

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
34th Legislative Day
Wednesday, June 18, 2025

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

Prayer by Reverend Sarah Gillespie, Andwell Health Partners, Lewiston.

National Anthem by Erynne Edwards, North Berwick.

Pledge of Allegiance.

The Journal of yesterday was read and approved.

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

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-759)** on Bill "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 132) (L.D. 210)

Signed:

Senators:

ROTUNDO of Androscoggin
RENY of Lincoln

Representatives:

GATTINE of Westbrook
BRENNAN of Portland
CLOUTIER of Lewiston
DHALAC of South Portland
RANA of Bangor
STOVER of Boothbay

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

Signed:

Senator:

BERNARD of Aroostook

Representatives:

ARATA of New Gloucester
BLIER of Buxton
DUCHARME of Madison
FREDETTE of Newport

READ.

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

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Westbrook, Representative Gattine.

Representative **GATTINE**: Mr. Speaker, Colleagues in the House, I rise in support of the pending motion.

Over the past many months, the AFA Committee has followed a rigorous process to produce a balanced Part Two budget after the Legislature passed a two-year continuing

services budget in March. This process included public hearings where hundreds of Mainers shared their feedback directly with lawmakers. It included extensive feedback from policy committees about their priorities, and last week, AFA voted to advance the Part Two budget, the Amendment that's before you now.

The choices we made in this budget balance the urgent needs of Maine people with the reality of an uncertain fiscal environment and uncertainty with respect to what we will be facing from future federal action. As always, there were tough decisions to be made to ensure a balanced, responsive budget. We made all of those choices with the goal of ensuring that we are meeting the needs of Maine people with respect to critical issues like health care, access to food and housing and child care and access to education, especially with respect to our higher education entities.

The budget before us invests in Maine communities and in Maine people. People who worry about their aging loved ones, that their aging loved ones will have nowhere to go if their nursing home closes. People who fear that they will lose access to health care, especially if they're living in the more rural parts of the State. People who depend on food assistance even though they're working full-time, trying to make ends meet. Kids who rely on breakfast and lunch at school, so they can focus on their studies. Working families who need child care to be affordable and accessible. Our community colleges and universities where young adults lay the groundwork for their futures, dreaming of staying in our State and contributing for years to come. Cities and towns across Maine who are facing a housing crisis that is hamstringing our economy and preventing continued growth and vitality in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this budget meets the moment. It addresses the biggest issues that Maine people are facing and protects critical investments that we've made in the past in health care, food security, education, housing and child care. We listened to the hundreds of Maine people who participated in our public hearings. We rejected many of the cuts and the tax increases proposed by the Chief Executive, including cuts to food assistance, emergency housing and child care. We rejected the pharmacy and ambulance taxes and we pushed back on proposed hospital reimbursement cuts. You will hear more on these and other topics from my colleagues who have done extensive, thoughtful work to include support for initiatives like child welfare, sexual assault services, services for older Mainers and civil legal aid.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll close with this. The budget before us is balanced, as all state budgets must be. It provides what people need and does what people have asked us to do. It recognizes that we are in an uncertain situation where things could shift dramatically in a short period of time. It leaves money in balance and does not touch our healthy reserves. And it is the right budget for Maine right now and I would urge Members of the Body to support me in supporting this motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from New Gloucester, Representative Arata.

Representative **ARATA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Well, there's a lot to criticize in this budget. For one thing, it was balanced on an unexpected \$24 million death tax on two individuals and it doesn't prioritize the full cost of living increase, which is required by law for direct care workers, but there are additional problems. But what I'm going to focus on is the tactic used to convince those of you who are on the fence to vote for it.

The extreme real estate transfer tax increase bypassed the legislative process and was included in the budget in order to

appease those of you who were upset by the cigarette tax increase, because they think that the wealthy should pay more in taxes and believe that this bill will create some balance. But it's not that simple. You should know that this bill actually makes the rich richer while penalizing Mainers who happen to buy their family home or small business in a good location. A home which may be their only asset. The revenue from this tax on Mainers will be used to make the wealthy even more wealthy, especially wealthy people from out of state. It does this by giving tax credits to the ultra-wealthy, as well as cash to politically connected developers. So, when you talk about some high-income people having a lower tax rate than the middle class, this has nothing to do with tax brackets. Rather, they achieve this by buying tax credits. So, imagine being so rich that you can afford to buy down your tax rate. Why would we support that?

This bill also benefits politically connected developers. With none of their own money invested, they get developer fees of 10% of the cost of the property, plus ongoing property appreciation and 20% of operating income every year as cash flow. They get rich from many upsides while taxpayers take on the risk. In fact, a Member of this Body is receiving \$247,000 for developing just 14 units of so-called affordable housing.

The good news is that if this budget doesn't pass, nothing bad will happen. The budgetary needs for the next fiscal year have already been met and we'll need to pass a supplemental budget after the December 1 revenue forecast, anyway. Next year, we'll have a full view of the impacts of federal decisions on Maine and can develop a more informed budget.

So, if you want a budget that's built on a house of cards and to help the rich get richer on the backs of Maine taxpayers while short-changing those who take care of the very personal needs of the most vulnerable Mainers, well, go ahead and vote for this budget. But I urge you to vote no. Thank you.

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

Representative **MEYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House, I rise in strong support of the pending motion.

This supplemental budget invests in Maine communities, providing critical funding for food security, education, housing and health care. There's also one provision in this budget that has received significant attention, the proposed \$1.50 increase in the cigarette tax. This proposed increase, the first in 20 years, would rank Maine fourth out of six among our New England neighbors. If enacted, our tax rate would still be lower than the rates in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Taxes on tobacco products are a proven effective public health measure that have been shown to prevent kids from starting to smoke, help adults to quit smoking and provide much needed funding for health programs. It's a win-win. According to the American Lung Association, every 10% increase in the price of cigarettes reduces tobacco consumption by about four percent among adults and seven percent among our youth.

