources to Evaluate How to Effectively Allow 2 Licensed Individuals to Fish for Lobsters or Scallops from a Single Vessel

(S.P. 556) (L.D. 1341)
(C. "A" S-115)

Resolve, to Establish a Working Waterfront Infrastructure Engineer Corps Pilot Program and to Conduct a Feasibility Study of a Higher Education Service Corps Program

(H.P. 942) (L.D. 1433)
(C. "A" H-194)

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rules to Protect Water Quality by Reducing Nutrient Pollution from Septic Systems

(S.P. 634) (L.D. 1550)
(C. "A" S-102)

Resolve, to Study Maine's Absolute Dominion and Beneficial Use Laws Relating to Water Rights

(H.P. 1131) (L.D. 1696)
(C. "A" H-156)

Were reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed, **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH**.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matters, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment Thursday, May 22, 2025, had preference in the Orders of the Day and continued with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

HOUSE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (12) **Ought Not to Pass** - Minority (1) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-117)** - Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** on Resolve, Directing the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to Apply for Federal Funding for the Purpose of Identifying the Rail Corridor Connecting Portland to Orono as an Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 316) (L.D. 487)

TABLED - May 13, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF EITHER REPORT**.

Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative HASENFUS of Readfield **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Readfield, Representative Hasenfus.

Representative **HASENFUS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I grew up on a road called Maranacook Station Lane. Now, the reason it's called Maranacook Station Lane is because that was the road that accessed Maranacook Station. Maranacook Station was one of the many stations that was a passenger rail stop, bringing tourists from Massachusetts or passengers along. And that is what my road is named after.

Currently, the line still exists that travels from northern Maine to southern Maine. This is the only operational line currently hauling freight that goes from Portland to Bangor, through Orono and further north. Just recently; last year, actually; I witnessed, as I was going to my mother's house; who still lives on Maranacook Station Lane; that there was heavy equipment removing ties, placing new ties; there were rails, long rails, laid on the side of the track, running as long as the eye could see. What this was was an approximately \$100 million investment by CSX, the new owner of that line, to upgrade that line to a Class 3 rail. Now, for those of you who; like I was before this bill; unfamiliar with the rail schedules, a Class 3 is the second-to-highest class that one can get. It allows freight to travel at 40 miles an hour; it allows passenger rail to travel at 60 miles an hour. And the Amtrak Downeaster usually goes on a Class 4, which would allow 80-mile-an-hour travel.

Now, this is important, because this investment has happened in the interim after a propensity study that you may hear about was done, looking at the feasibility of expanding passenger rail. It's also very important because the groundwork, literally, has been laid to get it to a Class 4 rail that would be the standards required for Amtrak. And what this bill is proposing is something relatively modest, and really, all that this bill is asking is that DOT apply for federal funding. That's it. That's what this bill does.

See, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act set forth \$66 billion for expanding passenger rail. And as part of that process, to be able to receive the money, we must first by making an application. If that application is granted, the feds will then, through step one of this three-step process, offer \$500,000 at 100% funding to get ready for a service development plan. That's what this bill does; it asks for the funding to get ready for a service development plan. If, once that service development plan precursor looks good, at that point, the State can then ask to move to step two, which would be to actually create the service development plan, which would lay out the plan components, the station stops, the equipment needed, overnight yards, new investments to bring that from a Class 3 to Class 4, that would all be part of the service development plan. But that, like I said, that is getting way ahead of ourselves today and what we're doing in this Body. And then that is funded at 90/10, and the final step would be funded at 80/20.

But let me back up, because I don't want to get ahead of ourselves. We are not dealing with the service development plan at this juncture, nor are we dealing with any build at this juncture. What this bill is doing, it is simply saying, please, DOT, we are directing you through the legislative authority to apply for this federal money, so that then we can further investigate whether we can actually get passenger rail to northern Maine,

as so many of our constituents want. Further, there was a recent poll that was released that said that six in 10 Mainers that are in the vicinity of this expanded project would ride this train. Further, 63% of Mainers said that they would be willing to consider a bond to fund the further expansion of Amtrak. And more than half of Republican voters would fund bonding for such an expansion of Amtrak. And keep in mind that we are just dealing with step one, that is not asking for funding at this time; it is just asking for the federal government to review our application and see if we would even qualify for such funding.

And finally, what we now have that we have been missing in the past is an actual economic impact study. So, after the Committee reported this bill out, there was an economic impact study that was done by the Rail Passenger Association, which has successfully completed the underlying groundwork for a number of these Corridor ID grants that the federal government has done. And so, I'd like to just highlight a few things from that study.

So, the biggest takeaway from that study is that it would generate \$61 million in estimated annual statewide economic benefits. Now, if you think about what passenger rail would bring, it would bring all of the stops along the corridor, it would bring passengers from Massachusetts, from New Hampshire, from southern Maine into northern Maine and it would work in the inverse, bringing those passengers from northern and central Maine to southern Maine. So, not only would the northern Maine and central Maine communities benefit from it, but so too would the southern Maine communities, as it's getting more riders coming down the State. And additionally, part of this study also showed that more than 260,000 new riders would be projected in the first year, and that that would grow exponentially. You see, you not only have the people who would leave their car if there's a passenger rail option, but there's also the people that wouldn't take their car in the first place. So, you're going to add a new subset of individuals who won't even drive. Because the train is there, they will ride; and if the train is not there, they will not ride; and if they do not ride, they do not spend their money; and if they do not spend their money, then our businesses do not get that benefit, our taxes don't get the benefit of out-of-staters spending money here and, of course, we would not see those 191 new jobs that the report also has predicted. It's predicted that we would see \$12 million in annual savings to passengers over their travel methods and nearly \$10 million in reduced road maintenance costs. Additionally, \$2.4 million in annual State and local taxes would be generated and 5.9 million vehicle miles saved.

You know, one of the funniest things I gleaned from this study is just how our perceptions don't always match with the data, and, you know, one thing is, did you know that train ridership actually increases the colder the mean temperature gets? You know, that's a funny little fun fact, but that's why expanding to Bangor and Orono would make perfect sense, some of the coldest spots in Maine.

So, with that, I think that this makes sense, given that it is simply directing that an application be made. It is not committing this Legislature to any future spending. It is simply seeing if we can qualify for some of that \$66 billion that has been approved by Congress and is currently on the table. It is popular, our constituents like it, I don't know how many times I've been asked, 'when is passenger rail coming back to central and northern Maine?' And I would say, 'when the federal government gives us some money;' which, here it is, here is that opportunity that will surely go away. And it makes good economic sense, not only for those communities that are going to host the line and the stations, but the surrounding

communities that generate travel from individuals meeting the train in Winthrop or Bangor or Pittsfield or Waterville. It's time to move forward. The train is literally about to leave the station, and if we don't get on board now, we may never have the opportunity in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newcastle, Representative Crafts.

Representative **CRAFTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my Good Colleague from Readfield, I agree that there's an interest in expanding transportation, specifically mass transit and passenger rail in our State, and we have a State Rail Plan that does just that. Unfortunately, this bill before us is not part of that State Rail Plan for several reasons.

It's not the first time passenger rail to Bangor and Orono has come up; there's been interest in the past. In 2023, this Legislature and the Committee on Transportation organized a rail propensity study and, unfortunately, the results of that propensity study pointed out several reasons why investing both in capital costs and in operational ongoing subsidy does not make sense at this time. One is the low ridership based on population; not because the cities and towns along this rail line don't matter, but rather, because in order to qualify for the Corridor ID Program and receive a federal subsidy, we would need to locate the line along more highly dense population towns. Additionally, we have low congestion along this corridor in our highway system, and the route as drawn is not time competitive, meaning that it would, in fact, take significantly longer to ride the train than to drive, thus decreasing the rate at which people would use the service.

The initial projected capital cost in the propensity study for this line ranged between \$375 and \$902 million. With federal matching, this would still leave the State on the line for around \$180 million. Projected ongoing operational costs; if we matched the same subsidy rate of 50% of rides as we do with the current Downeaster, it would require at a \$30 ticket; it would be \$16.2 million annually. And one of the challenges that our Committee has faced over and over again is in order to apply for the Corridor ID Program, you need two things: you need an agreement with the line, which we don't have with CSX; and you need to be able to identify where in your State budget the revenue will be coming from, allocated from. And at this time, economically, identifying an additional \$16.2 million in our Highway Fund or General Fund budget seems unlikely.

With no subsidy, this line from Brunswick to Bangor, a one-way ticket is projected to be approximately or between \$168 and \$232 per person, thus not making it an affordable transit mechanism to move Maine people. And what the propensity study instead recommended was that our State continue to invest in flexible, easy-to-access bus service, which the department is currently running a two-year pilot program between Lewiston and Portland, and we will take that up as a Committee moving forward.

And in closing, from John Theriault, the Chair of the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System, who participated in the propensity study, is quoted as saying: "BACTS recognizes the appeal of extending passenger rail service to Bangor. However, the significant capital costs associated with a rail alternative appears to outweigh the benefits and conflicts with our goal of maintaining fiscal responsibility for transportation investments in the Greater Bangor region." With this, I would ask people to follow my light. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Montell.

Representative **MONTELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Colleagues of the House, I rise in opposition to the pending motion.

Instead, I am in strong support of this Resolve that would direct the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to apply for federal funding for the purpose of identifying the rail corridor connecting Portland to Orono as an intercity passenger rail corridor. This federally funded study to expand passenger rail service from Portland to Orono would have a tremendous positive impact on our State and the communities within it. Mr. Speaker, this initiative is a step toward connecting northern Maine to the rest of the State while achieving economic growth, protecting our fragile infrastructure, making our roads safer and helping us to attain our climate goals.

With the new information we have now, that we did not have during the Committee process that the Good Representative from Readfield spoke about, we see a pathway to a bold economic development strategy that will benefit communities across our State. According to this modeling study provided by the Rail Passengers Association in Washington, D.C., expanding passenger rail is projected to generate over \$61 million in new revenue and create 191 new jobs in sectors ranging from construction and transportation to hospitality and tourism as well. Mr. Speaker, it would also generate millions in tax revenue statewide. For example, in Cumberland County alone, would generate more than \$1.4 million annually just in additional tax revenues, a substantial and recurring benefit for local government and residents alike. This investment would also address our serious public transportation deficit, which we are currently only meeting the needs of 11%; are offering Mainers more accessible, reliable and sustainable travel options that can transport in all weather conditions? According to the proposed model, an estimated 5.9 million vehicle miles traveled would be removed from our highways and secondary roads each year. This reduction means lower greenhouse gas emissions, fewer traffic accidents and fatalities and projected road maintenance savings of approximately nine million dollars annually. Mr. Speaker, fewer cars on the road also reduce congestion and wear and tear on our aging infrastructure. Municipalities would benefit greatly from reduced road maintenance.

We often talk about building a Maine that is future-ready. Passenger rail is a tangible and impactful way to do just that. It will connect our communities, strengthen our economy and protect our environment and improve everyday lives of our residents. I respectfully urge you to support this critical investment in our State's future and oppose the pending motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bangor, Representative Supica.

Representative **SUPICA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't planned on speaking, but I felt compelled to, since my community was brought forward.

Just a little background. I remember once, when asking the good Mr. Theriault why we didn't have a sidewalk in an area of town where a lot of children play, he said, because cement is expensive. So, the excuse that something is too expensive, I've heard time and time again in Bangor when it comes to pedestrian safety and our public transportation, and we've had to fight tooth and nail for the infrastructure that we have now and it's still not good enough. We don't even have service on the weekends, really, we don't have them; we've never had it on Sundays. We're just starting to implement bus stops. Central

and northern Maine can really use this infrastructure, and just as the Good Representative from Gardiner said, we're building for the future. The way it is now, we are very disconnected from the rest of the State and from the rest of the country because of that. I always talk about Bangor; it almost feels like sometimes a little bit of a vortex, that to actually physically get out and leave the area is really hard for people. And we know that the more you're able to move around, the more you're able to access jobs and opportunities and education, and this Resolve, this simple, simple Resolve is just a step in the direction; even though maybe, people may not feel like they're saying, Bangor doesn't matter, northern Maine doesn't matter; this is an act that one can take to show that they do care about the future of connectivity and not just saying, 'oh, we'll get a bus to you eventually.' Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Madawaska, Representative Albert.

Representative **ALBERT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The term 'northern Maine;' where does it end? Bangor? Or is it a little further up north? I'm sorry, but, you know, economic sense; you want to make economic sense and do something wonderful for the State of Maine, get I-95 finished from Houlton to the northern part of Maine. That's where northern Maine is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Readfield, Representative Hasenfus.

Representative **HASENFUS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to make a few final comments here.

One is that the propensity study that came out in 2023, that was prior to the improvements that were made by CSX, and it also considered the route that would go through Augusta, down the Lower Road that currently is, I think, barely a; it's not even a Class 1 rail line. So, that is a significant difference that has happened between the propensity study to today. Additionally, it mentioned low ridership. The propensity study only factored in those individuals that would be taking their car, and it did not factor in those other individuals that would choose to stay home instead of taking their car. For example, some elderly individuals may not take a car or a bus due to the cramped conditions, but would take a train. The same with young college students may also be in that situation.

And then, I'd like to speak to the corridor funding piece. And this is from an application to the same program that this bill is asking the DOT to apply for, it was an application done to extend Brunswick to Rockland that was successfully completed, and it says, "Corridor Funding. A funding commitment letter from MaineDOT is attached. As noted in the letter, MaineDOT is committed to providing financial assistance, when available, to make service and corridor improvements as identified in the Service Development Plan." There is then a table of existing Downeaster operations, and then it says, "no federal funding tied to this project must be spent by a certain date." To me, that says that the State of Maine can be committed, but the Legislature will have to authorize whatever funding there is in the future for any of these programs, and that the first step should be to ask for an application to be filed to get the information, so we can have accurate data for us, the Legislature, to determine whether or not we want to continue spending for passenger rail or, you know, to make that decision.

And in closing, I'd say; 2025, this project goes away, so, let's get on board now or forever lose the train.

Representative **HEPLER** of Woolwich **REQUESTED** that the Clerk **READ** the Committee Report.

The Clerk **READ** the Committee Report in its entirety.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 181

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer M, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, Dill, Ducharme, Farrin, Faulkingham, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Friedmann, Gattine, Gere, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hepler, Jackson, Javner, Kessler, Kuhn, Lance, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Macias, Mason, Mastraccio, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Morris, Murphy, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Zager.

NAY - Abdi, Archer, Arford, Beck, Boyer D, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Flynn, Fredericks, Frost, Geiger, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hymes, Julia, Lajoie, Lavigne, Lee, Mathieson, Matlack, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Nutting, O'Halloran, Osher, Pugh, Rana, Rollins, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Stover, Supica, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Adams, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 93; No, 52; Absent, 6; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

93 having voted in the affirmative and 52 voted in the negative, with 6 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

HOUSE REPORT - **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-144)** - Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** on Bill "An Act to Identify the State's Unidentified Human Remains"

(H.P. 359) (L.D. 540)

TABLED - May 14, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative BOYER of Poland.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF COMMITTEE REPORT.**

The Unanimous Committee Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED.**

The Bill was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (H-144)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED.**

Under suspension of the rules, the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading.**

Under further suspension of the rules, the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-144)** and sent for concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH** with the exception of matters being held.

SENATE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (11) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)** - Minority (2) **Ought Not to Pass** - Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** on Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council Regarding the Rail Line from Portland to Yarmouth

(S.P. 47) (L.D. 30)

- In Senate, Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Resolve **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-45).**

TABLED - May 7, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF EITHER REPORT.**

Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

Representative MONTELL of Gardiner **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Montell.

Representative **MONTELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and Colleagues of the House, I rise in opposition to the pending motion.

This bill, LD 30, would authorize the removal of 25 miles of State-owned rail line from the City of Portland to the City of Auburn and replace it with an interim trail at the estimated cost of \$1 million per mile. Additionally, this portion of the rail line would sever the connection from Portland's waterfront terminal to the province of Quebec. So, it would sever the tie that connects Maine's three largest cities with Montreal forever. The State-owned line, under the Rail Preservation Act, is to be preserved for future rail use and that any non-rail use is to be considered interim in nature. It is my opinion that removing rail tracks would not fit the definition of 'interim.' Furthermore, much of this line is currently being used for freight, and should freight continue to expand on this line after a trail was constructed, the trail would by law have to be removed, as rail takes precedence according to the Rail Preservation Act.

