

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate,

My name is Patrick Eisenhart, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard (ret).

I am a conservative, here today to support LD 3, a bill to provide \$450 from Maine surplus funds to help 880,000 Mainers meet the skyrocketing cost of heating oil and gas.

The \$450, if passed will barely cover the cost of a half of the standard capacity oil tank.

I am also here today to support the 123 representatives in the House and the 21 members of the Senate who voted to immediately pass LD 3 without amendment. This bill is being held up by 8 Senators who either didn't show up for the last vote or have allegiances to organizations which have goals not in the best interests of hard-working Maine people.

In the words of Representative Sawin Millet, a budget hawk and veteran Republican lawmaker widely regarded as one of the state's foremost budget experts and who formerly served as the state's top financial official, he said he was comfortable with what were mostly one-time expenditures using surplus revenue or unbudgeted sources.

Recently on public radio, he urged you all to realize that you will own this one way or another and you need to be honest with your constituents when you go back home." <https://www.mainepublic.org/politics/2022-12-07/senate-republicans-squash-emergency-bill-giving-mainers-nearly-500-million-in-energy-assistance>

I question how and why a minority of minority of 8 Republican senators would block the will of such a large majority in both houses and in so doing, neglect the immediate needs of their constituents.

Perhaps I can offer some answers to those questions.

The answer to the first is the 2/3 vote requirement which obstructs the immediate passage of this emergency bill as well as those of the future. The 2/3 requirement should be amended to read a majority vote in each house.

The answer to the second, is the lack of representation on the part of State Republican Senators Timberlake and Pouliot who failed to show up for such a critical vote affecting the lives of so many Maine people.

Next, I would like to address the motivations of the “No” votes cast by Republican Senators Stewart and Harrington, both members of the national ALEC (American Legislative Executive Council) organization with State Chapters in most States.

According to their financial disclosures, each received travel and lodging expenses paid by the national ALEC organization. ALEC has a long history of saying NO to minimum wage increases; unions striving to get fair wages and benefits; U.S. jobs in favor of “free trade” agreements that ship jobs to developing nations that pay workers less than subsistent wages; and injured worker’s compensation claims.

Stewart was quoted as “We need transparency and accountability in that process, and that necessarily involves feedback from the Maine people. And that has not yet happened. And I can't underscore that enough.”

Does he not think the 144 colleagues and members of the House were incapable of providing that accountability and transparency? Who exactly were they representing with their “NO” votes????

Their outcry for “transparency and accountability” was parroted on TV by Libertarian Senator Brakey, newly re-elected to Senate and funded by large donors as far away as Colorado, Nevada, Florida, and Pennsylvania. In addition to out of state donors, he received a large donation from the Maine Prosperity Alliance dedicated to protecting employers according to its website.

Brakey is the former state director for the failed Libertarian Ron Paul for President Campaign. His financial disclosure form lists his employment as national spokesman for the Young Americans. The organization was part of a coalition that filed 25 bills defending peoples’ rights against Covid-19 protocols, a proven highly effective means of ending the Pandemic.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young\\_Americans\\_for\\_Liberty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Americans_for_Liberty)

With his Libertarian past, all the out of state money and support for employers, I was not surprised at all by his “NO” vote and lack of direct support for Maine people.

In closing, I would ask that you follow Representative Sawin Millett’s counsel, reject outside influences, and return \$450 dollars from the state’s surplus to help a Mainer buy half a tank of heating oil. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to express my view.

Patrick Eisenhart, CDR, USCG (ret)