I know that many people have expressed legitimate concerns that the tobacco tax is regressive and that increasing it would disproportionately impact low-income Mainers. But this argument, intentionally or not, fails to recognize the public investments and health improvements that are supported by policies like this, many of which directly support low-income families. The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history over decades of targeting their deadly, addictive products to low-income populations while intentionally spinning the impact of tobacco taxes as hurting the same people. These deceptive practices continue to this day.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of smoking is also regressive. Here in Maine, we have the highest smoking rate in New England and smoking rates are particularly high for low-income Mainers. That means these folks are bearing the higher medical costs associated with tobacco-related disease including cancer, heart disease and lung disease. This modest increase to the tobacco tax will help Maine reduce health-related disparities, prevent young people from starting to smoke and help adults who are looking to quit finally end their tobacco use. It's a critical measure that will improve public health, especially for those who need it most.

For these reasons, I encourage everyone to support the pending motion. 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, and I applaud the previous speaker, first and foremost, on recognizing this for what it is, which is a supplemental budget. It's not a Part One/Part Two, Part A/Part B; this is a supplemental budget, as a baseline budget has already been passed by the majority party along a party line vote without one vote from the minority party.

So, what does this supplemental budget do? I thought I'd start off with doing a little bit of research, and in my prior service in this Chamber, during eight what some described as contentious years under Chief Executive LePage, we passed bipartisan budgets. Let me say that again, bipartisan budgets under Paul LePage. And lots of people complained about those years, but we worked together to pass bipartisan budgets. But that's not the norm anymore. The norm is, which is now sort of the expected norm, is that the majority party, along with their Chief Executive, get to pass majority budgets and majority supplemental budgets. That's the norm, and frankly, that's ridiculous. That is not the norm, and it shouldn't be the norm. We should be outraged that we think that's the norm.

People in Maine elect us from Fort Kent to Kittery, Republicans and Democrats alike, to come down here and to work together on what many would argue, the budget is the most important thing that we do. And here we have yet another budget coming forward, completing the Chief Executive's proposed \$11.5 billion budget, six-billion-dollar budget, almost 99% intact, along party line votes. And somehow, we think we're doing the peoples' work. We're not doing the peoples' work, we're doing half of the peoples' work.

I thought I'd go back and I'd look in the compendium of State fiscal information, it's down in the AFA office if anyone would like to go find it. And I looked at what the General Fund expenditures were for 2018, not that long ago. They were \$3.416 million. I'll say that again, 2018, \$3.416 million. For the second half of this budget for 2027, that number will increase to \$5.771 million General Fund dollars. Now, I may be off a few dollars here and there, and I went to a small school in Northern Maine, so, my math may be off a little bit, but my math tells me that's a 68% increase. A 68% increase in General Fund dollars spending by this Body and by this Chief Executive over the last six years. A 68% increase. Where does that money come from? We all know that money generally comes from either income tax or sales tax. So, what that means is we are taxing the Maine people 68% more today to fund State government than we were just six years ago. And even if my math's off a little bit, that's crazy. And I think about the people living on fixed income. We haven't fully funded the homestead exemption, their taxes are going up locally, they buy a car, their excise tax, because the car costs so much now, they can barely afford to pay the excise tax or the sales tax on top of it, but we just keep spending.

This is a tax-and-spend supplemental budget, a tax-and-spend two-year budget. The Good Representative from Westbrook indicated they rejected even some of the cuts that the Chief Executive of their own party proposed. Can't cut that program. Nope, wait a minute, can't cut that program. The prior speaker indicated it was a modest tax increase on cigarettes. A modest increase from \$2.00 to \$3.50. That, to me, is more than a modest increase.

So, let's talk about the good Speaker the other day got down, spoke from the floor, talked about New Hampshire and compared Maine to New Hampshire in regards to parking lot spaces and the bill they just passed in regards to what they were doing in New Hampshire. So, I thought, okay, that's fair. Let's look at what New Hampshire is doing with their cigarette tax. The cigarette tax in New Hampshire currently is \$1.78. A dollar and 78 cents. And so, we're going to jump to \$3.50 a pack, Mr. Speaker. Now, I don't know about you, I mean, you live in Biddeford, I understand, and a lot of those people that live on those border communities, I can see driving their cars across over to New Hampshire to buy their cigarettes, buy their alcohol, go out to eat, buy their groceries and coming back to Maine. Why wouldn't they?

What about retirees? You know, we're adjusting numbers up and down all the time trying to figure out where we want retirees to be in this State, and we take away a pension deduction and we lower that, so that we can raise \$25 or \$30 million, again sending a message to retirees; we really don't want you in our State, Mr. Speaker. But we're going to tax the rich, they've got big money.

And what about this budget as it applies to positions, the operation of State government? Do people understand that we have 2,000 vacant positions right now in State government? Two thousand. I actually think the actual number that we got for the other day from the Commissioner was 1,911 vacant positions. Yet what does this supplemental budget do? This supplemental budget adds another 250 positions to General Fund spending. So, I assume now the math is closer to 2,250 vacant positions in State government. Does that make any sense? Does it not make a little bit of sense to look at, well, we got 2,000 vacant positions here, how about we get rid of 250, because we don't need them over here, and if we got this need now for 250 positions, we'll move them over here. To me, that's just common sense. Anybody running a business would do that. But no, not in this budget.

And then we have this magical thing called the attrition rate. Well, when you're trying to balance a budget, you're trying to figure out how to make math work, you can raise and lower the attrition rate as it applies to these vacant positions in the majority party, instead of using sort of the average five percent, which they always use, they upped it to six percent, thus saving \$11 million in the budget to balance the budget.

And then we look at Paid Family Leave, which this Body has passed, again along party line votes, and rather than the mom-and-pop store, the little restaurant in Corinna, who each pay their fair share of the tax for that program which isn't even in effect yet, the majority party seeks to pay the tax for some employees. Which again, I don't understand that. And in the dark of night, they add three million dollars to family planning, Planned Parenthood, in the budget.

And I think what bothers me the most about this budget is what this budget doesn't do. It doesn't pay the direct care workers what they should've gotten. They get a one percent increase. Has anybody bought eggs lately? A gallon of milk? Gas? I mean, a one percent increase? That's what we could find for direct care workers? Those people are doing God's

work. Removes money from Aroostook County, Kennebec County crisis receiving centers. Continues to underfund the Judicial Branch. We complain about the Judicial Branch and their backlog of cases and they're asking for clerks and bailiffs, so that they can do their operations, and we eliminate those positions, but we continue to add positions to DHHS.