A more sensible solution would be to build a trail alongside this rail line. Much of the rail is double-tracked, which would allow for both rail and trail to coexist here. Rails and trails together could create economic growth far greater than just trails alone. Please join me in opposing this motion. Should this bill pass, I would ask that you join me in supporting my Amendment that I put forth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Falmouth, Representative Kuhn.

Representative **KUHN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members of the House. I rise in support of the pending motion.

The rail corridor under discussion here is a redundant line, and I say 'redundant' because there is another line between the same two points that is currently in use. It's a redundant line that has been out of service for decades. It currently sits idle, actually deteriorating, while commuters in and out of Maine's two of the largest cities are just sitting in their cars.

Now, imagine a safe, active transit corridor where commuters can travel on bikes and on foot, separate from vehicle lanes, improving community health and getting cars off the road, reducing our carbon emissions. This future is a win for our region, which is why conversion to trail was the Majority

Report of the Rail Use Advisory Commission that was convened to evaluate this project. And I'd like to take a minute to talk about that process.

In 2021, the State of Maine created the RUAC process, so that community stakeholders could be the ones to determine the future of unused rail lines. The purpose was to facilitate discussion, gather information and provide advice to the Commissioner regarding the future use of a rail corridor. It includes evaluation of the benefits and costs of potential uses of rail and trail uses. The RUAC Council in this case did just that. It was made up of 15 members, including representatives from each of the towns along the corridor, as well as advocates representing various stakeholders. The Council met eight times over a nine-month period and received and reviewed more than 700 public comments. And, in fact, nearly 86% of those public comments indicated support for a trail. I was at the final RUAC meeting back in December 2022, and I had the opportunity to cast Falmouth's vote in support of interim trail and join a majority of the members in this stakeholder's group in recommending a multi-use trail in the corridor.

It's very concerning to me that after a thorough and thoughtful process; which was commanded by the State; a majority report of community stakeholders can be overturned by a last-minute Amendment. I would ask you to further consider the consequences downstream of setting that kind of precedent. Who will ever take part in a RUAC Council in the future? What community members will bother submitting comments if 86% of community members' opinion can be overturned here in this Chamber at the 11th hour? This Amendment undermines the process that this Body established. I urge Members to support the Majority Report and support the transition of this important corridor. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newcastle, Representative Crafts.

Representative **CRAFTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the RUAC Process, the Rail Use Advisory Council, exists exactly for the reason of helping this Body determine the future use of rail lines, because throughout history, and as our Committee saw, there is very strong opinion about preserving rail and building and expanding our trail system in Maine. And both groups have highly legitimate, important reasons for both, and so, this Body created the RUAC process, so that stakeholders in our communities could have a voice and engage in a process to determine the future of these unused State lines. As a result of that, as my colleague from Falmouth stated, the majority of the RUAC Council for Portland to Auburn did vote in support of trail, and as you see in the Report from this Committee, this Committee supported the work of that RUAC for that very reason. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from North Yarmouth, Representative Graham.

Representative **GRAHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, seven separate communities support this. Hundreds of individuals stand in support of this. This is a rail line that has been unused for 30 years. I know; I live right there. This bill will allow us to start the process; not funding, but process; of looking how we can do 'rail until trail.'

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read from the *Portland Press Herald* and the *Sun Journal* an article; an opinion article that was put forward by the Mayor of Portland, Mark Dion, and the Mayor of Auburn, Jeffrey Harmon. They said: "As the mayors of Portland and Auburn, we enthusiastically support LD 30; a bill that would transform an unused rail corridor into a vibrant, 26-mile walking and biking trail connecting our two

cities. The Casco Bay Trail isn't just about repurposing railroad tracks; it's about building a stronger, healthier, and more connected Maine.

"LD 30 would transfer the rail corridor into the Casco Bay Trail, a multi-use path for walking, running, biking, and recreation. The Portland-to-Auburn Rail Use Advisory Committee;" RUAC; "concluded that the proposed trail is the highest and best use of the rail line at this time. Legislative approval is required before a publicly owned rail line can be used for something other than rail. LD 30 is that approval. It authorizes MaineDOT to move forward with planning a future pathway that benefits our communities today.

"From Portland's growing trail network to Auburn's new infrastructure investments on Route 202, the Casco Bay Trail would connect both our cities along a path of forests, fields and river crossings; testimony to the idea that quality of space is key to expanding the quality of life in both our cities. Approximately 15,000 people live within a half mile of the corridor. Imagine how much more vibrant our communities could be with this shared resource in place.

"This is our chance to turn the past into the future. It is a generational opportunity to create a natural asset that should really matter to all of us, built on a human scale, where kids can ride their bikes, neighbors can catch up and visitors can get a feel for what makes this part of Maine so special. Let's decide to make the most of what we already have."

And Mr. Speaker, I ask that the Committee Report be read. Representative **GRAHAM** of North Yarmouth **REQUESTED** that the Clerk **READ** the Committee Report.

The Clerk **READ** the Committee Report in its entirety. The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Montell.

Representative **MONTELL**: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and Colleagues of the House, I thought I turned my light off. I just really wanted to just really quickly reiterate that these RUAC processes were done during; they began during COVID and as COVID began to wane. I just think we're in a different place in our State, where our State is moving forward and we're moving forward to more freight lines and more access to passenger rail; and that's all I wanted to say, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative **COLLINS** of Sidney **MOVED THE PREVIOUS QUESTION**.

Subsequently, Representative **COLLINS** of Sidney **WITHDREW** her motion to **MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION**.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 182

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Caruso, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Gattine, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hasenus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Javner, Kessler, Kuhn, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, Lyman, Macias, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Mitchell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith,

Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Walker, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Abdi, Boyer D, Carlow, Chapman, Cimino, Cooper, Eder, Frost, Geiger, Golek, Jackson, Julia, Lajoie, Lee, Libby, Milliken, Montell, Osher, Quint, Rana, Sato, Shagoury, Supica, Wadsworth, Warren, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 118; No, 26; Absent, 7; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

118 having voted in the affirmative and 26 voted in the negative, with 7 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Resolve was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)** was **READ** by the Clerk.

Representative MONTELL of Gardiner **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-127)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Montell.

Representative **MONTELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and Colleagues of the House, I proposed an Amendment to you, and I hope that you can follow my light. This Amendment would, should the LD 30 go forward and become law, that there would be no State funding, no State bonding and no line could be authorized for removal if there was a business proposal on that line. Thank you very much.

Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ADOPT House Amendment "A" (H-127)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newcastle, Representative Crafts.

Representative **CRAFTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we just passed LD 30, the Amendment before us would restrict the ability to remove tracks while there are applications in process or requests, which could clearly pose a challenge, as 24 hours before the public hearing on this bill, we had an application proposed and submitted to the DOT after years of discussion around the use of this rail line.

Additionally, restricting the use of State funding; this bill has no Fiscal Note, because it doesn't allocate any funds to this project. This is a many-years-long project before us which will include significant fundraising if it's able to move forward, and as we know, the use of federal dollars often requires state matching, and so, restricting our ability to do that would prohibit the ability for this project to be successful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption of House Amendment "A" (H-127) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-45). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 183

YEA - Abdi, Arata, Boyer D, Carlow, Chapman, Cimino, Crockett, Eder, Fredericks, Frost, Geiger, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hymes, Julia, Lajoie, Lee, Milliken, Montell, Poirier, Pugh, Rana, Shagoury, Supica, Wadsworth.

NAY - Albert, Ankeles, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Caruso, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Friedmann, Gattine, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Greenwood, Griffin,

Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hepler, Jackson, Javner, Kessler, Kuhn, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Macias, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Mitchell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Osher, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Quint, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Walker, Warren, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Adams, Hall, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 26; No, 116; Absent, 9; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

26 having voted in the affirmative and 116 voted in the negative, with 9 being absent, and accordingly **House Amendment "A" (H-127)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)** was **NOT ADOPTED**.

Subsequently, **Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)** was **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Resolve was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Resolve was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-45)** in concurrence.

SENATE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (11) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-44)** - Minority (2) **Ought Not to Pass** - Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** on Resolve, to Require the Department of Transportation to Implement the Recommendations of the Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council

(S.P. 46) (L.D. 29)

- In Senate, Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Resolve **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-44)**.

TABLED - May 7, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF EITHER REPORT**.

Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

Representative MONTELL of Gardiner **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Char recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Montell.

Representative **MONTELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and Colleagues of the House, I rise to object to the pending motion.

LD 29 would allow for removal of railroad tracks along the Lower Road; which runs from Brunswick, up through Gardiner, all the way up to Augusta; to construct a trail on the railbed for the estimated cost of one million dollars per mile. Additionally, another bill was tucked inside of this bill that would allow for the removal of the Calais Branch Line for the same use and the same dollar amount of one million dollars a mile.

The Lower Road runs from Brunswick to Bowdoin, Bowdoin to Richmond and up through Gardiner, Hallowell and into Augusta, our capitol city; a crucial line to continue freight and passenger rail service. Removal of the Lower Road would

cap growth of this viable business opportunity of rail line, and severing it would affect the rest of the rail line. Additionally, there is a proposal on the Lower Road from the Maine Switching Service to operate the Cumberland and Knox Railroad, which has just resumed freight service on the Rockland line. The Lower Road proposal was included in the original proposal, and the Department chose to deal with these items separately, pending this proposed legislation.

The Rail Preservation Act states that rail must supersede all other uses for State rail lines. For Maine Switching Services, continuing the Cumberland and Knox rail line through the Lower Road would prove valuable to their freight line and could also use the Lower Road for Amtrak excursion trains as early as this summer, encouraging growth of community and tourism, pending approval from the MaineDOT to use this line. Rather than remove this track, why not resume the service on this line and build a trail alongside? For decades, my community has been able to enjoy the benefits of the Kennebec River Rail Trail that runs along the alongside the railroad tracks from Gardiner to Augusta. This is the time to build partnerships for economic growth and community vitality. We will lose viable infrastructure and the ability to connect with other communities in our State if we remove these tracks. We will lose the ability to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions. Will we continue to propose bypasses and road widening projects? Will we continue to explore ways to foster a strong economy? Or will we snuff out the opportunity?

What will be our legacy, Mr. Speaker? Will we be the Legislature with a vision of the future? A Legislature that values infrastructure and connectivity to all parts of our State? A Legislature that decides that rails and trails should coexist? I urge you to oppose this pending motion and should this bill pass, I have an Amendment that I would like you to follow. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from East Machias, Representative Tuell.

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be supporting the pending motion here today, and one simple reason is the Sunrise Trail in Downeast; which runs from the greater Ellsworth area on down through to Pembroke, in my district; has been an economic lifeline over the last couple of decades. At first, it was kind of; at first, it was a controversial thing, but over the years, local businesses have embraced it, the communities have embraced it, the ATVing community, the biking community, the walking community. I love to walk my dog on that trail, and extending it through to Calais from Pembroke will only boost that economic impact on our region and connect Machias and Calais.

I should add that that portion of the bill was added in after the fact. Through some miscommunication between DOT and the bill's Sponsor, they were all able to get on the same page and the Committee embraced that, adding it in. So, please join me in voting yes for the pending motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newcastle, Representative Crafts.

Representative **CRAFTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief. This is two RUAC bills coming before us. One, as the Good Representative from Gardiner mentioned, from Brunswick to Gardiner. The RUAC vote of that group was 11-3 in support of transitioning to trail until rail. And the Calais RUAC, as the Representative from East Machias referenced the Sunrise Trail, the vote was 10-1 to use trail until rail as an interim use. Again, there are no Fiscal Notes attached to this bill, as it is simply granting permission to pursue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Brunswick, Representative Ankeles.

Representative **ANKELES**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Fellow Members of the House. As you might suspect, I strongly support the pending motion.

This legislation is an opportunity to forge vital connections in two different parts of Maine. The measure authorizes the completion of both the Downeast Sunrise Trail in Washington County and the Merrymeeting Trail in the Southern Midcoast, along the Kennebec River. If we pass this Resolve, we would be making one of the greatest advancements in active transportation in a long time. There's a strong bipartisan and interregional coalition here in this Chamber in support of moving forward that goes well beyond the 11-2 Committee Report. And that is because we know these authorizations benefit our economy, our health, our environment and our ability to get from point A to point B.

This Resolve is the product of a lot of hard work. The only reason you might've heard some heartburn, Mr. Speaker, is because the trails would exist on defunct and inactive State-owned rail lines. But make no mistake, the best and highest use of these failed rail lines are these trails. Don't take my word for it, take the words of the communities that actually did the work.

The 130th Legislature unanimously agreed to set up a series of rail use advisory councils, or RUACs, as a way of taking out some of the politics of this process and giving a diverse range of local stakeholders much more of a voice in deciding what will happen to Maine's disused State-owned rail lines, and that is exactly what happened. In Washington County, the vote of the Calais Branch Rail Use Advisory Council was unanimous in support of completing the Downeast Sunrise Trail. The Lower Road Rail Use Advisory Council voted 11-3 in support of the Merrymeeting Trail. Moreover, the local governments of the host communities for the trail; Topsham, Bowdoinham, Richmond and Gardiner; all voted in support of the trail and provided letters that say as much. In my own community of Brunswick, which is one of our State's trail hubs, this is one of our top active transportation priorities. When LDs 29 and 30 arrived in our Committee as Department Resolves, the testimonials in support easily outnumbered any opposition. When questioned by opponents, the DOT had no problem fending off questionable arguments around the integrity of the RUAC process or the imagined environmental hazards of rail removal.

All that, despite being blindsided by last-minute fake business proposals to use the rails that look a lot like some of the nuisance lawsuits that tripled the cost of our new bridge to Topsham or that tried to force oyster farmers out of business. And by the way, the Maine Department of Transportation already has a 111-page rail plan and multiple follow-up reports. The lines covered by both RUAC Resolves we are voting on today are not a part of that plan. And it's not for some nefarious reason, as some would have you believe; it is because, given our demographics as a State, the only true potential these lines have is as trails. I've had my deep disagreements with MDOT, but there is no question that they have done the work in this policy area and are trying to maximize the use of limited resources to provide as much access to a diverse range of transportation options as possible.

And speaking of cost, remember that both trail LDs before us today are just authorizations, so, the Fiscal Note is negligible. The process allows DOT to seek out and receive funding from any source, very much including outside funding. It allows DOT the flexibility to come up with a plan that gets work done with a level of frugality that is appropriate to Maine's current and

projected fiscal situation. Conversely, going against the vote of these Rail Use Advisory Councils by trying for 'rail with trail' is vastly more expensive and far less feasible. And there is no federal cavalry on the way. In fact, the federal DOT has already begun clawing back rail grants awarded under the previous administration. Meanwhile, the fare for using a trail remains at zero.

On safety, Maine continues to struggle when it comes to bicycle and pedestrian deaths. One death a year is too many, but more than 20 is beyond unacceptable. We hear a lot about the climate change benefits of getting people out of cars and onto a trail, a train, a bus or an e-bike, but we also need to understand what it does for pedestrians, cyclists and yes, motorists when cyclists and pedestrians and others are off the road entirely. That is what it means to connect communities within Washington County and within Sagadahoc and Kennebec Counties through a trail network. A major advancement for public health and safety.

Finally, remember that under the law, no matter what happens, the rail corridor itself must be preserved in perpetuity, so that if and when rail is needed, the trail will rightly have to give way. If the rail never comes back, it won't be because of a lack of will, because of politics or even a failure to obey the law. It will be because rail on that one specific line simply isn't economically viable. If we fail to adopt this Report, we will not get rail with trail, what we will actually get is a guarantee that nothing will ever happen at all on these lines except decay, abandonment and the squandering of potential in Washington, Sagadahoc and Kennebec Counties. In short, economic blight. We can avoid that future by supporting this motion. We can do what Mainers do best and adapt and repurpose. And in doing so, we can deliver something truly wonderful for our constituents. Thank you for listening and thank you from the bottom of my heart for supporting this motion.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Calais, Representative Mingo.

Representative **MINGO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in total support of this Amendment. I really can't add a whole lot from what the fine Representative from Brunswick has already added, and I just want to say that the fine Representative from Falmouth really explained the relationship that we've had in my county working on this rail with RUAC and getting through to the point we're at right now.

The branch from Ellsworth that was supposed to go to Calais, the original Sunrise Trail, ended up at Ayers Junction, with the thought maybe someday rail going to Eastport, which turned out to be a dream that will never happen. When they had built that trail from Ellsworth to Ayers Junction, they paid for that trail with the rails that they had lifted. Rails that will not pass DOT regulations right now, so, any construction of rail in the future would have to be total new construction. It's a shame that it didn't get to Calais at the time, because that trail would've been totally paid for by those rails, and the prices of metal now, we will not see that. But as far as the construction goes, we've heard quotes of a million dollars a mile to build a trail over the existing rail. I'm a person that's in that business, and I can guarantee it does not take a million dollars to build a mile of an existing trail. In fact, that they had paid for the trail that was done through Ellsworth to Ayer Junction by the rails that they had lifted, that didn't take a million dollars' worth of rail per mile to do it. So, that's it, Speaker. Thank you for your time.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Augusta, Representative Rollins.

Representative **ROLLINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to beat a dead iron horse with a stick, I rise in opposition; I mean

in support of this bill. And beyond the many town meetings and town charrettes that have vetted this issue from Brunswick, beyond Augusta to Waterville and even one theory that that would then connect to Bangor, and we see the other side coming up through Lewiston-Auburn, Winthrop, seems more feasible to get to Bangor.

I offer a quick trip up the river from Brunswick to Augusta past 30 road crossings at five miles an hour, the train having to slow. Then; which kind of dulls the passenger service opportunity; then, to talk about the feasibility of freight train, the destinations are gone. The giant paper mill in Augusta is gone, the big distribution center for Pine State Tobacco, Candy and Beverage is gone, the cotton mill is gone. So, the big load of freight that you would need to make it economically feasible, I don't think is in place anymore. So, for those logistical reasons, and everything else we've heard today, I'd advise us not to support; I mean, to support this bill. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 184

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Caruso, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hepler, Jackson, Javner, Kessler, Kuhn, Lavigne, Lemelin, Lyman, Macias, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McClinton, Meyer, Mingo, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, Olsen, Osher, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Quint, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Walker, Warren, Webb, White J, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Abdi, Bishop, Boyer D, Carlow, Chapman, Cimino, Cooper, Eder, Frost, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hymes, Julia, Lajoie, Lee, Libby, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, O'Halloran, Rana, Simmons, Supica, Wadsworth, White R.

ABSENT - Adams, Hall, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 116; No, 26; Absent, 9; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

116 having voted in the affirmative and 26 voted in the negative, with 9 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended Report was ACCEPTED.**

The Resolve was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (S-44) was READ** by the Clerk.

Representative **MONTELL** of Gardiner **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-126) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-44)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Montell.

Representative **MONTELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and Colleagues of the House, again I rise to present Committee Amendment; sorry, House Amendment; so, anyway, sorry. So, I would appreciate if you could follow my light, that there would be; this Amendment would disallow State funding, State bonding and the authorization of removal of tracks on a line that has a business proposal on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ADOPT House Amendment "A" (H-126) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-44)**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newcastle, Representative Crafts.

Representative **CRAFTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the same reason I previously opposed the Floor Amendment, the same holds true. We have a current application for use in process and the Department is honoring that application. And for fear of restricting the possibility of future funding options with federal funds, I am opposed to this Amendment. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption of House Amendment "A" (H-126) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-44). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 185

YEA - Abdi, Arata, Boyer D, Carlow, Chapman, Cimino, Crockett, Eder, Fredericks, Frost, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenus, Hymes, Julia, Lajoie, Lee, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Osher, Pugh, Rana, Shagoury, Supica, Wadsworth.

NAY - Albert, Ankeles, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Caruso, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hepler, Javner, Kessler, Kuhn, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Macias, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Walker, Warren, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Adams, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Perkins, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 26; No, 114; Absent, 11; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

26 having voted in the affirmative and 114 voted in the negative, with 11 being absent, and accordingly **House Amendment "A" (H-126) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-44) was NOT ADOPTED**.

Subsequently, **Committee Amendment "A" (S-44) was ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Resolve was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Resolve was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-44)** in concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH** with the exception of matters being held.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Support Direct Access Worker Employment by Removing Certain Employment Disqualifications"

(S.P. 493) (L.D. 1204)

Signed:

Senators:

BAILEY of York
HAGGAN of Penobscot

Representatives:

ARFORD of Brunswick
CIMINO of Bridgton
CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham
FOLEY of Wells
MASTRACCIO of Sanford
MORRIS of Turner
OLSEN of Raymond

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BALDACCI of Penobscot

Representatives:

MATHIESON of Kittery
BOYER of Cape Elizabeth
FLYNN of Albion

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT NOT TO PASS Report READ and ACCEPTED**.

READ.

On motion of Representative MATHIESON of Kittery, the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** in concurrence.

Nine Members of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-133)** on Bill "An Act to Increase State Funding for the Campuses of the University of Maine System and to Raise the Minimum Hourly Wage for Employees of the System" (EMERGENCY)

(S.P. 508) (L.D. 1219)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
HAGGAN of Hampden
MITCHELL of Cumberland
SARGENT of York

Three Members of the same Committee report in Report "B" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-134)** on same Bill.

Signed:
Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

CARLOW of Buxton

LYMAN of Livermore Falls

One Member of the same Committee reports in Report "C" **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:
Representative:

BAGSHAW of Windham

Came from the Senate with Report "A" **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-133)**.

READ.

Representative MURPHY of Scarborough moved that the House **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

Representative LIBBY of Auburn **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of Report "A" Ought to Pass as Amended. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 186

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Guerrette, Hasenpus, Hepler, Javner, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lemelin, Lyman, Macias, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Olsen, Osher, Parry, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Stover, Strout, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Bagshaw, Boyer D, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Eder, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Haggan, Henderson, Hymes, Lavigne, Libby, Morris, Nutting, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Quint, Rudnicki, Smith, Soboleski, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 108; No, 33; Absent, 10; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

108 having voted in the affirmative and 33 voted in the negative, with 10 being absent, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended** was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (S-133)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-133)** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-265)** on Bill "An Act to Expand Access to the Maine Wage Assurance Fund"

(H.P. 30) (L.D. 66)

Signed:
Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:
Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
LIBBY of Auburn
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

On motion of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (H-265)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-265)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-218)** on Bill "An Act to Require Continuing Education for Licensed Architects"

(H.P. 915) (L.D. 1393)

Signed:
Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney

DRINKWATER of Milford

SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

On motion of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-218)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-218)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-259)** on Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Reduction of Unfunded and Outdated Municipal and County Mandates

(H.P. 402) (L.D. 634)

Signed:

Senators:

BALDACCI of Penobscot

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook

ADAMS of Lebanon

FARRIN of Jefferson

GREENWOOD of Wales

MATLACK of St. George

POMERLEAU of Standish

ROLLINS of Augusta

TUELL of East Machias

UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Resolve.

Signed:

Representative:

COPELAND of Saco

READ.

On motion of Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Resolve was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-259)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Resolve was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Resolve was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-259)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Recognize Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as State Holidays"

(H.P. 463) (L.D. 724)

Signed:

Senators:

BALDACCI of Penobscot

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook

ADAMS of Lebanon

FARRIN of Jefferson

GREENWOOD of Wales

MATLACK of St. George

POMERLEAU of Standish

TUELL of East Machias

UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representatives:

COPELAND of Saco

ROLLINS of Augusta

READ.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative ABDI of Lewiston **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Lewiston, Representative Abdi.

Representative **ABDI**: I'd like to pose the Ought to Pass.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair would inform the Member that the report of Ought Not to Pass has been moved. Roll Call is in order on the Ought Not to Pass Report. Does the Member wish to speak on the bill as a whole, or?

Representative **ABDI**: I do not.

The **SPEAKER**: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 187

YEA - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Brennan, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cray, Daigle, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gere, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Javner, Kessler, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Mastraccio, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Moonen, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Runte, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Schmursal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Zager.

NAY - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Eaton, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Golek, Gramlich, Julia, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Murphy, Osher, Pluecker,

Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Sachs, Sato, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Adams, Cooper, Graham, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 87; No, 52; Absent, 12; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

87 having voted in the affirmative and 52 voted in the negative, with 12 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act Requiring Voter Approval of Legislative and Gubernatorial Pay Increases"

(H.P. 498) (L.D. 775)

Signed:

Senators:

BALDACCI of Penobscot
BEEBE-CENTER of Knox

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook
ADAMS of Lebanon
COPELAND of Saco
FARRIN of Jefferson
GREENWOOD of Wales
MATLACK of St. George
POMERLEAU of Standish
ROLLINS of Augusta
UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A"** (H-261) on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

MARTIN of Oxford

Representative:

TUELL of East Machias

READ.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative LIBBY of Auburn **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Fewer than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was not ordered.

Subsequently, the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A"** (S-95) on Bill "An Act to Require Health Insurance Coverage for Specialized Risk Screening for First Responders"

(S.P. 343) (L.D. 784)

Signed:

Senators:

BAILEY of York
BALDACCI of Penobscot

Representatives:

MATHIESON of Kittery
ARFORD of Brunswick
BOYER of Cape Elizabeth
CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham
MASTRACCIO of Sanford

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Refer to the Committee on Labor** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

HAGGAN of Penobscot

Representatives:

CIMINO of Bridgton
FLYNN of Albion
FOLEY of Wells
MORRIS of Turner
OLSEN of Raymond

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A"** (S-95).

READ.

Representative MATHIESON of Kittery moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on her motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wells, Representative Foley.

Representative **FOLEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every member of the Health Coverage Insurance and Financial Services Committee wants to support, protect and provide specialized screenings for our first responders due to their on-the-job specialized exposures. Every Member in this Body and the Other Body wants to provide the same support to them as well. The question that this bill tries to answer is how best to provide that coverage. The Majority Report provides a presumptive right that health insurance should cover it, not a guarantee. The Minority Report suggests referring the bill to the Labor Committee to cover the screenings under Workers' Compensation coverage.

Health insurance is designed to provide the same protection of coverage to all insured, without providing separate coverages and benefits for separate classifications of covered individuals. Workers' Compensation, on the other hand, is designed to provide coverage and protection based on the working classification of the individual, which can be different depending upon the classification. For instance, under Workers' Compensation, coverage for PTSD is covered for first

responders, while other classifications might not have the same presumptive right for that same coverage.

If coverage is provided under the health insurance, there is going to be a Fiscal Note to the General Fund; which is yet to be determined; in order to provide this coverage to the Maine State Employees Health Trust. I will note, however, that in the 131st, LD 444 was passed that provided similar protection under health insurance, with a Fiscal Note of \$927,000. I'm concerned that if this bill, under the Majority Report, is passed once again, that funding will not be viable. If we move to refer the bill to the Labor Committee and provide coverage under Workers' Compensation, there will be no impact to the General Fund. I ask you to follow my light.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Kittery, Representative Mathieson.

Representative **MATHIESON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill is about health insurance coverage, pre-screening coverage, specialized risk screening. This is for first responders to cover their screening for health care. Workers' Compensation already has a similar, rebuttable presumption statute in Statute. Workers' Compensation does not cover preventative care, which is what this bill is looking at. We want to stop the claims before our first responders get sick. This is about protecting those who protect us. Please follow my light and vote for the motion on the floor.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Winter Harbor, Representative Faulkingham.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: I request a Roll Call.

The SPEAKER: A Roll Call is in order. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Turner, Representative Morris.

Representative **MORRIS**: Mr. Speaker, I rise to echo much of what my good friend from Wells said. I think everybody on the Committee is very supportive of first responders and making sure that they have some sort of coverage in trying to prevent these types of cancers. To echo what he said; or to add on to what the Good Representative from Wells said; this does not belong; it's problematic putting this into the section of health insurance.

As the Representative from Kittery noted, this creates a rebuttable presumption in health insurance if a health insurance company denies a first responder a right; denies a first responder the screening. The problem is, the way that the health insurance laws are written or the way that our regulations work, is that this will not cover all first responders in the State of Maine, it will only cover those that are covered by a State-based plan. So, there will be many first responders that will not be eligible for this coverage.

The second problem is the insurance companies may not know if an individual is a first responder if they end up denying these screenings. It could be somebody who is a young person on their parents' insurance, and the health insurance company is not aware; because they're not made aware; that the person is a first responder. Which brings me to the next point. By creating a rebuttable presumption, this will allow lawyers to then sue if someone is denied, and you may have a situation where the insurance company did not even realize that they were denying somebody who would've been covered under this, because this bill doesn't just cover full-time first responders, it also covers volunteers, so, it can get very confusing and very problematic about who is covered and who is not covered under this law. And I think, you know, the other problem is; I asked this question during the work session; you could have a situation where somebody is denied Workers' Comp under this, they are denied a Workers' Comp claim, they are not able to; it is

determined through a hearing that the person did not; whatever disease or cancer they have did not arise out of doing their job as a first responder. There may have been other circumstances that would've determined that they got that form of cancer, and yet, under this law, they could still sue the health insurance company, even if, even if the cancer was not out of result of doing their job.

So, again, our Report is, it may be that this could not be covered under Workers' Comp as a preventative, but you could create a program where Workers' Comp insurers could incentivize employers to cover these screenings and thus help to keep their rates down through the Workers' Comp process. That's why our Report is to refer this to Labor. We're absolutely in favor of covering our first responders, but this is a very problematic way to do it when you consider that not all first responders are going to be covered, there will be some confusion about whether or not someone is a first responder under this bill.

So, I would encourage this Body to reject this notion and send this bill to the Labor Committee, so that it can be looked at from that perspective, so that we can then cover potentially more people under this law, but also, we're not putting our health insurance rates at risk with a rebuttable presumption that the only ones that ever benefit from rebuttable presumptions are generally the lawyers. So, I would encourage people to reject this motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Farmington, Representative Bunker.

Representative **BUNKER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Colleagues in the House themselves. I stand before you as a five-year survivor of cancer, for which I filed as a rebuttable presumption in Workers' Comp, went through numerous difficult trials in my recovery and I'm thankful to the good Lord above for that.

I can tell you from my lifelong experiences of this that the number-one best strategy to preventing loss of death through cancer and cardiac arrest is early screening. When you first enter the program itself, health care coverage needs to provide that type of screening, it's the number-one best practice to prevent these issues and to prevent the need for having to succumb to those events, having to go through a Workers' Comp claim for any rebuttable presumptions on this. It's an absolute necessity, and it's a vote in favor to all first responders, including the majority of our firefighters; who are volunteers; and I think there would be little question that we go forth as to whether or not they are, in fact, covered and are a first responder and I would encourage you to follow my vote in support of this, and I thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bowdoinham, Representative Cluchey.

Representative **CLUCHEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to respond to the Good Representative from Turner.

So, we did have discussions about whether it could go to the Labor Committee for Workers' Compensation to consider it, but Workers' Compensation does not provide preventative care; it's after the fact. We do know that first responders have a much shorter lifespan than regular citizens that are not in those positions, and we don't have a comprehensive statewide way to provide this screening for everyone. We do have things, pilot projects that are ongoing to try and test pilots, but this was one additional attempt that we've tried to make to reach a pool of people that may be; especially volunteers; where their communities aren't able to pay for the screening.

So, what this would do is, most of these screenings are going to be for younger people that aren't able to qualify for it already. And so, that's going to require a prior authorization. When your physician puts in a prior authorization, the supporting information they're going to provide is they're going to say, 'this person is a first responder. We know that these people have higher rates of X, Y and Z; therefore, it's appropriate they get testing.' What the bill is going to do is say, if then, the health insurance company says, 'nope, we're not going to pay for that test,' if then, later, that first responder develops that illness that could've been, you know, screened for and treated earlier, then there's an opportunity for that first responder to sue.

So, this is just; it's a note of encouragement to the insurance companies to say, take care of your people, keep them safe, pay for preventative care, don't wait until they're sick, till they have cancer and then it costs a lot more. So, this is a nudge to the insurance companies to try and do the right thing while the rest of us try and figure out how to pay for this for all of our communities across the State the same way. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 188

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenus, Hepler, Javner, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lyman, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmursal-Burgess, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hymes, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Graham, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 78; No, 62; Absent, 11; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

78 having voted in the affirmative and 62 voted in the negative, with 11 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-95)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-95)** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Strengthen Maine Citizens' Second Amendment Rights by Allowing the Discharge of Firearms on Private Property That Is Within 500 Feet of School Property in Certain Circumstances" (H.P. 344) (L.D. 525)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
MITCHELL of Cumberland
SARGENT of York

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

BAGSHAW of Windham
CARLOW of Buxton
HAGGAN of Hampden
LYMAN of Livermore Falls

READ.

Representative MURPHY of Scarborough moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative LYMAN of Livermore Falls **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Turner, Representative Morris.

Representative **MORRIS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This bill is really just a clarification of the rights that people already have under Maine law.