And while we're talking about DHHS, did anybody have a chance to read the *Portland Press Herald*? I believe it was this weekend, Mr. Speaker. Maine has one of the highest, if not the highest number of children in foster care in the country. I just did a case two weeks ago where children had been taken and placed in foster care and the grandparents of these children wanted to take them and take care of them, provide a home for them, feed them. These children had been in foster care for over a year and, by their own testimony from the department, had two failed placements. And we finally had a hearing, the Department was against us, counselors were against us, but luckily the judge saw through that and decided to place those children with their grandparents rather than to have those rights terminated and those relationships terminated for the rest of their lives, placed them properly with the grandparents. We have a failed foster care system and this budget does nothing to talk about it, fix it, or address it. And again, that's an article in the *Portland Press Herald*. If you've got a minute, you're probably scrolling through your phones now, you can Google it and read it.

And then I look at our K-12 system. You know, I talk about and some of you folks probably laugh, well, you know, Ken Fredette grew up in this little town of Danforth up in Northern Maine, you know, 21 kids in my class. Yep, and I did. And I got a fine education, Mr. Speaker, in that little, tiny school. I got a fine education. But then, when I read my good friend from Portland, Representative Brennan, I'm sure will have four responses to this, but then when I read that the K-12 education system, the 2024 NAEP test in Maine for fourth graders scored 233 and only 33% were above or at proficient compared to 39% nationally, down from 42% in 2019. Reading scores were 210 and only 26% reached grade level proficiency, down from 36% in 2019, Mr. Speaker. This is all online, you can use ChatGPT, you can find it. Eighth grader reading, just 26% were proficient, down from 36% pre-pandemic. These are the lowest scores in Maine in nearly three decades, it is unacceptable and this budget, again, fails to set any standards to dealing with a blank check that we're giving to K-12 education and demanding from our K-12 education that we provide students and graduate students that can read and do math. This budget does not do that, Mr. Speaker. This budget uses a bunch of one-time money to balance it, which will only add to the structural gap when we come back in two years.

And as we all know, this budget continues to expand and pay for MaineCare, in which one in four people, Mr. Speaker, are on MaineCare. Now, we have a very similar population, as the Speaker knows, to New Hampshire, and while we have some 400,000 people on MaineCare, New Hampshire has about 184,000. We heard those that serve the DHHS Committee and in Appropriations, we heard from the Department about three problems in the DHS MaineCare system, Mr. Speaker; increased utilization, increased cost and increased enrollment. This budget again fails to address what the Department was telling us was wrong with this program and why costs were increasing.

Mr. Speaker, we spent a lot of time down in Appropriations, working through this budget. And when I served in this Body back in 2010 and I served on Appropriations with the Good Representative from Eagle Lake, Representative Martin, he

actually taught me many things that I needed to learn to be able to understand the State budget and how it worked. But the Good Representative also taught me how we work together and how we make deals. To have a budget that reflects bipartisan priorities and how to get to a two-thirds budget.

I'll close by saying this, I stopped to get a coffee this morning at Dunkin Donuts and someone stopped me and they said, you know, hey, are you Ken Fredette? And I'm like, yeah. Yeah, yeah, I know you're down there in the Legislature. You know, I know you guys down there kind of yell back and forth at each other, but I've been living in Maine all my life and, you know, just do what's best for Maine. That's what we care about. Just do what's best for Maine. And I think that's what most people in Maine want. They don't want us yelling back and forth at each other, Mr. Speaker, saying it's a bad budget, it's a good budget. They don't want that. I don't think they do. But I know when we're now passing a budget, again, along party lines without what I anticipate will be a single Republican vote, is not consistent with the Maine that I grew up in. And I spoke earlier this year when I talked about, you know, we always used to say, Maine wasn't Washington, D.C. This budget is yet again a reflection that yes, Maine has become Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you not to support this budget and send this budget back to the Appropriations Committee, so that we can do some bipartisan work to report out a bipartisan budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Madison, Representative Ducharme.

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is supplemental budget, not a Part Two budget, because Part One supposedly fulfilled all the needs and obligations of State government to keep things operating. I'll call it a supplemental spending budget. However, the continuing services budget does not do many things. The continuing services budget does not fulfill the obligations made by this Body and the Chief Executive.

Mr. Speaker, we're here today to talk about the budget, but we need to talk about addiction. Many in this Chamber have referred to addiction and recovery in many ways over the course of the last five or six months. Our Attorney General has gone out and sued drug companies to create opioid recovery fund to deal with addiction problem that we have here in Maine. We put hundreds of thousands; no, really, millions of dollars into various recovery and behavioral health programs that deal with addiction. However, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber, we have an addiction, and it is a real addiction that we must first acknowledge, and once we acknowledge, then only can it be treated. Mr. Speaker, that addiction is an addiction to spending money, particularly an addiction to spending Maine taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, it's easy for this Body to spend money, because it doesn't seem real. Several days ago, I was talking with someone in the hallway about the size of the supplemental spending bill that we're talking about today, and I said it was only about \$300 million. Just think of that statement and how absurd that sounds. It was only \$300 million. Mr. Speaker, in the addiction world, it's only one drink, it's only one cigarette, only one lottery ticket, only one pull of the handle on the slot machine, only one hit. Most addiction counselors will agree that there is a real addiction problem when normal things in life begin to take a backseat to that addiction. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we're there.

Mr. Speaker, only 600 days ago, we experienced the horror of the Lewiston tragedy. I remember. We walked around the halls and tried to determine what we could do here in this

building to make sure that that situation never happened again. We put forth plans, we talked across the aisle, we had a number of meetings and a number of different ideas. Ultimately, a plan came forth that had a broad base of support across both sides of the aisle. That plan included crisis receiving centers across Maine, strategically located so that they could be accessed by law enforcement and other individuals quickly, within close proximity to major population centers. We put millions of dollars into behavioral health counseling both at the community level, at the children level and the adult level. Now, with the Lewiston tragedy in the rearview mirror by some 18 months, this budget determines that we don't need those. We don't need those crisis receiving centers. Oh, yes, there's one in Lewiston, one near Bangor, but in areas like Washington County, Aroostook County, Somerset County, Kennebec County, those won't be created, because we need the money to do some other things.