Under current Maine law, an individual has the right to defend themselves on their home premises. This is enumerated under Title 17-A, Chapter 5, Subsection 104. We have a right to defend our lives and our property by using force if necessary. Current State law also states that you cannot fire a firearm within 500 feet of school property, with only a few exceptions generally extended to members of law enforcement or a school-sanctioned event. It does not make an exception for someone acting in self-defense or defending their property. And that's why I brought forward this bill. This is really just a clarification.

I had a member of my community reach out and ask me about this and had this concern. We did reach out to the Attorney General's office and asked, if someone was to act in self-defense on their own property that was within 500 feet of school property, could they be prosecuted for discharging a firearm? Understandably, without a scenario before them, the AG's office could not give an answer. And I sponsored this bill because every person, I believe, it's very clear in our Constitution as well as in the Statutes, that you have a right to defend yourself on your own property. Where you live should not make a difference, and this bill is about ensuring that everyone has a right to self-defense.

While no one has been prosecuted, I do believe that we should pass this law to ensure that no one can be prosecuted. It is really important that, you know, everyone has the same rights on their own property to defend their property should they need to, and that's really all we're attempting to do here. Adding this to Statute just simply clarifies that if you are acting in self-defense of your property, that you have a right to fire the firearm regardless of where it exists. I believe this right is already clear, but this is just making the clarification in law. So, I would encourage this Body to reject this motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Scarborough, Representative Murphy.

Representative **MURPHY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 500-foot buffer that's already in current law is under one-tenth of a mile. The concern would be, if students are walking to or from school, participating in outside physical education classes, participating in recess or in extracurricular activities that take place outside the school day, that there would be a risk to those students from misfires or stray bullets. So, we ask the Body to vote with the pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 189

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Cray, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Frost, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hymes, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Fredette, Graham, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 70; No, 69; Absent, 12; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

70 having voted in the affirmative and 69 voted in the negative, with 12 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Allow Certain Persons with a Permit to Carry Concealed Handguns to Possess or Discharge a Firearm on School Property"

(H.P. 571) (L.D. 885)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
MITCHELL of Cumberland
SARGENT of York

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

BAGSHAW of Windham
HAGGAN of Hampden
LYMAN of Livermore Falls

READ.

Representative MURPHY of Scarborough moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative LYMAN of Livermore Falls **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Guilford, Representative White.

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in favor of this bill today, and I'd like to clarify just a few points of it.

This is only pertaining to those people who have went through the process of a background check and adequate training and went through the process of obtaining a concealed carry permit. Prior to the Columbine incident, this was common law in our State, that if you had a concealed carry permit and you went to a school; for instance, to a parent-teacher conference or a Friday night basketball game; that you weren't breaking the law by concealing a firearm. The other part of this bill is to discharge the firearm in the case of a situation of self-defense. I bring it to the attention of everyone that a civilian with a concealed carry permit has a much higher standard of being lawful and discharging a firearm than law enforcement does. To be justified in doing so, you have to be in danger directly and have expended all of your options to remove yourself from that danger. So, it has to be an imminent threat.

Currently, in this State, because of some prior legislation, a concealed carry holder can drive up to a school and drop their child off while carrying a concealed firearm. However, if there is somebody standing on the lawn of the school, shooting children, that person can't get out and confront the perpetrator. I think this is common sense. We've never had an issue in this State. There's 16 states that never changed their laws about concealed carry in public schools, none of those 16 states have had an issue with it and those 16 states have all been fortunate enough not to have a school shooting since. So, I would appreciate you to consider the motion and follow my light.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Scarborough, Representative Murphy.

Representative **MURPHY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Were this legislation to pass, there could be a situation, like the Good Representative from Guilford suggested, at a basketball game where there could be something that requires police response and any person in the public who is there that is carrying their concealed weapon that would react to that situation could cause confusion when uniformed or non-uniformed officers respond. So, I ask that the Body follow Ought Not to Pass motion.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 190

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Carlow, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hymes, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Graham, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 74; No, 66; Absent, 11; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

74 having voted in the affirmative and 66 voted in the negative, with 11 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Amend the Regional School Unit Budget Validation Referendum Law"

(H.P. 1044) (L.D. 1586)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
MITCHELL of Cumberland
SARGENT of York

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

BAGSHAW of Windham

HAGGAN of Hampden

LYMAN of Livermore Falls

READ.

Representative MURPHY of Scarborough moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative LYMAN of Livermore Falls **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Windham, Representative Bagshaw.

Representative **BAGSHAW**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I rise today in opposition to this motion.

The legislative request deals with school budget validation referendum. It's simple; it's a simple change; just adds the dollar amount for the budget for the validation referendum. The current Statute requires just a yes or a no, and it doesn't specify a dollar amount the voters are approving. Many people complained that they are in a position where they're voting for or against a budget, but they have no idea what that budget is. This bill is about transparency. Taxpayers deserve that, especially since it's about 70% of their property taxes. Please vote against the pending motion, and let's treat taxpayer with the respect that they deserve.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Scarborough, Representative Murphy.

Representative **MURPHY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Current law requires that the number be posted in polling places already, and there are plenty of opportunities for voters to follow along budget processes as they take place in communities, including ways to find budget information online or in person at their municipal buildings. For larger districts, in particular, it would be very impractical for the actual dollar number to be printed on individual ballots for absentee purposes, because those are required to be printed within 24 hours of that budgetary number being decided and final. So, for those reasons, I hope you support the pending motion.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 191

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hymes, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cray, Graham, Hall, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood, Yusuf.

Yes, 72; No, 66; Absent, 13; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

72 having voted in the affirmative and 66 voted in the negative, with 13 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Require Competitive Procurement of Electricity from Generators Fueled by Municipal Solid Waste in Conjunction with Recycling"

(H.P. 692) (L.D. 1063)

Signed:

Senators:

LAWRENCE of York
GROHOSKI of Hancock

Representatives:

SACHS of Freeport
GEIGER of Rockland
KESSLER of South Portland
RUNTE of York
WARREN of Scarborough
WEBB of Durham

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-238)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

FOSTER of Dexter
MCINTYRE of Lowell
PAUL of Winterport
WADSWORTH of Hiram

READ.

Representative SACHS of Freeport moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative FOSTER of Dexter **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dexter, Representative Foster.

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I'll stick to the facts on this and be as brief as possible.

This bill basically would set a rate of a few cents; under seven cents a kilowatt-hour; for power produced in trash-to-energy plants in Maine. We have three of those. More

importantly, the facility that has been out of service for a few years now; a couple of years, anyway; and is being brought back to service in Orrington, this would benefit in a way of setting a dependable rate that investors could count on to get that plant back up and running.

Now, the State of Maine is in a bit of a conundrum in this regard, because folks don't like burning trash to produce electricity. I understand that. But more importantly, right now, that trash that had been going to the Orrington facility is being landfilled, and we certainly don't like to bury that trash as well. The baseload energy that is produced by these facilities is very important to the State of Maine, especially as we move to more and more solar and wind energy; which if you look at the New England ISO app today, you'll find that although solar production is up, wind production is down. We have a very high percentage of the energy produced in New England comes from refuse being burned in trash-to-energy plants.

So, I'd ask that you oppose the pending motion, and that we support this form of energy production in Maine, and also as importantly, the disposal of our municipal waste in this fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Old Town, Representative Dill.

Representative **DILL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Colleagues of the House, Maine has a severe municipal solid waste problem. Currently, Juniper Ridge landfill in Old Town has 159 towns sending their non-recycled waste directly to the landfill. Because of this, JRL is running out of its current capacity faster than expected. We were told that the operator would need to file an extension, because JRL will be full in eight years. Now, it is three years, and that was last year when we heard that. We are filling up at least twice the rate as expected, because we aren't recycling.

This bill will help with the recycling issue. This will help bring another waste-to-energy plant online, the former PERC facility in Orrington. So, I rise today in opposition to the pending motion for LD 1063. This is a pragmatic, forward-thinking bill that I am proud to sponsor and reflects our responsibility to both the environment and our municipalities. At its core, this bill directs the Public Utilities Commission to procure 35 megawatts of electricity from Maine-based waste-to-energy facilities through a competitive bidding process. This would be long-term contracts, no shorter than five years, no longer than 15, with a firm price cap of seven cents per kilowatt-hour.

Now, why is this necessary? Because waste-to-energy is not just about power, it's about preserving Maine's rapidly diminishing landfill capacity. These facilities reduce landfill volume by up to 90%. That means less environmental degradation, fewer greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing trash and more time before our landfills reach capacity. Three waste-to-energy facilities in Maine; Ecomaine in Portland, Maine Waste-to-Energy in Auburn, and now the new Eagle Point in Orrington; already form a critical piece of our waste management structure. Together, they support more than 150 good-paying full-time jobs, paying two to four times the median State income.

This bill isn't a giveaway. It's a competitive procurement open to eligible facilities and ensures ratepayers' protections. In fact, the amended bill removes the outdated 300% waste-to-energy REC multiplier, which has previously contributed to increased costs. That's gone. What we have now is a leaner, smarter, more affordable approach. Maine's own solid waste hierarchy prioritizes reduction, reuse and recycling. But it also recognizes waste-to-energy as preferable to landfilling. We have to deal with what's left over, and doing nothing is not an

option. Even Maine's Public Advocate acknowledged that this approach makes sense, testifying that a fixed rate of 6.9 cents for 15 years could actually provide price stability for ratepayers, especially in a volatile energy market.

Colleagues, this is a ratepayer-friendly, environmentally responsible and economically sound policy. LD 1063 will help stabilize tipping fees, preserve critical jobs and support long-term investment in the facilities that manage our waste responsibility. And I've heard from a few people that say burning waste to energy is not sustainable. I say to this, sending municipal solid waste from 150 municipalities to JRL and remaining there for who knows how many 10s or hundred years is also not sustainable. So, let's not let this opportunity go to waste. I urge you to vote against the pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Freeport, Representative Sachs.

Representative **SACHS**: Thank you, and with respect to the puns from my good colleague from Old Town, I will not talk trash about this bill. However, I will support the pending motion, Mr. Speaker, for a few reasons.

Number one, that the Public Advocate said ratepayer benefits were not certain, this does require a fixed price for this contract for up to 15 years and we have no sense at all whether those would actually be ratepayer savings. Number two, it is such a poorly written bill that they're unclear if that price cap is not only for the energy alone, or both for the energy and the renewable energy credits, which are quite lucrative, Mr. Speaker. Also, with respect to my Good Colleague from Old Town, this does not end the 300% multiplier, which by the way, we are the only state in New England giving this multiplier. It simply ends it as of January 2026, but in recent past, the Legislature has extended that every time. So, that is not comfort for me whatsoever. Finally, this State has never met its recycling goals. Proponents of this bill would have you state it's either the landfill or these waste-to-energy places, but instead, the Legislature would like to encourage recycling, which is why it had the extended producer responsibility bill in the past few Legislatures that give boosts to municipalities for recycling. We do have a choice, and the choice is to continue the policies that we have passed, Mr. Speaker, in this Body.

And the most important part about this bill is that it shifts the costs of property taxes of a few municipalities to all ratepayers. That is a fact. I cannot stress this enough. At a time when we are working, again, very hard in a bipartisan way to lower the rates for all ratepayers, this does not do that. I will note that these facilities face significant operation and maintenance costs. In fact, there was just an article from the BDN, only after suing the records for the Town of Orrington, they discovered that Orrington indeed does not have a mortgage agreement with this brand-new facility and could default. If they default, they have no way to foreclose. This is a bad bill for ratepayers. This is not the way to go for waste-to-energy support. Please follow my light and support the pending motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Orrington, Representative Campbell.

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I sat here through the rail debate, listening to how bad Bangor is. I'm not going to sit here and listen to how bad Orrington is. Orrington is a partner in this new facility; therefore, it has a lot to say about what goes on.

Back to this bill, both the Good Representative from Dexter and the Good Representative from Old Town have told you everything about this bill. This bill sets a cap, a ceiling, of seven

cents on the waste-to-energy production. And for those of you who haven't followed our disposal history, one of our State Departments decided at one point we should be putting waste oil in gravel pits. How'd that work out? That same Department decided that we should be spreading sludge on farmlands. How did that work out? This bill gives those who are going to invest in the real solution to municipal solid waste, the real solution is waste-to-energy. That trash; that we're not going to stop producing; is a renewable, that trash generates electricity. To simply put a cap on this of seven cents when solar, I'm hearing, is somewhere between 20, 21 cents. Let's do what's right and defeat this motion and go on to pass the Ought to Pass. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rockland, Representative Geiger.

Representative **GEIGER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion.

This Body has spent a great deal of time talking about how problematic net energy billing has been. I want us to review the origin of that, which was that the Legislature, a policymaking Body, decided to move into becoming a ratemaking Body. And that was a bad choice. This bill does the same. It moves from policy to telling the PUC what the rate will be. It wasn't a good idea then, it's not a good idea now. We set policy, we should let the PUC set rates. We should not put on the backs of ratepayers 15 years of a contract that may not be financially responsible. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wales, Representative Greenwood.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I truly had not planned on rising on this one, but I've got to share with you. The Good Representative from Old Town made great points; Representative from Dexter, the Good Representative from Orrington made great points. My community is a community that we own our waste-to-energy plant. We are one of 14 municipalities that took the initiative years ago and built a facility. We create energy, we are solving the State's problem of municipal waste. When we burn trash, we reduce it by nearly 90% of its volume.

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair would inquire, does the Member have a fan on?

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Yes.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would inform the Member that the fan is disrupting the; is distorting the mic. The Member may proceed.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Thank you. I apologize for the fan. It's now off.

My community had took the initiative, we built a facility that is solving part of this waste problem. We create energy, we're reducing the trash by nearly 90%, so, when 153 towns across the State are polluting our State with unprocessed trash, our facility is solving that problem.

Mr. Speaker, this is a modest request. We're creating electricity, we're doing the responsible thing. Please vote no on the current motion so we can support the bill. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dexter, Representative Foster.

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify on a couple of things.

First of all, this is not a new facility in Orrington; it is a facility that's undergoing refurbishment, improvements and so on; part of the reason this funding is necessary. That PERC plant, as it was formerly known, ran for many years and they do have scrubbers on the towers, on the stacks, to help and maintain what is required by the EPA for discharge out of those stacks.

And secondly, I will say this; I thought the Good Representative from Freeport might've been talking about NEB and I missed how many bills we'd gone by here for a minute, because this bill, if passed; if we defeat this pending motion; will give us electricity at a much lower rate than what we currently pay for net energy billing electricity produced in the State of Maine. And it would also be baseload energy, which is dependable 24/7 production, which we need as backup as we increase more and more our non-baseload renewable energy that we have out in the fields and woods of Maine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 192

YEA - Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pugh, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Terry, Warren, Webb, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Abdi, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hepler, Javner, Lajoie, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rana, Rollins, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, Wood P, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cray, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Libby, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood, White R.

Yes, 63; No, 73; Absent, 15; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

63 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, with 15 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

Subsequently, on motion of Representative SACHS of Freeport, the Minority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-238)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-238)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Amend Laws Governing the Public Utilities Commission Concerning Participant Funding"

(H.P. 927) (L.D. 1405)

Signed:

Senators:

LAWRENCE of York
GROHOSKI of Hancock

Representatives:

SACHS of Freeport
GEIGER of Rockland
KESSLER of South Portland
RUNTE of York
WARREN of Scarborough
WEBB of Durham

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-242)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

FOSTER of Dexter
MCINTYRE of Lowell
PAUL of Winterport
WADSWORTH of Hiram

READ.

Representative SACHS of Freeport moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative FOSTER of Dexter **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dexter, Representative Foster.

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. In the 131st Legislature, the Energy Committee passed out a bill, unanimous Ought to Pass, LD 395. That established that the PUC would help participants or intervenors that came before them for any reason through funding that would be provided by the utilities and; quite possibly, depending on the type of action; by ratepayers. During the discussions on that bill, the Public Advocate at the time said that we want to try to make available to every resident in the State of Maine who couldn't afford to, to come in before the PUC, state their case, participate in the process. That included someone who might need bus fare, maybe a meal or two, maybe some lodging to do that.

After much discussion and questioning, and one of the questions I had was, what about folks, what about nonprofits that can afford to pay their own way, and do often now, to appear before the PUC, such as, at that time, Natural Resources Council of Maine was one I mentioned. And the thought was that those folks who are so well-funded probably would not meet the requirements the PUC would have set aside. However, then-Public Advocate Harwood did state that there may be some that come in who need large amounts of funding, because they do not have the monies available, and we'll just have to wait and see how that all works out. So, those on my side of the aisle supported the bill, thinking that there might be someone who we would want to see come in that's a ratepayer and might

participate, want to participate to state their case before the PUC that couldn't afford to do it.