This supplemental spending bill deallocates over \$16 million in behavioral health programs for children, for our communities, to pay for other priorities in the current supplemental spending bill. We talk about helping families with children. This budget raises the credit, the dependent credit for those with kids under age six from three to six hundred dollars. But wait, if you're single and you make more than \$100,000 a year, you're no longer eligible for that exemption.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is about priorities. When we started this process, Republicans asked for two things. Two things that we needed to understand before we would consider supporting this supplemental spending bill. We asked, number one, where's the money coming from? We had just passed a biennial budget that was \$100 million more than our projected revenue. Where was the money coming from? And two, what are the priorities of the majority? Finally, last Thursday, we discussed where the revenue was coming from. Republicans had started it from a position of no new taxes and we remain in that posture. Despite the rhetoric that we hear from our friends in the majority, we can see what the priorities of the majority are by their action in this spending bill.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in opposing this motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Boothbay, Representative Stover.

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

I have had the honor of working with the Members of the Appropriations Financial Affairs Committee. Our State is facing devastating reductions in federal funding. One of these reductions, under the Victims of Crime Act, known as VOCA, if we do not act, this cut will have a profoundly harmful impact on essential services to crime victims in our State. For years, VOCA funding has been the bedrock of our efforts to provide counseling, legal support, emergency shelter, advocacy and more to survivors of crime such as domestic violence, sexual assault and homicide. In cases of homicide, VOCA funding also supports grief counseling, funeral expenses and more, as families cope with the unthinkable. LD 2010 allocates six million dollars to sustain these critical services, which for many survivors are a lifeline, helping them rebuild their lives and navigate the complex and traumatic aftermath of their experiences. It also dedicates three million dollars to our domestic violence and sexual assault centers. This much needed funding supports frontline supports for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, providing shelter, counseling, crisis intervention and much more.

As a surviving member of a loved one who died in the hands of an intimate partner, I can personally attest to the

incredible importance of these services. My family experienced the unspeakable tragedy when my aunt, my father's sister, was murdered by her fiancé. At that time, VOCA-funded services were not available, didn't exist to help us navigate the trauma and loss my family experienced. Since then, I have spent my professional career in human services, including time spent as the State's director of domestic and sexual violence. I have seen the difference that robust support can make for victims of crimes and their families. I know how much my own family needed and would've greatly benefitted from had those vital supports been available.

Let me be clear, without this funding, programs will be forced to lay off staff. They will be forced to make harmful cuts to vital services to our most vulnerable neighbors. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to support this measure. With this funding, we can ensure that this much needed support is there when Mainers need it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Albion, Representative Flynn.

Representative **FLYNN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise this morning in thanks. Thanks that I live in a country where I can stand and speak, not only for myself but for those that I represent.

As many of you know, this past week, I celebrated a birthday. Yes, I've been on this Earth for six and a half decades. I was born a third-generation Irish immigrant. We were Irish, we were Roman Catholic and we were Democrats. On the wall in the living room was a crucifix of our Lord Jesus, a portrait of JFK and a portrait of the Pope.

In 1980, I caucused in Standish, Maine at the George E. Jack Elementary School for then-Senator Ted Kennedy. By the mid- to late 1980s, I realized as a young adult looking out at the American landscape that things had changed and things were changing very rapidly, Mr. Speaker. It was at that time that I changed my party affiliation from Democrat to Republican. And then, I was faced with the ominous task of telling my father that I was no longer a Democrat. In my father's eyes, I might as well have said I'm no longer Irish. It was a conversation I did not welcome, Mr. Speaker. But when I told my father, it was very, very hard. I expected perhaps anger, confusion or, geez, Paul, I'm disappointed in you. But I got neither of those. What I got from my father was wisdom, Mr. Speaker. He said, Paul, it's okay. Now, my father was in the Democratic Party, my father was an elected politician, the entire family was and many remain. But my father said to me, Paul, he chuckled, he said, you know, if we Democrats didn't have you Republicans to be the majority every few years, we Democrats would spend ourselves into bankruptcy.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I received wisdom. And now, as a 45-year resident of Maine, I'm sad to say I believe my father's comments are coming true in my lifetime. And this morning, I do rise in thanks to the United States of America for allowing my family to be residents here and to becoming part of the American fiber and the American dream. But I also rise this morning, Mr. Speaker, with great sadness that we as a collective, we as a whole, as the majority rules, I believe that my father's prophesy may be coming true in front of me.

I urge everyone in this House to reconsider their thoughts on this budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Buxton, Representative Blier.

Representative **BLIER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise today with a heavy heart. A heavy heart, because as I look on the other side, most of us are pretty much tuned out to these conversations, so, I don't think

that my speech is going to change anybody's opinion on how they're going to vote. But secondly, as I sit next to the Good Representative from Portland and the Good Representative from Lewiston on the Appropriations Committee and we can have laughs and enjoy each other's company, I'm dumbfounded to the fact that we cannot come on some kind of a bipartisan agreement on what is best for the State of Maine. It's been a one direction for many, many years, and I don't see that changing here any time soon.

And so, I ask you to consider some things, and I know that, you know, the one thing that I find amazing is that I think it would be easier for me to convince your party that Santa Claus exists over the taxpayer. And the truth of the matter is that the sense that we're able to take from these people and give it to something else, and that's what we do in this dome and that's acceptable is dumbfounding me, because if I work all day long and the resources I receive, shouldn't they be my resources? Oh, no, we have a better plan for your resources. We have a better idea to do with that. And so, I look at that as taking advantage of people.

And, you know, one of the items on this budget is the cigarette tax and, you know what, we're going to charge people more to smoke, because they're going to quit and we're going to take that money and we're going to pay for MaineCare. Well, if we're going to take the cigarette tax, raise it so people quit, when they quit, how are we going to pay for MaineCare? I mean, you can't even make this stuff up, I don't understand it.

Another item on our budget is free community college. Free community college. But the truth is we're taking away the pension exemption from our seniors to pay for it. There's Santa Claus again.

Nothing is for free, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? You worked your whole life here in the State of Maine, you paid your taxes, you did what you had to do, now you're retired and guess what? We're going to come and take a little bit more. But look at the bright side, you can go back to work. I mean, your party could use the tax, revenue from the taxes they would receive. Oh, and by the way, if you enjoy fishing, don't worry, we're going to get you there, too, because we're going to raise your fishing license. Hope you enjoy retirement. That's what we're doing to the people of Maine.