As suggested by Public Advocate Harwood, I did watch for the first opportunity that; where that this would come into play. And in the first opportunity where this occurred, a pretty well-funded nonprofit, Our Power, who has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars the last few years, and spent that, and who also has; say, let's guess; a lobbyist that appears occasionally before the Committee, applied for \$84,000 in funding. When I saw that, Mr. Speaker, I immediately put in this bill which we see before us today, which would require that those funds be set aside, that we would not ask utilities and/or ratepayers in the State of Maine to pay for somebody who; some organization, if you will; who has appeared before the PUC multiple times in the past and who I would suggest can afford to do this on their own.

So, therefore, that's why you see this bill before you. I request that you defeat the pending motion and support LD 1405. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Freeport, Representative Sachs.

Representative **SACHS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the pending motion.

While I certainly can understand that we don't get to pick and choose who can take availability of the funding that we all agreed unanimously was a good idea, that the current Public Advocate, Sanborn, is against this bill as well and would support the pending motion with her testimony. And also, the unintended consequences of passing this particular legislation, which is really detrimental to folks, for example, such as the Maine water utilities, who testified against the bill because "water systems are not large." Most of them "are very small, some extremely small with limited customer bases," and they would not have their own legal departments. And so, as public stewards of one of our most essential resources, if this bill were to pass, they would not be able to bring; have the resources to bear, they stated, to be able to come before this adjudicatory proceeding with the Maine PUC. We'd also disenfranchise our Tribal members. They would not be able to be represented as tribes in front of the PUC. We also talked about municipalities, and would it require me, if I were the First Selectperson, to go as an individual instead of going on behalf of the town?

So, for these reasons, this bill felt unworkable, and I urge you to pass the pending motion. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Lowell, Representative McIntyre.

Representative **McINTYRE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I oppose the pending motion and offer just a few points for you to consider before you cast your vote.

The intent of LD 1405 as offered by my Colleague from Dexter is singular and simple to identify. The intent of this proposed legislation is to curtail the potential; the potential; for waste, fraud and abuse in the execution of one very specific line of funding as administered by the Public Utilities Commission. That's it; nothing more, nothing less, no hidden objectives. There are many pillars that comprise the broad concept of good governance. However, as I see things, there is only one that serves as the keystone: public service is a public trust. That trust rests primarily on three principles: transparency, ethics and accountability. As I see things, LD 1405 serves to reinforce each of those.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask you for a modicum of latitude as I offer my closing thoughts. While I know some in this Chamber will ask, 'where the heck is the newbie going with this,' it will make sense, I assure you. When my wife and I are driving

the roads, and the Doobie Brothers song "Takin' it to the Streets" comes on, her and I can rock a pretty good duet. Fear not, I don't sing publicly, and I assure you, you don't want to hear that. Within that song, however, there is one lyric that resonates for me. It goes, "I ain't blind and I don't like what I think I see." What I am seeing, Mr. Speaker, is a widespread and growing distrust by the people of Maine of their elected officials and highly paid bureaucrats. And that distrust is not isolated to one particular political affiliation. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I assert to all of you that we need to start rebuilding that damaged trust, and we need to start sooner than later.

Of one thing I am very certain; the results of this Roll Call will, indeed, matter to all the people of Maine. I know how I will be voting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dexter, Representative Foster.

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One thing I would just like to point out, before LD 395 was passed and if this bill were to pass, the ratepayers of Maine, the people who would normally fall under a category; as suggested by my Good Friend from Freeport; whether it's the Tribes, whether it's a selectperson; most of the time, Mr. Speaker, those folks are represented by the Public Advocate. As a matter of fact, if the Public Advocate, who should be there to represent them, is going to do that, as is listed in the job description, if you will, the purpose for having the Public Advocate, then this bill would not come into play. So, voting against the pending motion and for this bill will not keep those folks that were suggested earlier from being represented before the PUC. That is why we pay a significant amount of money to have the Public Advocate in the first place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Freeport, Representative Sachs.

Representative **SACHS**: Since you asked, Mr. Speaker, per the Public Advocate, and I quote: "Accordingly, we do not see what problem this bill before you is trying to solve." "We see no reason to walk those changes back or narrow the type of intervenors the PUC could find eligible for funding." Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 193

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Carlow, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Campbell, Caruso, Cray, Dhalac, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 72; No, 63; Absent, 16; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

72 having voted in the affirmative and 63 voted in the negative, with 16 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-266)** on Bill "An Act to Allow Employees to Request Flexible Work Schedules"

(H.P. 24) (L.D. 60)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot

RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor

ARCHER of Saco

BECK of South Portland

GEIGER of Rockland

MACIAS of Topsham

SKOLD of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney

DRINKWATER of Milford

LIBBY of Auburn

SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

Representative ROEDER of Bangor moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

Representative DRINKWATER of Milford **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Milford, Representative Drinkwater.

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. LD 60 would give employees the statutory right to ask for a flexible work arrangement up to twice per calendar year. Employees already can ask for a flexible work arrangement from their employers. There is no statutory prohibition from doing so.

LD 60 requires employers to respond to requests for flexible work schedules in writing and provide the reason for denials in the written response. There appears to be no limit in the frequency in which an employee can request a flexible work schedule. Regardless of the number of requests, employers must respond in writing with the reason for denial. Many businesses, particularly small and mid-sized employers, lack the resources to manage this additional paperwork. The requirement to maintain documentation of these requests and responses creates unnecessary red tape and exposes businesses to potential liability for claims of noncompliance.

Many jobs are not suited for flexible schedule. LD 60 fails to acknowledge that many jobs simply do not lead themselves to flexible scheduling. Industries such as health care, manufacturing, retail and food service require employees to be physically present at specific times to meet customer and operational demands. Positions that rely on teamwork, shift coverage and real-time service cannot accommodate arbitrary schedule changes without causing disruptions.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is against this bill. We must recognize that agriculture is not an office job. The crops have to be harvested when the weather cooperates and the crops are ready to be harvested. This bill could have a devastating effect upon our farmers. The Construction Association of Maine also testified against this bill. When field work occurs at night, on weekends or early morning, it's common that support workers in the construction office will be required to be present. Those support services vary, including safety, human resources, finance, mechanics, purchasing and other technical positions during weather events. It might require both field and office staff to be present. The industry is best served when the entire team is present for their operations, including the safety of personnel.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let's put a stop to a stranglehold on businesses. This bill is just one more attempt to legislate the daily activities of every business in the State of Maine. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bangor, Representative Roeder.

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to point out something in the bill that the employer may deny a request if the employer considers the request to be inconsistent with employer operations. And that means, with respect to a flexible work schedule, any of the following conditions: If there is a burden of additional costs on an employer; if there's a detrimental effect unrelated to discrimination or unlawful employment practices on aggregate employee morale; a detrimental effect on the ability of an employer to meet consumer demand; an inability to reorganize work amongst existing employees; an inability to recruit additional employees; a detrimental impact on business quality or business performance; an insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work a flexible work schedule; planned structural changes to the business; or determination by the employer that the position held by the employee cannot be performed completely or partially at a location other than the place of employment. Because we heard from construction, agriculture, service employees that, you know, you can't have a waiter work from home, that makes no sense.

This is mostly a bill about retaliation. There have been instances that were brought to me; which is why the bill came forward in the first place; of employees requesting a work schedule, being denied and then being immediately retaliated against for even asking for it. We made this as easy as possible for the employer to say yes or no. Yes, it has to be in writing. Yes, a text message is okay. But we left a lot of latitude for that employer to say no to the employee if it just doesn't work; for safety, for business operations, for anything. We just don't want employees to be retaliated against for asking for this. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 194

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Campbell, Cray, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 73; No, 64; Absent, 14; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

73 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, with 14 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-266)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-266)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Promote Opportunities by Establishing a Student Wage"

(H.P. 77) (L.D. 112)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-264)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

Representative ROEDER of Bangor moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative DRINKWATER of Milford **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from South Portland, Representative Beck.

Representative **BECK**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise in support of the pending motion.

Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it. No matter how honorable the intent of my colleagues supporting this bill, we must not forget the long and sordid history of the subminimum wage for children in this country. Modern subminimum wages for minors are a reminder of the past and present interests in children as a pool of exploitable, low-wage workers. If the past is any indication of what the future would look like if this bill becomes law, we can all but guarantee that the exploitation and abuse of minors in some Maine workplaces will increase. Cheap child labor will lead some employers to overwork children by assigning them to longer and longer work hours. The 50% cut in wages for two years would make it harder for them to save for college or make vital contributions to their family's household income. Cutting their wages in half could cost these children and their families hundreds of dollars in lost income per week. And what kind of message would we be sending to young people? Even if they're doing the exact same work as adults, that they only deserve to get paid a fraction of what adults get paid? Whatever happened to equal pay for equal work? Cheap child labor will also lead to lower wages for adults, if they can even get hired in the first place. What would prevent an employer from only hiring children and excluding adults altogether?

For all those reasons, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting the pending motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Topsham, Representative Macias.

Representative **MACIAS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in strong opposition to LD 112, because it paves the way for legalized wage suppression under the guise of opportunity.

Let's be clear, a so-called training wage or student wage is not about education or skill building, it's about creating a subclass of workers who can be paid half the legal minimum wage, many of whom will be performing the same work as their adult counterparts. This bill doesn't train students; it trains employers to rely on cheap labor. The sectors most likely to use this wage loophole are the same industries that have historically relied on underpaid, vulnerable workers: agriculture and hospitality. These industries don't lack labor; they lack incentives to pay fairly.

By legalizing poverty wages for students, we displace adult workers and depress local wage standards across the board. Wages are not just about what a worker earns, they're about what a community can spend. A student working 20 hours a week at half the minimum wage earns around \$150 less per week than a fully paid worker. Multiply that across hundreds of youth jobs, and you're draining hundreds of thousands of dollars from the local economy. Money that could be spent at small businesses, on groceries or on transportation. This isn't economic development; it's economic erosion.

Proponents argue it builds experience, but if we want to invest in the next generation, we should be expanding paid internships, mentorships and workforce training programs, not legalizing exploitation. LD 112 sets a dangerous precedent. It says some work is worth less simply because of age. But the work done by a 17-year-old dishwasher, farmhand or food services is still real labor and still contributes to someone else's profit. It still deserves dignity and a fair wage.

Let's build an economy that lifts people up, not one that relies on youth to prop up low road business models. I urge a strong Ought Not to Pass vote. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Lowell, Representative McIntyre.

Representative **McINTYRE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I had no intention of rising in rebuttal, but there were some insinuations in there. So, I will be very, very brief.

In 1959, this State had an apprenticeship program, and that is what this bill was looking to start the conversation to restore. Agree or disagree on the approach path, maybe we'll bring the topic up again in a future session. But the implication that anybody on this side of the aisle is trying to promote what was a regrettable portion of the past is absolutely absurd, and that's just not the case.

So, I bring people's attention to the fact that there used to be a carveout in the bill. And I'm not big into eye poking, I will simply make an observation: On March 18th, during the public hearing, a presentation by a very nervous first-timer, campus-wide fire alarm went off. Maybe people remember that. So, what did I do? I went into my training mode of military and law enforcement and went to the door, posted up, started ushering people out. The senior Senator from that Committee stopped briefly in the door as I was moving people towards safety, and with a Cheshire grin, looked at me and said, 'you know why this alarm is going off, it's because you were making too much sense.' I offer that for your consideration. Vote how you're going to vote.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Milford, Representative Drinkwater.

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard from farmers, and I'm going to give you two examples. One was a Christmas tree farmer. And the question was asked when we went and visited his farm, 'are you hiring teenagers?' He said, 'no, I will not hire teenagers anymore, because when I have to pay them within a dollar of my top hands' pay, and then my top hand has to teach them how to prune trees, *et cetera*, it's not worth my investment.' So, there were some opportunities for kids to have a job, denied. The second example is a vegetable farmer. The question was asked at her farm, 'with this new minimum wage, are you hiring teenagers?' She said, 'no, I will not hire teenagers, because they're too close of pay to what my top hands are getting paid.'

So, therefore, now we're having a group of kids, like I'll use this group in Rockland who turned out to be juvenile delinquents, breaking into cars and stuff because they had so much time on

their hands, they should've been out working. My point is this, Mr. Speaker; is that if we don't teach our kids a work ethic and then pay them accordingly; because remember, now, they have no experience, you have to teach them how you want things done; we're going to have a generation, as we're witnessing in the trades, that don't have any skills. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bangor, Representative Roeder.

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to echo what some of my colleagues have said, notwithstanding the motivations which I understand of my colleagues to be pure and wanting to do the best for the youth in this State and for businesses in this State.

What we hear time and time again when we're trying to move the needle on the minimum wage is that the minimum wage is a starting wage for kids; it's not for people to sustain families. If that is true, then the State minimum wage should be applicable to those youth. We have also heard that we need to relax all of the child labor laws, so that a child who is supporting their family can continue to earn wages to support that family. Cutting minimum wage in half just because somebody is under the age of 18 doesn't make sense in either of those arguments. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 195

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Carlow, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Fredericks, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Quint, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Rudnicki, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S.

ABSENT - Adams, Cray, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 77; No, 61; Absent, 13; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

77 having voted in the affirmative and 61 voted in the negative, with 13 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH**.

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Ensure Timely Reimbursement Under MaineCare Regarding Hospital Cost Reports

(H.P. 231) (L.D. 331)

Signed:

Senators:

INGWERSEN of York
NANGLE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MEYER of Eliot
DEBRITO of Waterville
GRAHAM of North Yarmouth
MCCABE of Lewiston
SHAGOURY of Hallowell
ZAGER of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-270)** on same Resolve.

Signed:

Senator:

MOORE of Washington

Representatives:

DAIGLE of Fort Kent
GRIFFIN of Levant
JAVNER of Chester
LEMELIN of Chelsea

READ.

Representative MEYER of Eliot moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative JAVNER of Chester **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Chester, Representative Javner.

Representative **JAVNER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You don't know how badly I wish I had won that cornhole competition this morning.

This bill simply pays our hospitals on time, every time. It is as simple as that. Now, I'm going to ask for a little bit of latitude in my remarks as well, not as a newbie, but as someone who has been here for quite a while. I'm not sure if you know, Mr. Speaker, but we have three children, three amazing children; I get to say that, because I'm their mom; but two of them were not even born in the United States. They were born on the continent of Africa. We lived there for over a decade. We learned many lessons as we immersed ourselves in the culture. And the one thing overall on a daily basis that we observed was the corruption.

Now, I have sat on the Health and Human Services Committee for seven years, and every one of those terms, I have asked our Department, 'what is the level of fraud that is happening in MaineCare?' And every time, I am told, 'Representative Javner, it is minimal. It is minimal.' Now, when we ask our providers to enter into a contract with the State, we're asking them to be a business partner. Now, I don't think that the State has been a very good business partner, because now, again, we are asking our hospitals to take a back seat.

I voted for the supplemental budget, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that our hospitals need to be paid for services rendered. I voted for the bill last week, and the emergency as well, so that

our hospitals could get paid and our providers be paid. And I would ask today; before everyone in this Chamber pushes their buttons to vote on this bill one last time to seek payment for our hospitals every time, every moment; that you would think long and hard before pushing your button, so that we have one more opportunity here to be able to pay our hospitals for services rendered, and this is that opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Milford, Representative Drinkwater.

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was my bill that I put in. And a funny thing happened along the road to the public hearing. The public hearing was on the 19th of March, the same day that the Other Body failed to support the supplemental budget. So, I'm thinking, in my seven years that I've been here, I might have a chance to get one bill across the finish line. Sad to say, Mr. Speaker, this is my last chance here.

In my seven years under one party's dominance, it's become evident that the majority insists hospitals and universities shoulder more of the burden, demanding they have skin in the game, when the stakes may be unfairly high. The University of Maine is required to support students and expected to identify funding within its existing budget to cover those costs. Hospitals and medical providers consented to participate in MaineCare with the understanding that they would be responsible for absorbing some of the program's costs.

LD 331 simply asks that hospitals receive the same type of treatment we gave nursing homes in 2023. LD 1474 directed the Department of Health and Human Services to expedite reimbursement of long-term care facilities. And as we remember, Mr. Speaker, our long-term care facilities were in crisis mode. In fact, now our hospitals are in crisis mode. And Mr. Speaker, in 2023, your party recognized the crisis in long-term facilities and took action. Why can't we recognize today that our hospitals are facing a very similar crisis and take the simple necessary step of passing this bill to ensure they are paid in a timely manner?

Our health care providers are in crisis. Over the past several years, we've expanded MaineCare enrollment without fully accounting for the financial impact. As a result, we're now witnessing the downsizing of rural hospitals and the closure of facilities like Waterville's Northern Light Inland Hospital. In my personal experience, it took 10 months to secure an appointment with a specialist. When I reached out to my eye doctor in February, I was informed that the soonest available appointment wasn't until October the 29th. Waiting eight months for a basic eye checkup is simply unacceptable. The severe lack of medical specialists in rural communities is a critical issue that demands urgent attention.

While it may be convenient to dismiss these issues as mere mismanagement, we owe it to ourselves and to those affected to reflect honestly on our role and consider how we be part of the solution. The reality is clear; our health care system is stretched beyond capacity and chronically underfunded. We cannot afford to wait any longer to act.

Listen to the testimony from our medical professionals. This is Maine Health: "As of February 28th, we have not received any settlements from MaineCare for our Fiscal Year 2023." And that care was provided between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023. "This amount totals nearly \$40 million. We are still waiting for reimbursement more than one year after submitting our cost reports. It is important to note that this care that has already been provided and the expenses have already been incurred; in some cases, more than two years ago; and we're still waiting for reimbursement. We also recently

submitted our Fiscal Year 2024 cost reports, for which combined settlements totaled nearly \$61 million. We are currently owed \$100 million by MaineCare."

Northern Light: "The gap between our costs to provide care and governmental payments;" that'd be Medicare and Medicaid; "is \$300 million. As we work to improve our financial performance, timely payments for the services we provide is a priority. We incur the cost to provide care in real time; our doctors, nurses, medical procedures, clinical imaging; all of it. We are challenged when we wait years to receive the MaineCare settlement payments that we are due. Today, we are due \$50 million in cost report settlement payments for acute hospital and provider services from prior years."

Maine Hospital Association: 'Hospitals have to pay their employees and vendors. So, when reimbursements are delayed, it creates a financial burden for our members.' Mr. Speaker, here are some of the facts submitted by Maine Hospital Association. Roughly 80% of hospitals are owed settlement debt from MaineCare. The debt occurred from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2024. In other words, the care was provided between six and 30 months ago. The total amount of debt; and this is climbing, Mr. Speaker; \$195 million.

This bill is asking that hospitals be paid just like we did to nursing homes, requiring the Department to reimburse at least 75% of the as-filled settlements pursuant to the facility's cost report within 90 days of receipt. Mr. Speaker, if we don't change the direction of what MaineCare is costing the State of Maine, we are going to be faced with what we saw with the previous Chief Executive Officer, where we owe hundreds of million dollars and we have to sell things off and leverage things to pay that debt. Let's not repeat what history has taught us: that we need to pay our bills in a timely fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Eliot, Representative Meyer.

Representative MEYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House. As we conduct our work here in the Chamber, MaineCare continues to cap payments to hospitals and health care providers across the State, because this Body has failed to take emergency action to fully fund our obligations to MaineCare.

When LD 331 came before the HHS Committee, it was clear then, as it is clear now, that this is not a means to help hospitals through this period of MaineCare payment capping. At the public hearing for this bill, support was based solely on the need to pay hospitals in the near-term to alleviate the hardship based on the current ongoing crisis. This is not the vehicle to address the MaineCare shortfall in the near term. This bill would not get us there. An earnest desire to have avoided the MaineCare payment crisis would've been reflected in the passage of a supplemental budget with the two-thirds necessary for emergency enactment.

In actuality, LD 331 was proposed well before the payment crisis we are dealing with today as a way to pay hospitals more quickly for the cost settlements they submit annually. An understanding of how hospitals are paid is necessary in order to fully grasp why this measure would neither improve nor prevent in the future the payment capping crisis we find ourselves in today. Hospitals paid through cost settlement receive interim payments throughout the year, which are then reconciled with actual costs submitted annually by the hospitals. The reimbursement timeframe for cost settlement approved by the federal government in Maine's Medicaid State Plan is 12 months, which the State is currently meeting. LD 331 would pay 75% of those settlement costs within a shorter period of time,

and the remaining balance once all due diligence was complete. LD 331 requires the Department to reimburse 75% of the as-filled settlement pursuant to a hospital cost reports within 90 days of receipt. It requires the Department to accomplish this within existing resources. The operationalization of this proposed reimbursement practice is clearly not feasible utilizing existing resources. As written, the Department would be required to borrow funds from future Fiscal Years in order to make as-filled payments within 90 days. The fiscal details on this bill if passed include the need for \$51 million General Fund appropriation in '25-'26 to accelerate payment of the as filed cost reports and an additional \$24 million; also in '25-'26; to implement the 75% of as-filled reports. It would also require the establishment of a position, another auditor.

Even if we were to identify the \$74 million necessary to move in the direction of LD 331, this could not go into effect before the current shortfall and associated payment capping has ended. That will happen in June, thanks to this Majority's work to pass those appropriations in March. Even within the last few weeks, we had yet another bill, LD 1948, "An Act to Fund MaineCare," that would have ended the MaineCare shortfall with already available funds. Unfortunately, a second opportunity was squandered with an inability to; once again; reach the requisite two-thirds to get that money out the door and to the hospitals I'm hearing so much about today. I would add that any genuine desire to assist the health care delivery system we all need access to is certainly not reflected in the effort to block implementation of the Biennial Budget through a petition drive and a People's Veto.

I urge my colleagues to support the Ought Not to Pass Report and reject the false promise to resolve the MaineCare shortfall via LD 331. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Hodgdon, Representative Quint.

Representative QUINT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually don't even know what to say at this moment, because I am more than a little ticked off at our State.

Maternity units across our State are closing. Hospitals are doing cuts. I live 15 minutes away from my hospital, I had my daughter minutes after arriving and then, I hemorrhaged. Mr. Speaker, if I had that same situation a couple of months from now, when the maternity unit in Houlton Hospital closes, I would die. This is where we are in the State of Maine.

And I'm hearing on; don't get me wrong, on both sides; I'm hearing, 'blah-blah-blah, timing, money, people should've voted this way, people should've voted that way.' We're not paying our bills, Mr. Speaker. We are adding people on to MaineCare daily, and we're not even paying our bills that we already have. Why are we doing this? Any opportunity to close that gap, we're not even looking at. We're adding people on, and we're not even paying the bills that we already have. This is just very disturbing to me. I'm only just talking about the maternity units. How many have closed in the rural areas? You want to talk about women dying? That, Mr. Speaker, that will kill women in Maine, and I would be one of them.

This is a good bill. I don't understand why we're arguing and we're using politics at this point. We're way beyond politics. Maternity units are closing, long-term care within hospitals are closing, what other department needs to close down before we pay our bills? We made a commitment, and we're liars. I'm not okay with this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Pittsfield, Representative Collamore.

Representative **COLLAMORE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am pretty pissed off. I'm sorry for saying it like that. I'm very angry. I apologize.

Twelve o'clock today, Mr. Speaker, Inland Hospital's emergency room stopped taking patients. Stopped. No more people can go to Inland Hospital for emergency services. In an hour and 35 minutes, primary care patients will no longer receive services in Waterville, Maine with Inland Hospital's primary care places. I'm 20 minutes from Waterville; I have Northern Light. How much longer, Mr. Speaker, before my hospital is closed and my primary care provider is closed?

We heard from the Good Representative from Milford, 10 months to try to get an appointment; 18 months in Pittsfield right now, Mr. Speaker. Eighteen months. My partner had to go to the ER at MaineGeneral; because you can't go to Inland; to try and get services for his heart having an issue. They told him, 'you have to go and get a stress test.' Our primary care provider in Pittsfield had gotten rid of him as a patient, because he had been a year without having to go in, because he had had no problems. So, he was penalized for being healthy, lost his primary care service and we still don't have a stress test. Because nobody is accepting anything anymore from the State, ever. You try to go to a dental place; you can't get it. I have a child who still has MaineCare, and he can't get services anywhere anymore, because we're not paying our bills. And to be told that, 'well, we had a chance to fix this issue,' Mr. Speaker; yeah, we did, and guess what, I voted for it every single time. And I'm sick of being told that I'm the bad guy as part of this minority party, when our Body actually did the two-thirds for the supplemental. And I was a Co-sponsor of the bill from the Good Representative from Old Town, and I was told by members of the Majority Party that not to worry, because the hospitals will get paid in 40 days. Well, they need to be paid right now. They don't need to wait another 40 days.

So, if you could please vote down this part, make it so that our hospitals can get paid in a timely manner, so that those of us who are in rural areas, outside of Cumberland and York County, can actually get services, that would be super helpful. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newport, Representative Fredette.

Representative **FREDETTE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, about six weeks ago down in Appropriations, I raised the question, and I raised the issue to the Committee on mic, that I believed our medical system in Maine was broken. And I asked the Leads on the Committee if maybe we could bring in some folks from the hospitals to talk about what's going on, what are the problems.

I had the opportunity earlier this year, I met with the President of the Maine Health System down in Portland, and with the President of Northern Light. And in neither of those conversations did I take away some sort of golden nugget that said, 'hey, this is what's wrong with the system.' Housing's an issue, the cost of housing, the availability of housing; traveling nurses are an issue, traveling doctors are an issue; you know, the amount of debt up at Northern Lights, it's around \$500 billion. And yes, payments to the hospitals are an issue. But, Mr. Speaker, I would contend that, you know, while we want to talk about paying the hospitals, our hospitals are broken. The system isn't working. And while we want to debate sunflowers and other issues in this Body, people throughout the State are seeing the services and the availability of medical care diminish. Diminishing to the point where the go-to now is LifeFlight. When

I was a kid, 17 years old, in Danforth, Maine, I was a passenger in a vehicle, the vehicle rolled over, I was; I was not in a good position, let me just put it that way. I was taken to Houlton Regional Hospital, and I would generally say I was fixed. But the point of it is that, you know, nowadays, it's let's not take him to Houlton Regional Hospital, let's get him on LifeFlight, so we can get them somewhere to get the help that they need.

The system's broken, and the conversation about payment, I get it, yup. But it's just a small piece of the pie. But people sent us here to fix problems in this State. Our judicial system isn't working, hospital system isn't working. We ought to be here fixing the big problems, identifying the big problems and figuring out how we can make it better for the citizens of the State of Maine, and we're not doing that. This bill isn't going to do it, giving the hospitals a check isn't going to do it; you're still going to see hospitals close. But we need to get serious about it. And it's not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue; it's an issue for the State. I've lived here all my life. I grew up poor in rural Maine. You know, I didn't worry about access to doctors, dentist, eye doctor, nothing. Here we are some 60 years later, all the technology in the world, all the advancements in the world, standard of living, minimum wage, I'm not sure things are any better today than they were 60 years ago. But I would only say, Mr. Speaker, I think we ought to be focusing on the big issues. Let's focus on the big issues that's going to change the lives of people in this State.

So, yes, we need to pay the hospitals. We get it. But there's a lot bigger issues that we need to focus on than just this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Sidney, Representative Collins.

Representative **COLLINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add on to what the Representative from Pittsfield said. Inland will be closing today. The strain on the system is already being felt, with the City of Waterville requesting at least one more ambulance, because they know that their transport times are now increasing. The hospital, obviously, at MaineGeneral is overwhelmed already, and the strain is there. It's a simple question: can we pay our bills? And I mean, we've got an \$11.3 billion budget, why is that money not already being paid out? That's all I'm asking. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Chelsea, Representative Lemelin.

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill is not intended to solve MaineCare shortfall issues. The MaineCare shortfall started well over three years ago, and no one did anything about it. We just keep spending and finding ways to add more people onto the system. We also keep passing bills to make it easier to qualify for free care at our hospitals.

This bill only solves hospital cash flow issues. There is no position required for this bill. There's one suggested, but that's all a bunch of hoopla; we really don't need that position, they can just cancel that out. This bill does help save hospitals. We need to separate the MaineCare shortfall and supplemental budget from this bill, because they're not related. This bill isn't going to save anybody anything, it's only going to save our hospitals, which you've heard over and over again, we're in dire need of doing. So, this needs to be Roll Called, because I think the people of the State of Maine need to see who in this Chamber supports our hospitals and who doesn't. Because they are closing and more are coming. Here's something that we can do about it right now.

So, I'm hoping that everybody really thinks about this before they hit their button and realizes that they're voting to not pay hospitals quicker and try to help the hospitals. This is not about a MaineCare shortfall at all, or a supplemental budget. That's a totally separate option. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Milford, Representative Drinkwater.

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry for rising for the second time, but I heard some things that really bothered me, Mr. Speaker. And one of them is that we were told that this side of the aisle did not support the supplemental budget back in January. I would like to correct the record and say this Body, both sides, supported that supplemental budget with an emergency Enactor to pay the hospitals. I heard from the speaker from Eliot, Representative Meyer, that we did not support that. I'd like just to correct the record. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 196

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Roeder, Rudnicki, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Campbell, Cray, DeBrito, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 70; No, 66; Absent, 15; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

70 having voted in the affirmative and 66 voted in the negative, with 15 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-213)** on Bill "An Act to Regulate Employer Surveillance to Protect Workers"

(H.P. 25) (L.D. 61)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
LIBBY of Auburn
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

Representative ROEDER of Bangor moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

Representative DRINKWATER of Milford **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Phillips, Representative Soboleski.

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen. I rise today in firm opposition of LD 61, a bill that, while seemingly aimed at employee privacy, imposes excessive restrictions on lawful workplace oversight, ultimately jeopardizing the ability of employers to maintain efficient, secure and well-managed work environments.

At its core, despite its Amendment, this bill introduces broad limitations on employer surveillance without recognizing the legitimate and necessary role of workplace monitoring and ensuring productivity, compliance with company policies and protecting against fraud, theft and other misconduct. By requiring advance notice of any electronic monitoring, it hinders business' ability to respond to emergent security concerns. Further, the prohibition against audiovisual monitoring in an employee's personal workspace; while understandable; fails to consider cases where remote work environments intersect with company security needs. What's more troubling is the restriction on data collection applications on employee devices. Many companies rely on such applications to maintain cybersecurity, protect proprietary information and comply with industry regulations. By allowing employees to decline these measures outright, we create sufficient vulnerabilities, potentially exposing business to cyber threats, data breaches and costly legal liabilities.

This bill makes Maine an outlier among states in how it regulates workplace oversight, introducing stringent rules that place businesses at a severe disadvantage. If enacted, LD 61 will discourage companies from expanding or investing in our

State, fearing an environment that limits their ability to effectively manage their operations. Employers must have reasonable flexibility to ensure workplace safety, compliance and security. This bill strips them of that ability.

Instead of placing broad restrictions that undermine business operations, we should pursue balanced policies that safeguard employee privacy while also protecting the employer's ability to ensure workplace integrity. LD 61, as currently written, does not achieve that balance. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to reject this bill and work towards a solution that strengthens security and accountability without compromising the ability of businesses to operate effectively. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bangor, Representative Roeder.

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this bill was written with the knowledge that there are many employers that need to surveil their employees at the worksite. This bill is specifically about prohibiting an employer from using audiovisual monitoring in an employee's residence or personal vehicle or on the employee's property, provides that an employee can decline a request by an employer to install data collection or transmission applications on the employee's personal electronic devices. If the company wants to monitor, they can provide their own electronic devices to the employee.

So, this ensures that the employee's rights to privacy are respected while allowing employers to maintain necessary oversight. In our increasingly digital work environments, the line between appropriate supervision and invasive monitoring can become blurred. LD 61 addresses this by setting reasonable boundaries, protecting workers from unwarranted surveillance that can lead to stress, decreased morale and a sense of mistrust in the workplace. In the Department of Labor's testimony, they said that they, quote, "appreciate the valid concerns raised by the bill as the concept of employer surveillance is currently not addressed in Statute." And the Department further stated the, quote, "reasonable protections" outlined in Subsections 3, 4 and 5 are, quote, "commendable steps towards safeguarding employee privacy." It provides clarity for employers by defining acceptable surveillance practices, thereby reducing potential legal ambiguities and fostering a more transparent work environment.

In working with stakeholders, we also limited the bill to reflect necessary business practices in certain industries. As an example, the amended version of the bill excludes personal care services and services from financial institutions such as virtual teller services. It also clarifies that audiovisual monitoring is acceptable if required by the employer for duties of the job. It has garnered support from various stakeholders, reflecting a collective acknowledgment of the need for balanced labor practices to protect both employees and employers. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 197

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte,

Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Campbell, Cray, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood, Yusuf.