Last session, we promised a three percent COLA. We doubled our income in this Chamber last session, doubled it. Our budget has gone up 68%, but we can't afford the three percent COLA, we're going to give them one percent.

Representative **MOONEN**: Point of Order.

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair will inquire as to why the Representative from Portland rises.

Representative **MOONEN**: Mr. Speaker, I would like you to advise the Member that he is speaking into a microphone and therefore there is no need to scream.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would ask the Member to direct his comments to the Chair.

The Chair reminded Representative BLIER of Buxton to address his comments toward the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **BLIER**: To get back to where I was, we promised a three percent increase to our direct care workers and we're only giving them one percent, but yet we doubled our income here, Mr. Speaker, and we increased our State budget by 68%. You know what one percent equals to somebody making \$18 an hour? Eighteen cents an hour. You know what? We promised you three percent, but you know what, we can't afford it, here's a turkey. You know what, if I worked in that field

and gave me a turkey, I'd tell you what to do with the turkey. So unfair, it is so unfair.

Bipartisan, work together to get something that all of us can agree to is not where we're at. It's not where we're at, Mr. Speaker, and it's a real shame that we're saying we're going to give you free health care, we're going to give you affordable housing and we're going to tax the rich. Where are the rich here? Our retirees? Our cigarette smokers? Our direct care workers? It's a joke.

I've lived here my whole life. I'm ashamed of what this Body is doing to the people of Maine. They worked hard their whole entire lives. Let them live a good life. We're going to put up solar panels everywhere and everything else that we're doing that doesn't even make any sense. If you vote for this budget, you're not a Mainer.

The SPEAKER: The Chair will remind Members to not impugn the motives of other Members.

The Chair reminded all Members that it was inappropriate to question the motives of other Members of the House.

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

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen. This budget, this supplemental budget, we don't need it. We don't need it at all. We don't need to tax the citizens of our State anymore again like this. We don't need it at all. Why? Because we already have the money. The Good Representative from Newport explained that we have 1,911 unfilled positions right now. They'll fill a few of them, but that's 1,911 \$100,000 slush funds that they're going to still be able to spend in these departments that'll be handling these issues of health care, food, housing, children, things that have already been brought up.

Additionally, Sir, as of about five weeks ago, we had \$730 million in an overfunded unemployment insurance health trust fund; \$730 million. They asked for another \$500 million to go into that, \$250 million a year two years in a row. That would give us nearly \$980 million in a trust fund that only needs about 450 to be solvent. Why? We spend about \$125 million a year in unemployment insurance, that's it, but they want double the amount just to put more into that account. If you look at the graph and the way this was set up, pre-COVID, we were putting just a little bit in it, giving it just a little bit more each year to try and build it up. Since COVID, \$100 million a year has been going into that account. We've got it bloated and ballooned up. We just don't need it. A half a billion dollars taken from our taxpayers and put in a State account. Taken out of our economy. Money we could be using. We could use money for these type of programs.

At the same time we did the last budget, we pulled the Other Special Revenue accounts, one billion, six million dollars in Other Special Revenue accounts. A little goes in, a little comes out. When we need 30, 40 million dollars, someone takes it out of those accounts. We have more than enough money to pay for anything that's in this supplemental budget, \$320 million. It's out there, we already have it.

We also had the ability in the last budget to make the cuts necessary to ensure that we were going to have money left over. We had one account, I still can't get an answer to what it; why this has happened. It's the Office of Community Affairs, '24/'25, \$170,000; '25/'26 baseline, \$356. And then what does it go to? Fourteen million, two hundred and thirty-four, eight hundred and forty dollars. An 8,251.97% increase in that account. What are we using the money for? No answers. I couldn't find any. I asked repeatedly.

We have the money, we don't need to tax our citizens again. We have to be more fiscally responsible, manage our money more correctly, spend our money more wisely and stop burdening the citizens of our State with over-taxation. Thank you.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the pending motion. I just want to go back over what this supplemental spending bill has in it.

It's got a real estate transfer tax, a seven dollar increase to hunting and fishing fees, a 50 cent per gallon paint tax, a tax on our seniors' pensions, 22,000 of them, an increase in the cannabis tax to 14%, a tax on streaming services and a tax on tobacco, which will make our tobacco tax \$3.50, all to fund a budget that spent more money that we have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to ask yourself, what do you get out of this budget? What do your constituents get out of this budget? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to have the courage to vote no, and I request a Roll Call.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM** of Winter Harbor **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 Bangor, Representative Roeder.

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to; to the point that the Good Representative from Phillips made, the unemployment trust is healthy, which means that employers are paying lower premiums on their unemployment insurance. So, if that fund goes down, premiums go up.

This supplemental budget invests in essential Maine mental health workers who have been asking for funding for years. In fact, they asked for this funding six times over the last 20 years. For 20 years, we've been trying to fix this for them. It addresses the dangerous number of vacancies in our psychiatric facilities as well as the extremely dangerous nature of working there, providing \$2.9 million one-time General Fund investment to allow certain employees who provide care at Riverview Psychiatric Center and Dorothea Dix to have access to the 1998 special plan for retirement.

The 1998 special plan allows workers to retire at age 55 with 25 years of service. The workers eligible for this special plan do work that is high risk, stressful and often traumatic, like law enforcement, firefighters and corrections officers, recognizing the extreme danger of their work. Mental health workers and their colleagues at our State hospitals do challenging and physically demanding work, often under dangerous conditions. These workers encounter mental, verbal and physical abuse while at work and face a higher likelihood of on-the-job injuries. The patients that they work with and provide direct care for are often some of the most dangerous people in Maine, many of whom have committed violent crimes and have been determined by courts to pose an imminent risk of harm to themselves and others, so, workers must remain constantly aware of their surroundings to keep both themselves and their patients safe.

And here is where I'm going to take a little bit of a sidebar. Every single one of the workers that testified in front of us said the same thing about those patients, which is, I am there to help them, I want them to get better, even as they are being abused by the same patients. There have also been longstanding

concerns about employee safety at these facilities, because it's difficult to maintain safe staffing levels. Many of the existing professionals and their former colleagues have endured serious assaults, leaving permanent damage not only to their bodies, but to their families and their communities as well.