Yes, 73; No, 63; Absent, 15; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

73 having voted in the affirmative and 63 voted in the negative, with 15 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-213)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-213)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-267)** on Bill "An Act to Direct the Board of Occupational Safety and Health to Develop Indoor Air Quality Standards for Buildings in the State in Which Public Sector Workers Work" (H.P. 929) (L.D. 1407)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
LIBBY of Auburn
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

On motion of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-267)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-267)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit Copyrights for Works of State Government"

(H.P. 474) (L.D. 732)

Signed:

Senators:

BALDACCI of Penobscot
BEEBE-CENTER of Knox

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook
COPELAND of Saco
FARRIN of Jefferson
MATLACK of St. George
ROLLINS of Augusta

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-258)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

ADAMS of Lebanon
GREENWOOD of Wales
POMERLEAU of Standish
TUELL of East Machias
UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

READ.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wales, Representative Greenwood.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: I rise in opposition to the pending motion and further request a Roll Call.

Representative **GREENWOOD** of Wales **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from East Machias, Representative Tuell.

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise today to oppose the pending motion, and I do so to remind everyone who we; legislators, staff, members of the various agencies of State government; serve the Maine people.

This bill is a simple but significant Act, one rooted in the core values of transparency, accountability and public access. It does one essential thing: it makes clear that the work produced by State government departments and agencies, paid for by the taxpayers of Maine, belongs to the people of Maine, not to the State as a gatekeeper, not to a single department, but to the public.

Let's be honest, there is a dangerous trend in government to protect, privatize and restrict access to information that should be open to all by default. If something is created with taxpayer funds, using public resources, in service of the public good, then the public must have the unrestricted right to use, share and build upon that work. This bill ensures that departments and agencies of the State cannot copyright their work under U.S.

law. It carves out necessary exceptions; products being sold commercially, copyrights transferred to the State voluntarily and those that already exist. It also wisely exempts educational institutions and cultural institutions like the Maine State Museum and the University of Maine System, entities whose missions require different treatment. But let's not lose the thread. This bill affirms that government is not a publisher selling content; it is a servant delivering knowledge and transparency. Why is this important? Because we should not live in a Maine where accessing a report, database set, manual or publicly funded material comes with a legal warning. We should not tell citizens, journalists, educators or researchers that they need permission to use work their taxes already paid for.

Some may say copyright is a tool to protect the integrity of government information, but we already have laws to prevent misuse, distortion and misrepresentation. We don't need copyright for that. What copyright does do is create barriers and that is unacceptable when it comes to civic information. Just ask California, Florida and the federal government, who do not copyright their works. In an age when trust in government is fragile and access to accurate information is more important than ever, we must lead with openness, not ownership.

LD 732 is not just a legal correction; it's a moral commitment. It says to the people of Maine, 'your government's work is your work, you paid for it, you own it.' Let's reject the pending motion, pass this bill and stand for a more open, more democratic and more accountable Maine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 198

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Carlow, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cray, Crockett, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood, Yusuf.

Yes, 70; No, 66; Absent, 15; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

70 having voted in the affirmative and 66 voted in the negative, with 15 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Regarding When the Governor May Call the Legislature into Session

(H.P. 866) (L.D. 1331)

Signed:

Senator:

BALDACCI of Penobscot

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook

ADAMS of Lebanon

COPELAND of Saco

FARRIN of Jefferson

MATLACK of St. George

ROLLINS of Augusta

UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-260)** on same RESOLUTION.

Signed:

Senator:

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

GREENWOOD of Wales

POMERLEAU of Standish

TUELL of East Machias

READ.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Turner, Representative Morris.

Representative **MORRIS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the pending motion.

Our government is built on the separation of powers between the three branches of government. The Maine Constitution establishes an adjournment date for the Legislature for both the First and Second Regular Sessions. In recent sessions, however, the Legislature has adjourned earlier than the dates established in the Constitution, only to be called back almost immediately by the Chief Executive for a Special Session. This Resolution would limit the Chief Executive's ability to call us back for a Special Session to no earlier than 90 days after we have adjourned *sine die*. The reason for this is that laws passed by the Legislature do not take effect until 90 days after we adjourn. We would not know how these laws are impacting our citizens until they take effect, so, there's no need for the Chief Executive to call us back relating to those laws and their impacts.

The Constitution states that the Chief Executive may call us back on extraordinary occasions, not just to finish the work that we haven't gotten to yet. This Resolution only addresses the Chief Executive's ability to call a Special Session of the Legislature. It does not limit the ability of the Legislature to call itself into a Special Session. If an extraordinary circumstance exists that needs to be addressed, the Legislature can still choose to return at any time.

The current process is not working well for anyone. Passing a budget early has resulted in power being concentrated in the hands of only a few legislators. It doesn't work for the majority party or the minority party. It effectively puts all the power of the State's finances into the hands of the Chief Executive and a few legislators. Additionally, the resulting Special Session results in additional costs for the people of

Maine. There is no requirement that the Legislature be wrapped by statutory adjournment date, any days we are here past that date result in additional cost to Maine taxpayers. Each day we are here beyond statutory adjournment means we are paid an extra \$100 daily, in addition to our allowances for meals, travel and lodging. I believe if we pass this legislation, it will require the Legislature to decide if they want to adjourn early or continue working until statutory adjournment and build consensus. I would request a Roll Call, and I would encourage this Body to reject this motion.

Representative MORRIS of Turner **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from East Machias, Representative Tuell.

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise today in staunch opposition to the motion before us.

LD 1331 proposes, as the speaker previously stated, proposes a Constitutional Amendment to clarify and limit the Chief Executive's power to reconvene this Body after we've adjourned without day. At its heart, this proposal is about protecting the foundational principles of separation of powers by setting a clear, defined limit on when we, or a future Legislature, can be called back if we adjourn *sine die*.

Under our current Constitution, the Chief Executive may call the Legislature back into session on, quote-unquote, "extraordinary occasions." But nowhere is there a clear limit on how soon that power can be exercised after we, as a deliberative Body, have finished our work and adjourned. This Constitutional Amendment introduces a reasonable and defined pause, 90 days, before the second floor may reconvene us after final adjournment. This is important, because it affirms that when this Legislature adjourns without day, it does so intentionally. It signals that our work for the Session has concluded. To immediately override that decision days or even hours later without constraint is to undermine our autonomy. It invites the Chief Executive to use his/her constitutional authority not just in moments of necessity, but potentially in moments of political convenience.

This bill sets a guardrail, not a wall. It does not remove the Chief Executive's emergency powers clause, it does not impair action in times of real crisis. What it does is ensure that extraordinary occasions are not treated as ordinary opportunities. To those who feel this limit is too strict, I say this: good governance requires restraint, and just as we as legislators must use our power judiciously, so too must the executive. A 90-day pause is not an obstruction; it is a safeguard. To those who argue that this is unnecessary, I ask: should any Chief Executive, regardless of party, be allowed to recall the Legislature at will without the tempering passage of time? Should this Chamber be subject to executive impulse rather than constitutional balance?

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, this is not a theoretical concern. Across the nation, we've seen the erosion of legislative prerogative when executives are given unchecked authority. Maine need not follow that path. We must reaffirm that this House and the Other Body down the hall are not subordinates of the Blaine House; we are coequal branches of government. This Amendment does not weaken our republic, it strengthens it. It ensures that when the majority sends us home, it takes more than a whim to bring us back. It ensures that we are not debating frogs, dogs, turtles, whether the State ought to

encourage everyone to turn their lights out at night or any other trivial piece of legislation you may have seen flit across your Committee radar or our desks this session.

I urge you to oppose the pending motion and give the people of Maine the opportunity to affirm that when the Legislature speaks, it is heard; and when it adjourns, it is respected and indeed, finished. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 199

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfuls, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cray, Fredericks, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 73; No, 64; Absent, 14; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

73 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, with 14 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Limit Eligibility Under the Maine Clean Election Act"

(H.P. 541) (L.D. 855)

Signed:

Senators:

HICKMAN of Kennebec

DUSON of Cumberland

Representatives:

SUPICA of Bangor

FAIRCLOTH of Bangor

FROST of Belgrade

GRAHAM of North Yarmouth

MALON of Biddeford

TERRY of Gorham

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-225)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin

Representatives:

BOYER of Poland

CHAPMAN of Auburn

FREDERICKS of Sanford

HYMES of Waldo

READ.

Representative SUPICA of Bangor moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Poland, Representative Boyer.

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of welfare reform. We need to make sure that this program is here for the people that need it most, not, you know, millionaires that abuse the system when they don't really need it.

This program should be a hand up, not a handout, and that's what it's turned into. You get to use this program year after year, cycle after cycle, to no end. There's no means testing, you know, it just goes to anybody, you could be a millionaire or not. And it doesn't make sense. We're going to have to make another appropriation from the General Fund to keep this program going, and it's not working; it hasn't done anything to make our system better, hasn't produced us any positive results that I can see for the money that we spend on it. So, I think we need to make sure that it's here for the people that need it most, and I ask for a Roll Call. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative BOYER of Poland **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Majority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 200

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfuls, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lyman, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Strout, Supica, Terry, Tuell, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Swallow, Thorne, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cooper, Cray, Fredericks, Graham, Guerrette, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 78; No, 57; Absent, 16; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

78 having voted in the affirmative and 57 voted in the negative, with 16 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Six Members of the Committee on **LABOR** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-212)** on Bill "An Act to Replace the Minimum Hourly Wage with a Regionally Based Living Wage" (H.P. 539) (L.D. 853)

Signed:

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

Six Members of the same Committee report in Report "B" **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
BRADSTREET of Kennebec
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

Representative ROEDER of Bangor moved that the House **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Milford, Representative Drinkwater.

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm feeling hopeful. Hopeful that we're almost to the end of this Calendar. I'd like to ask for a Roll Call. Thank you.

Representative DRINKWATER of Milford **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rockland, Representative Geiger.

Representative **GEIGER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as the sponsor of LD 853, "An Act to Replace the Minimum Hourly Wage with a Regionally Based Living Wage."

I moved to Maine when I was 21 years old and a newly minted registered nurse. I had grown up in upstate New York, worked summers at a beauty salon as a receptionist. I made \$5.99 an hour my last summer there. When I arrived at Pen Bay Medical Center for my first RN job, my starting pay was \$3.99 an hour. I assumed the cost of living would match the wages. It did not.

In the decades since then, I have observed that Maine has consistently remained one of the lowest, if not the lowest wage state in New England. We have consistently had; I'm sorry; the lowest wage and the highest poverty rates. The results of decades of low wages have now come home to roost. Maine is

the oldest state in the nation. We have experienced a brain drain for decades as our young people left for college or better opportunities and never returned. We have an acute labor shortage despite being seen as a highly desirable place to live. With low wages, high living costs and a huge surge in the cost of housing since the pandemic, we are facing a crisis to the very future viability of our State as a year-round place to live and work.

Maine's minimum wage is now \$14.65. MIT estimates the living wage every year by state and by county. In Maine, that ranges from \$20.64 an hour in Aroostook County to \$25.11 in the Portland Metro area. This wage is based on meeting the basic needs for food, housing, medical care, transportation and internet. According to the Maine Development Foundation in 2024, 88% of Mainers can no longer afford to rent a two-bedroom apartment, while 79% of households cannot afford a median priced house. In my county, Knox County, 88% of households are unable to afford a median priced house.

Since coming to the State House, I have observed how many programs the State runs to ensure that children don't go hungry, that Mainers have heating and rental assistance and access to health care. These programs are touted as helping low-income people, but I see it a little differently. It seems to me the State and its taxpayers are subsidizing employers who pay too little for people to live on. Whether it is Walmart placing a food box at the front of the store for its customer to contribute to its employees for Christmas or business's orientation showing low wage Mainers how to sign up for heating assistance or Medicaid, we have allowed decades of Mainers to struggle on low wages and face the constant indignities of applying for local or state assistance to survive.

There are no easy answers, but when more than three-quarters of Maine people are unable to afford to rent or buy, we have a structural issue. Our economy is broken. Food, rent, heat assistance are meant to help those who are disabled or on fixed incomes, not those working full-time. There will never be enough public money to subsidize three-quarters of Maine's population's housing needs. There is currently a seven-year wait for Section 8 vouchers. When you receive one, you have 30 days to find an apartment or the voucher goes to the next person. With vacancy rates below 5% in most counties, there are no apartments to find. One has to ask, who is Maine subsidizing? Is it Maine people who, despite working one or more jobs, still don't make a living wage, or are we subsidizing employers whose business plan depends on underpaying workers and having the taxpayers of Maine subsidize those same workers in order for them to eat, pay rent and live in a heated space?

This bill proposes to exchange the minimum wage for a regionally based living wage, as was originally intended when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed it. This bill divides the State into four regions: the northern Maine region, which would pay \$20.67 an hour; coastal regions, which would pay \$22.04 and the Portland Metro area which would pay \$25.74. I am well aware that this is a heavy lift and unlikely to pass, but to avoid doing so is to see Maine slowly decline, become a true vacationland with seasonal workers, seasonal homes and fewer and fewer year-round working residents. If we want to reverse the terminal spiral we are in, we must have young people stay here, move here, have children here and we must enable them to have a decent and dignified life. It is time for Maine employers to provide a living wage that allows working Mainers to afford the essentials, while leaving Maine's social programs like rental assistance, SNAP benefits and heating assistance for those it was meant for: Mainers on low fixed

incomes and those unable to work due to health or age. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of Report "A" Ought to Pass as Amended. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 201

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Kessler, Macias, Mathieson, McCabe, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Osher, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Roeder, Rollins, Sato, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Crafts, Crockett, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Javner, Julia, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Mastraccio, Matlack, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rielly, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Adams, Cooper, Cray, Fredericks, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 39; No, 97; Absent, 15; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

39 having voted in the affirmative and 97 voted in the negative, with 15 being absent, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended** was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

Subsequently, on motion of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, Report "B" **Ought Not to Pass** was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Six Members of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Promote Artisans and the Creative Economy" (H.P. 954) (L.D. 1462)

Signed:

Senator:

BALDACCI of Penobscot

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook

COPELAND of Saco

FARRIN of Jefferson

MATLACK of St. George

ROLLINS of Augusta

Six Members of the same Committee report in Report "B" **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

ADAMS of Lebanon

GREENWOOD of Wales

POMERLEAU of Standish

TUELL of East Machias

UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

READ.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook moved that the House **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass**.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wales, Representative Greenwood.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: I turned my fan off in advance, so that we wouldn't have the background. I'll note the heat's still on on this side of the building.

I rise in opposition to the pending motion and further request a Roll Call.

Representative GREENWOOD of Wales **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from East Machias, Representative Tuell.

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise today in respectful but firm opposition to the pending motion.

While I wholeheartedly support Maine's artisans and creative community; my grandfather used to make and sell handcrafted baskets along the roadside of Route 1 in East Machias and at craft fairs; this bill, though well intentioned, poses substantial risk to local control, public space management and the balance between expression and community order. At its core, this bill strips municipalities of the power to prohibit vending of expressive matter in public spaces while failing to define exactly what that is. Instead, it allows only limited regulation, restricted to narrow time, place and manner constraints that must meet specific criteria. In doing so, it invites conflict, litigation and uncertainty. In short, the only folks expressing themselves, should this bill pass, are the legal community, who will be gainfully employed trying to sort out the legal minutiae of what is and is not allowed under a local ordinance.

LD 1462 assumes that expressive matter can be neatly separated from commercial enterprise, but in practice, the distinction between "expressive content," quote-unquote, and "commercial content," quote-unquote, is blurry at best. A painting, a sculpture or performance all can carry artistic value with commercial intent. This bill prohibits regulation of the former while disallowing only purely commercial activity. How will municipalities enforce that? Who decides where expression ends and commerce begins? This law creates a regulatory gray zone that will leave municipalities vulnerable to legal challenge and strip them of the flexibility they need to manage public spaces responsibly and fairly.

Let's also look at the impact on public spaces. Under LD 1462, a town may not prohibit vendors of expressive matter in parks or on sidewalks. Even if the community is already struggling with overuse, crowding or visual clutter. While the bill does allow for some restrictions tied to health, sanitation and ADA compliance, those are narrow exceptions. Town officials, those who knew their communities best, are handcuffed from taking broader action to preserve the esthetic and recreational value of their public areas. It bears noting that Maine Municipal was opposed to this bill as well. In Portland, in Bar Harbor, in Machias, our parks and waterfronts are gathering spaces, natural retreats and community assets. Local governments need flexibility to preserve their beauty, prevent overcrowding and ensure accessibility, not rigid limitations and mandates imposed by Augusta.