Moving other workers like doing jobs like law enforcement and corrections officers with similar levels of danger and stress into the 1998 special plan would be an incentive to not only hire new workers, but also to retain the talented and experienced workers currently employed. It would also show thanks and appreciation to the Mainers who do these incredibly difficult jobs. Employees in our State hospitals have been asking to be included in this retirement plan that acknowledges the demanding and often traumatic nature of their work.

I was gratified this year that we had a Divided Report coming out of Committee, not because it showed that there was some kind of split in our Committee decision, but because it gave us a chance to actually talk about it on the House floor. And the Good Representative from Milford and I spoke about our desire to see this particular initiative funded. And because we did, I was approached by a woman who heard us talking about the need for this funding, and she said she knew the woman that I spoke of who had died by suicide and that it had wrecked their entire department. She thanked us for talking and she said she might still be at that job if she had had a potential to retire at 55. That potential didn't exist, so, she left. That was one talented mental health worker we lost because we couldn't guarantee her a safe, dignified and graceful exit from a profession that she loved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **RANA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and Honorable Colleagues of the House, the Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee have worked tirelessly to craft a budget that meets the needs of all Mainers, especially those who need the most help in our communities. We know that among those who are struggling the most right now are our neighbors living with low income as well as working families. This budget invests in the well-being and success of these neighbors, from providing cost-of-living adjustments for our direct care workers to staunchly rejecting cuts to child care and continuing to support our SNAP and General Assistance programs.

By passing this budget proposal, we are saying yes to a \$22 million General Fund investment and a \$40 million federal match for cost-of-living adjustments for direct care workers. When we add this investment to the measure passed in the continuing services budget, these adjustments total to about \$90 million.

By passing this budget, we are saying yes to protecting child care. This budget rejects all proposed cuts to child care while funding child care worker wage supplements, Head Start and the Child Care Employment Award pilot program. This investment of \$39.7 million means that our child care providers get paid, our children continue to receive services and parents continue to work to provide for their families.

By passing this budget, we are investing in a mobile home park preservation and making it easier for residents of mobile home parks to fight back against private investors. We are making it easier for Mainers to fend off these large conglomerates who hope to charge people far too much to live in their current homes. Further, this budget invests in the bridging rental assistance program, which will help to meet the unprecedented housing needs we have seen across the State and in our communities.

By passing this budget, we are saying yes to sustaining our SNAP and General Assistance programs, so that our neighbors who are struggling most right now are able to put food on the table and continue to get the help that they need.

This budget proposal is a sound investment in our collective futures, Mr. Speaker. I hope that you can follow me in supporting our children, direct care workers and our working families. Thank you.

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

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rose to say that it's; I understand that there's a lot of spending here on a lot of causes that sound really good. But it sure would be nice if some primary functions of government could be funded, like the courts in Piscataquis County that have been closed for 25% of the time. These fundamental issues that we should be addressing first are not being dealt with, to replace them with lofty goals that are far in the periphery of what we're here for. The citizens of the State deserve to have the fundamental core issues of life addressed. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Madison, Representative Ducharme.

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I ask a question through the Chair?

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you. Your bill, LD 1082, appears in this budget. LD 1082 was not debated on the floor of this House nor on the floor of the Other Body. It was put into this budget document so that it could be passed. My questions is, I've read through the bill several times and I do not see if there is an exemption for commercial real estate transactions above a million dollars. The bill clearly says that if your real estate transaction is above a million dollars, your transfer tax is going to be six dollars per 500. I would think it would be really significant to our business community that are buying and selling businesses all over the place all the time to know whether they're going to be exposed to this additional tax or not. And also, will that, if that is not exempted, as long as people understand that that money is going to go in part into the housing world to help build affordable housing, but part of it is coming to the General Fund. Just wondering if there is that commercial carveout.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Madison, Representative Ducharme, has posed a question through the Chair to any Member who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Hodgdon, Representative Quint.

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a member of the Tax Committee, I sat through a parade of bills that asked us to raise taxes, because our State needed more money. Tax the rich, tax the tourist, most of those bills were. I then sat through a parade of bills that ask us for tax credits, because people cannot afford to pay the taxes that we are taxing them for. Yet here we are, spending more money that we don't have while taxing to take more money that is not truly there, but we refuse to cap our spending. Mr. Speaker, we're out of other people's money. Instead of 'Vacationland,' our new State slogan should become 'welcome to Maine, give us your money.'

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Blue Hill, Representative Milliken.

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to try to get through this without crying, but I don't promise anything.

I drafted this speech with the intention of voting no on this budget. It's hard to stand on this floor in opposition to a lot of

colleagues that I have an enormous amount of respect for on this side of the aisle. And I live in a community that is decidedly blue. For the most part, right, they elected me, I'm wildly liberal, right? But I also border communities represented by Republican friends, people I consider my friends, the Representative from Bucksport, the Representative from Ellsworth and other Republican colleagues, and I see the harm that this party puts on working poor people in this State. I see it daily.

I'm also being lobbied hard for my vote on this budget by organizations that I have an enormous amount of respect for. The unions which also represent the working poor people in this State, the domestic violence folks; I'm a victim and a survivor of domestic violence myself and I have an enormous amount of respect for their needs and I understand that their needs are somewhat covered in this budget.

This legislative session—these are my prepared remarks, that was all unprepared, I was off the cuff—this legislative session, we have been repeatedly told that we have tough choices to make. And those tough choices are coming in addition to the tough choices that we made last year and they will be added to next year and the year after that. All along, much of our existing infrastructure in this State is crumbling before our eyes. Our schools are having a difficult time, our Department of Health and Human Services is struggling, the Department of Corrections is strapped for funds, we owe hospitals millions of dollars. The proposed budget is balanced; this proposed budget is balanced on the backs of some of Maine's poorest residents through regressive taxation, full stop.

While I understand the public health intentions behind raising the cigarette tax by \$1.50, it is risky to rely on a revenue source that we all hope will decline. Moreover, smoking rates are highest in Maine's low-income residents. I support wholeheartedly the three million dollars allocated in this budget to help keep people in their mobile homes, but it's important that we recognize that a third of people who live in mobile homes in this State smoke. They smoke. The same population will be contributing an estimated \$80 million through this regressive cigarette tax. In effect, we are applauding ourselves for investing in vulnerable communities while extracting over 25 times that investment from the very people that we are claiming to help.

This Body and our colleagues down the hall have supported progressive tax policy changes. Not all of us, but this side of the aisle, we have done that. The Representative from—help me out here—thank you, the Representative from St. George, had her bill been passed, had that bill become law, the poorest people in Maine would've seen a reduction in their taxes. But the Chief Executive doesn't want to see the wealthiest people in Maine have to pay their fair share. Our property taxes are going up, it's the most common thing I heard at doors. Working people's income taxes are quite large and some of Maine's wealthiest citizens continue to enjoy luxury vacations year after year, drinking fine wine and spirits on yachts while Members of this Body do gymnastics and jump over ourselves to try to save those constituents as much money as we possibly can. This is expensive to the lowest income earners in this State. Meanwhile, those important agencies that I just referenced, MCEDV, MECASA, the unions, our hospitals, are all lining up and trampling over each other to get their tiny sliver, their tiny sliver.

We will never have enough if we require that Maine's poorest citizens pay for the programs that are intended to support their needs. It is unethical, it is dangerous and it puts our constituents' lives at risk if we fail to take the common-sense step to tax our wealthiest citizens to pay our bills. This is the job

of government. This is our job, Mr. Speaker. Democrats across this country right now are screaming at the top of our lungs for Republican members of Congress and the U.S. Senate to stand up to the Executive Branch, because they are separate, co-equal branch of government and they should be asserting their power as such. We are a separate, co-equal branch of government and this Body has indicated very clearly that we support progressive tax revenue. We should be standing up to our Executive and sending her a bill that she will veto if that's what it takes. We are hypocrites if we sit on this floor as Members of the Legislature of this great State and, frankly, push a green button to save her from having to veto a budget that we seem to agree on.

I don't know how I'm going to vote for this budget, Mr. Speaker. I'm torn. This morning, it was a firm no; last night, I was a firm no; right now, I'm in a difficult position. And I think it behooves all of us to think really deeply about how we proceed from here. We owe it to our constituents to do better, to tax people who are super wealthy, so that the poorest people in our communities see some relief. We owe them that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. 571

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

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

ABSENT - Lavigne.

Yes, 71; No, 77; Absent, 1; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 77 voted in the negative, with 1 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended Report was NOT ACCEPTED.**

Subsequently, on motion of Representative GATTINE of Westbrook, the Minority **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 **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-756)** on Bill "An Act to Clarify Tariff Rates for Nonresidential Customers Participating in Net Energy Billing with a Distributed Generation Resource" (H.P. 1188) (L.D. 1777)

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 "B" (H-757)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

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

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-756)** 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-756)** and sent for concurrence.

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

SPECIAL SENTIMENT CALENDAR

In accordance with House Rule 519 and Joint Rule 213, the following items:

In Memory of:

Richard C. Forrest, of Wiscasset. Mr. Forrest's career as a merchant marine and engineer was distinguished by his service aboard the NS Savannah, the world's first nuclear-powered merchant ship, as part of the Atoms for Peace program. He later worked as an engineer at Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. His community service included the Virginia Project Maine's First Ship initiative and his work as an engineer at the Boothbay Railway Village. He also served for more than 20 years on local shellfish and waterfront committees. Mr. Forrest will be long remembered and sadly missed by his wife, Virginia, and his family, friends and community;

(SLS 994)

On **OBJECTION** of Representative HEPLER of Woolwich, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Woolwich, Representative Hepler.

Representative **HEPLER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to tell you a little bit about one of the kindest men I knew, and not because of his hilarious habit of bowing to me after I got elected.

He was how I first learned about children who were in acute mental crisis were being stuck in emergency rooms. He had followed up on that because of a friend of his. I did not; I was not aware of that. He also helped his friends, like me, he helped build a set of stairs on my house, some of you may have been to my house and see that it needs a lot more than stairs, but he provided that when my husband was delayed in getting home from the hospital. He was a fixer, but not just to the humans in his life, but to the machines that he cared about. He; the *Sherman Zwicker*, a boat he lovingly maintained at the Maine Maritime Museum and, of course, my beloved ship *Virginia*, Maine's first ship. In Wiscasset, he smoothed the way through local officials, so that *Virginia* had a home, an ice-free home in the Wiscasset harbor. He was an extraordinary volunteer, as you can tell from the Sentiment, for a wide community. And I miss him, I miss his wit, I miss his 'I can fix anything' attitude and his kind, friendly spirit. Thank you.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** and sent for concurrence.

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

In Memory of:

Irving J. "IJ" Pinkham, of Boothbay. Mr. Pinkham's teaching and coaching career began at Buckfield High School, where from 1969 to 1976 he taught math and history and coached various sports. In 1976, he began his tenure at Boothbay Region High School teaching math and coaching varsity boys basketball. He retired from teaching in 2017 but continued coaching for an additional three years. Mr. Pinkham holds the distinction of being the winningest coach in Maine boys' basketball history, with his teams achieving an extraordinary 659 victories. A pinnacle of his coaching career was leading the Boothbay Seahawks to the Class C State Championship in 2001. Some other professional accomplishments were his induction into the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016 and the Midcoast Sports Hall of Fame in 2017 and receiving the Wooden Award of Excellence from the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame in 2023. He was a Rotarian, receiving the Paul Harris Fellow award, volunteered at the Boothbay Region YMCA and coached summers at Hoop Camp. Mr. Pinkham will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family, friends and community;

(HLS 399)

Presented by Representative STOVER of Boothbay. Cosponsored by Senator RENY of Lincoln.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative STOVER of Boothbay, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Boothbay, Representative Stover.

Representative **STOVER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Men and Women of the House. I rise today to pay tribute to a man whose quiet strength, steady presence and lifelong dedication left an indelible mark on generations of students,

athletes and families in the Boothbay region and across the State of Maine.

On April 15th, IJ Pinkham passed away peacefully at the age of 78. With his passing, our community not only lost a legendary coach, but a beloved teacher, a devoted family man and a true public servant.