Finally, while the bill purports to protect First Amendment rights, let us not forget the Constitution already does that. Courts across the country have long held that municipalities can

place reasonable restrictions on expressive activity in public forums. LD 1462 does not strengthen those rights; it burdens communities by tying their hands unnecessarily.

We should be celebrating the arts, yes. We should be promoting expression. But we should also respect the wisdom of local governments and trust them to strike the right balance between expression and order; creativity and community interest. I urge this Body to reject the pending motion, let's support the creative economy without sacrificing local control or common sense. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Woolwich, Representative Hepler.

Representative **HEPLER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. LD 1462 would allow artists who share and sell their expressive matter in the public sphere under certain conditions, and expressive matter is 'materials or objects created by a vendor with expressive content, including written material, such as newspapers, books or writing, visual arts such as paintings, prints, photography or sculpture.' It supports street artists in our public spaces and provides a crucial venue to those without access to an art gallery or a publisher and culturally enriches our communities. But it is a bill primarily to protect and highlight the First Amendment rights of artists, performers and writers.

Courts have affirmed that art and written works are protected expressive content under the First Amendment, even when sold, and that restrictions on this activity must be reasonable and viewpoint-neutral. To that end, the bill also creates guardrails for municipalities, which can regulate the time, place and manner of expressive matter. This means that towns, yes, can focus on safety, sanitation and ADA compliance. Towns can also regulate activities that interfere with the scenic and natural character of public spaces. It can also identify sidewalk limitations and acceptable venues and times when vending is allowed, as has been done in places like Portland and Cape Elizabeth. It can't force towns to change any existing ordinances such as noise. It explicitly excludes materials that are related solely to the economic interests of the speaker and crucially; at least for me; it limits the vending to the actual artist. They cannot have a friend or family member do this work for them.

As many of you know; as you know, Mr. Speaker; I'm a long-time Select Board member, and I am committed to the practice of home rule, and I believe that the constitutional right to share expressive matter and local control can coexist and that this bill is a suitable venue to maintain that balance. In some ways, it's similar to a recent discussion about keeping chickens, protecting another constitutional right; that of the right to food. Municipalities cannot prohibit chickens, but they may establish reasonable regulations, and I believe that this bill does the same for artists. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of Report "A" Ought to Pass. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 202

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bunker, Carlow, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pluecker, Poirier, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Wadsworth, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Bridgeo, Campbell, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Javner, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Montell, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cooper, Cray, Doudera, Fredericks, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lavigne, Lookner, Malon, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 73; No, 61; Absent, 17; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

73 having voted in the affirmative and 61 voted in the negative, with 17 being absent, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought to Pass was ACCEPTED.**

The Bill was **READ ONCE.**

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading.**

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED** and sent for concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH.**

**SENATE PAPERS
Non-Concurrent Matter**

Bill "An Act to Establish the November General Election Day as a State Holiday"

(H.P. 17) (L.D. 53)

Majority (9) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-91)** in the House on May 6, 2025.

Came from the Senate with the Minority (4) **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT READ** and **ACCEPTED** in **NON-CONCURRENCE.**

The House voted to **INSIST.**

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH.**

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 179)

**SENATE OF MAINE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

May 22, 2025

Honorable Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Clerk Hunt,

Pursuant to my authority under Title 10 MRSA, Part 1, Chapter 1-B, §21, I am pleased to reappoint the following Senators to the *Maine-Island of Ireland Trade Commission*, effective immediately:

Senator Donna Bailey of York County will continue to serve on this commission as a member of the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature;

Senator Trey Stewart of Aroostook County will continue to serve on this commission as a member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature.

If you have any questions regarding these appointments, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

S/Matthea Elisabeth Larsen Daughtry

President of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 180)

**STATE OF MAINE
CLERK'S OFFICE
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002**

May 27, 2025

Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Speaker Fecteau:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the following Joint Standing Committees have voted unanimously to report the following bills out "Ought Not to Pass:"

Environment and Natural Resources

L.D. 1882 Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Conduct Rulemaking Regarding Significant Vernal Pools

Health and Human Services

L.D. 770 An Act to Establish the Office of the Inspector General of Child Protection

L.D. 782 An Act to Amend MaineCare Financial Eligibility Requirements

L.D. 1429 An Act to Provide Full Reimbursement for Emergency Ambulance Services Provided to MaineCare Members

L.D. 1878 An Act to Establish a Managed Care Program for MaineCare Services

L.D. 1973 Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study Oversight and Funding Structures for Recovery Residences and Resident Protections (EMERGENCY)

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

L.D. 151 An Act to Allow Businesses to Impose a Surcharge on Credit Card and Debit Card Transactions

L.D. 1269 Resolve, to Study the Costs and Funding of a Universal Health Care Plan for Maine

L.D. 1504 An Act to Support Small Businesses by Providing a Refundable Tax Credit to Certain Businesses to Offset Credit and Debit Card Transaction Fees

L.D. 1883 An Act to Enact the All Maine Health Act Housing and Economic Development

L.D. 319 An Act to Allow Residential Housing on Church Property Located in Commercial Zones

L.D. 1238 An Act to Establish a Small-cap Loan Guarantee Program for Affordable Housing Investments

L.D. 1272 An Act to Address the Housing Crisis by Reducing Barriers to Building More Accessory Dwelling Units

L.D. 1385 An Act to Consider Municipalities Meeting Regional Housing Goals in Awarding Transportation Grants

L.D. 1396 An Act to Amend Maine's Municipal Subdivision Standards to Increase the Number of Dwelling Units on or Divisions of a Tract of Land Before the Tract is Considered a Subdivision

L.D. 1534 An Act Enabling Municipalities to Protect Tenants and Stabilize Rents

L.D. 1914 An Act to Address Housing Density Requirements in Sole Source Aquifer Island and Peninsular Communities

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

L.D. 341 An Act to Amend the Definition of "Oversized ATV" to Increase the Minimum Weight Requirement (EMERGENCY)

L.D. 937 An Act to Establish a Permit to Hunt Coyote over Bait

L.D. 1051 An Act to Provide Funding to Maintain All-terrain Vehicle Trails

L.D. 1293 An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine

L.D. 1438 Resolve, Regarding Deer Hunting on Mount Desert Island

L.D. 1441 Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Access in Maine

L.D. 1448 An Act to Provide Winter Access to the Bog Lake Public Boat Launch in Northfield

L.D. 1532 An Act to Expand the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Outdoor Education Programs to Schools and Communities

Veterans and Legal Affairs

L.D. 1690 An Act Regarding Artificial Intelligence in Campaign Advertising

Sincerely,

S/Robert B. Hunt

Clerk of the House

READ and with accompanying papers ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 181)

**STATE OF MAINE
CLERK'S OFFICE
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002**

May 27, 2025

Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Speaker Fecteau:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology has approved the requests for "Leave to Withdraw" by the following sponsor:

Representative Warren of Scarborough

L.D. 1472 An Act to Address Climate Change

L.D. 1513 An Act to Study the Role of Natural Gas in an Equitable Clean Energy Transition for Maine and to Establish a Commission to Study the Establishment of a Just and Equitable Transition for Maine's Workforce

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the Joint Standing Committee on Labor has approved the requests for "Leave to Withdraw" by the following sponsor:

Senator Tipping of Penobscot

L.D. 572 An Act to Improve Maine's Workers' Compensation Laws

L.D. 573 An Act to Improve Penalty Collection for Labor Protection Violations

L.D. 578 An Act to Improve Occupational Regulation

Sincerely,

S/Robert B. Hunt

Clerk of the House

READ and with accompanying papers **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (S.C. 456)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

May 21, 2025

Honorable Ryan Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0002

Dear Speaker Fecteau:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A. §158 and Joint Rule 506 of the 132nd Maine Legislature, please be advised that the Senate today confirmed the following nominations:

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Labor:

- Michelle Anderson of Westbrook for appointment, to the State Workforce Board,
- Christian Bartholomew of Augusta for appointment, to the State Workforce Board,
- Jason Judd of Lewiston for appointment, to the State Workforce Board,
- Janet Kelle of Newport for appointment, to the State Workforce Board,
- Catharine MacLaren of Portland for appointment, to the State Workforce Board,
- Peter Parizo of Bangor for appointment, to the State Workforce Board.

Best Regards,
S/Darek M. Grant
Secretary of the Senate

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (S.C. 457)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

May 22, 2025

Honorable Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Clerk Hunt:

Please be advised the Senate today insisted to its previous action whereby it accepted the Minority Ought to Pass Report and Passed to be Engrossed Bill "An Act to Eliminate Barriers to Reentry into the Community After Incarceration by Repealing Certain Driver's License Suspension Provisions" (H.P. 275) (L.D. 421) in non-concurrence.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH.**

CONSENT CALENDAR

First Day

In accordance with House Rule 519, the following items appeared on the Consent Calendar for the First Day:

(H.P. 1175) (L.D. 1757) Bill "An Act to Update the Laws Governing Osteopathic Physician Licensing" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 111) (L.D. 178) Bill "An Act Regarding Coverage for Step Therapy for Advanced Metastatic Cancer" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-272)**

(H.P. 134) (L.D. 211) Bill "An Act to Make School Safer for Students with Epilepsy and Other Seizure Disorders by Requiring Seizure Action Plans and Training in Schools" Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-273)**

(H.P. 212) (L.D. 312) Bill "An Act Regarding the Rates of Speed at Which School Buses Travel" Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-278)**

(H.P. 553) (L.D. 867) Bill "An Act Regarding Pre-need Funeral Insurance" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-274)**

(H.P. 605) (L.D. 940) Bill "An Act to Increase Cash Prizes for Fishing Derbies" Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-275)**

(H.P. 662) (L.D. 1033) Bill "An Act to Regulate Alcoholic Beverage Competitions" Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-276)**

(H.P. 912) (L.D. 1390) Resolve, Directing the Secretary of State to Develop a Plan for a Multiyear Registration System for National Car Rental Companies Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-277)**

(H.P. 1165) (L.D. 1747) Bill "An Act to Repeal and Replace the Charter of the Yarmouth Water District" Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-279)**

(H.P. 1274) (L.D. 1913) Bill "An Act to Allow Matinicus Isle Plantation to Issue a Revenue Bond for Urgently Needed Repairs to the Plantation's Electric Power Generating Facility" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-280)**

Under suspension of the rules, Second Day Consent Calendar notification was given.

There being no objection, the House Papers were **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED** or **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended** and sent for concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH**.

Representative MOONEN of Portland assumed the Chair. The House was called to order by the Speaker Pro Tem.

In accordance with House Rule 519, the following items appeared on the Consent Calendar for the First Day:

(S.P. 139) (L.D. 353) Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Recommend Methods for Preventing Deed Fraud in the State (EMERGENCY) Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-129)**

(S.P. 251) (L.D. 753) Bill "An Act to Support an Aroostook Adult Treatment and Recovery Court" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-130)**

(S.P. 405) (L.D. 950) Bill "An Act to Prevent Domestic and Sexual Abuse of Children and Increase Access to Protection from Abuse Orders by Allowing Children to File Protection from Abuse Orders on Their Own Behalf" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-131)**

(S.P. 502) (L.D. 1213) Bill "An Act to Allow the Premiums and Gratuities Paid for Any Agricultural Events Approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Be Considered in Apportionment of Stipends to Agricultural Fairs" Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-135)**

(S.P. 564) (L.D. 1347) Bill "An Act to Increase the Cap on Liability for Governmental Entities Under the Maine Tort Claims Act" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-132)**

(H.P. 1306) (L.D. 1947) Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Pertaining to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System" Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 118) (L.D. 185) Bill "An Act to Expand Opportunities to Invest Municipal Tax Increment Financing Revenues" Committee on **TAXATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-255)**

(H.P. 125) (L.D. 192) Bill "An Act to Exempt from State Sales Tax Utility Vehicles Purchased for Use in Commercial Fishing, Agricultural Production, Aquacultural Production and Wood Harvesting" Committee on **TAXATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-256)**

(H.P. 262) (L.D. 408) Bill "An Act to Allow Unaccompanied and Emancipated Minors to Access Their Vital Records At No Cost" Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-253)**

(H.P. 268) (L.D. 414) Bill "An Act to Prohibit Deceptive Pricing" Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-252)**

(H.P. 384) (L.D. 616) Bill "An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine Semiquincentennial Commission to Commemorate the United States of America's 250th Birthday in 2026" Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-262)**

(H.P. 417) (L.D. 649) Bill "An Act to Certify Chiropractic Assistants Who Perform X-rays as Radiologic Technologists" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-269)**

(H.P. 460) (L.D. 721) Resolve, to Support the Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State (EMERGENCY) Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-257)**

(H.P. 507) (L.D. 800) Bill "An Act to Fund the Provision of Advocacy Services to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities" Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-271)**

(H.P. 631) (L.D. 971) Bill "An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding Checking Baitfish Traps" Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-263)**

(H.P. 818) (L.D. 1243) Bill "An Act Regarding the Licensing of Assisted Living Facilities" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-254)**

(H.P. 981) (L.D. 1497) Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Primary Care Reporting by the Maine Quality Forum and to Establish the Primary Care Advisory Council" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-268)**

Under suspension of the rules, Second Day Consent Calendar notification was given.

There being no objection, the Senate Papers were **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended** in concurrence and the House Papers were **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED** or **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended** and sent for concurrence.

(H.P. 181) (L.D. 277) Bill "An Act to Repeal the Law Prohibiting Places of Business from Being Open to the Public on Sunday" Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-251)**

On motion of Representative FECTEAU of Biddeford, was **REMOVED** from the First Day Consent Calendar.

The Unanimous Committee Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-251)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Representative FECTEAU of Biddeford **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-293) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-251)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Biddeford, Speaker Fecteau.

Representative **FECTEAU**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This Amendment is pretty; well, first and foremost, this Report that was adopted, the Unanimous Committee Report, increases the square footage for businesses that can be open on Thanksgiving. The original bill is one that I have seen every time I have served in the Legislature, the previous efforts to expand the square footage of businesses that can be open on Easter, Christmas and Thanksgiving have all been previously rejected. The Committee, in this instance, narrowed the bill to just Thanksgiving, increasing the square footage of businesses that can be open on Thanksgiving. In doing so, I have no objection to the premise of those businesses being open on Thanksgiving, but my Amendment; which we'll be voting on shortly; narrows the scope in which those businesses can be open to specific hours during Thanksgiving Day, which would be 7:00 a.m. to noon. So, therefore, the folks that are working at those businesses can still hopefully enjoy time with their family, maybe catch the NFL game or the couple games that are on that day, eat some turkey, argue with their uncle and take a nap in the recliner. Thank you.

Representative **COLLAMORE** of Pittsfield **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ADOPT House Amendment "A" (H-293) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-251)**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Pittsfield, Representative Collamore.

Representative **COLLAMORE**: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. So, I've been on the Committee that keeps seeing this come to us. This is the very first time I've actually voted for it. And the reason that I voted for it is because for the very first time ever, the retailers have come out in support of it. They've always been against it. And that was really an interesting turn of events.

And what we kept in this; to make it very clear, you can still go have an argument with your uncle on Thanksgiving Day and still catch the NFL game or the Puppy Bowl or whatever it is your fancy is on Thanksgiving Day; because what we kept in this from the originally proposed bill in this Amendment is that they are not allowed to require you to work on Thanksgiving Day. So, why should I tell, in my community, Danforth's that they are not allowed to stay open to four o'clock if they wanted to stay open to four o'clock and had the people to work that time, but it's okay for the gas station across the road from them to stay open? What if I run out of cranberry sauce at two o'clock and I need to get some, but my gas station doesn't offer that?

So, I think that it's really important that it's understood by you, Mr. Speaker, and those in this Body, that it's still very limited in scope, and we want to ensure that we are allowing all of our

local grocers, with those people who maybe don't have family to see on Thanksgiving and it's just a regular Thursday for them, and they want to work and earn more money. Thank you.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption of House Amendment "A" (H-293) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-251). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 203

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Parry, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Bridgeo, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hepler, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, McIntyre, Milliken, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Cooper, Cray, Doudera, Fredericks, Graham, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lance, Lanigan, Lookner, Malon, Mason, Roberts, Skold, Underwood.

Yes, 71; No, 63; Absent, 17; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 63 voted in the negative, with 17 being absent, and accordingly **House Amendment "A" (H-293) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-251)** was **ADOPTED**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-251) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-293) thereto was **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules, the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules, the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-251) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-293)** thereto and sent for concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH**.

On motion of Representative **FAULKINGHAM** of Winter Harbor, the House adjourned at 4:53 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, May 28, 2025, in honor and lasting tribute to Ryan T. Bickford, Sr., of Winter Harbor.