IJ was born in Milbridge, Maine, he graduated from Milbridge High School, attended the University of Maine at Farmington and received his Master's degree in Education from the University of Southern Maine. He came to Boothbay Region High School in 1976, where he taught and coached until his retirement in 2017, marking a 48-year career in education. But IJ was more than all the sum of his years in the classroom. He was by all accounts a teacher of life, someone who cared deeply about his students not just as learners, but as people. His classroom was a place of discipline, humor, encouragement and reflection. Above the clock in his classroom for decades hung a sign that read, time is passing, are you? That simple question became a guiding principle for his students, including yours truly. He challenged us to be present to take ownership of our learning and make every moment count.

As a coach, IJ's accomplishments were legendary. As you've heard, he brought home 659 victories. He led us to the Class C State Championship in 2001, was inducted into the Maine Basketball Hall of Fame and the Midcoast Sports Hall of Fame and the recipient of the Wooden Award of Excellence in 2023. But if you asked him, IJ would tell you that the trophies and records weren't his real legacy. IJ once said, as a coach, people knew I was old school, but they liked I had standards and stood behind them. Fans, coaches and others didn't praise my win and losses, they liked my coaching methods and demeanor of my players before, during and after games. That said everything about the kind of leader that he was.

At home, he was a loving husband to his wife, Peggy, with whom he shared 49 years of marriage. He was the proud father to his sons, Matthew and Timothy, father-in-law to Alexandra and joyful Papa to his grandchildren, River, Sailor, Henry and Graham. He was also a brother-in-law, uncle, cousin and friend. A man who found joy in mowing his lawn and spending quiet time at the family cottage in Somerville.

IJ taught us that success is measured not only in achievements, but how we treat others, with consistency, with humility and with kindness. Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Body join me in honoring the life and legacy of IJ Pinkham. His presence may be missed, but the lessons he shared in the classroom, on the court and in the community will endure. Mr. Speaker, IJ Pinkham once said, I am not concerned about what you do as to who you are. I think these words can reflect for all of us. We offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and we say thank you to a man who gave so much of himself to others. May his memory be a blessing and an inspiration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** 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 Exempt Electronic Smoking Devices or Other Tobacco Products Containing Ingestible Hemp from the Tax Imposed on Tobacco Products"

(S.P. 767) (L.D. 1960)

Minority (3) **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report of the Committee on **TAXATION READ** and **ACCEPTED** in the House on June 4, 2025.

Came from the Senate **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-231) AND SENATE AMENDMENT "A" (S-430)** in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford moved that the House **INSIST**.

Representative CLOUTIER of Lewiston moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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 to Recede and Concur. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 572

YEA - Abdi, Beck, Boyer D, Boyer M, Cloutier, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Fredericks, Friedmann, Frost, Golek, Hepler, Lanigan, Lee, Libby, Lookner, Macias, Mathieson, McCabe, Milliken, Moonen, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Roeder, Sachs, Sato, Sayre, Sinclair, Skold, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Terry.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, Lemelin, Lyman, Malon, Mason, Mastraccio, Matlack, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rielly, Roberts, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Salisbury, Sargent, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Warren, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Lavigne.

Yes, 38; No, 110; Absent, 1; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

38 having voted in the affirmative and 110 voted in the negative, with 1 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR FAILED**.

Subsequently, the House voted to **INSIST**.

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act to Protect and Compensate Public Utility Whistleblowers" (EMERGENCY)

(S.P. 770) (L.D. 1963)

Minority (6) **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** **READ** and **ACCEPTED** in the House on June 17, 2025.

Came from the Senate with that Body having **INSISTED** on its former action whereby the Majority (7) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-417)** in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford moved that the House **INSIST**.

Representative FRIEDMANN of Bar Harbor moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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 to Recede and Concur. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 573

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Carlow, Cluchey, Copeland, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, Osher, Pluecker, Poirier, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Sachs, Sato, Shagoury, Sinclair, Skold, Stover, Supica, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Cloutier, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lajoie, Lance, Lanigan, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Mastraccio, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Runte, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Lavigne.

Yes, 68; No, 80; Absent, 1; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

68 having voted in the affirmative and 80 voted in the negative, with 1 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR FAILED**.

Subsequently, the House voted to **INSIST**.

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act to Protect Health Care Workers by Addressing Assaults in Health Care Settings"

(H.P. 351) (L.D. 532)

Minority (5) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (H-576)** in the House on June 17, 2025.

Came from the Senate **READ** and **INDEFINITELY POSTPONED** in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

The House voted to **INSIST**.

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

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

ENACTORS

Acts

An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the Mining Excise Tax

(H.P. 601) (L.D. 936)

(C. "A" H-755)

An Act Regarding the New Markets Tax Credit and the Maine New Markets Capital Investment Program

(S.P. 506) (L.D. 1217)

(C. "A" S-413)

An Act to Establish a Minimum Age at Which Conduct Constitutes a Juvenile Crime and to Confer Jurisdiction to the Juvenile Courts Over Any Criminal Offense Under Maine Law Committed by a Juvenile

(H.P. 1233) (L.D. 1849)

(C. "A" H-758)

An Act to Prohibit Financial Institutions from Using Merchant Category Codes to Identify or Track Firearm Purchases or Disclose Firearm Purchase Records

(S.P. 737) (L.D. 1867)

(C. "A" S-360)

An Act to Change the Name and Duties of the Taxpayer Advocate to Increase the Use of State Tax Credits

(H.P. 1247) (L.D. 1876)

(C. "A" H-760)

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, Directing the Department of Corrections to Study Achieving Gender Equality

(H.P. 1167) (L.D. 1749)

Was 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**.

An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities

(H.P. 1315) (L.D. 1971)
(C. "A" H-751)

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

On motion of Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, was **SET ASIDE**.

Representative POIRIER of Skowhegan **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 Hodgdon, Representative Quint.

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't speak on this the other day, but I figured I had a little bit of insight that perhaps others in this Chamber do not have. My husband was a Border Patrol agent. He was also a Legacy Immigration agent and a Customs and Border Protection officer. And so, he served in three different sections of federal law enforcement where there was a lot of collaboration with local law enforcement.

So, this bill appears in conflict with the Maine Revised Statute which confers State of Maine law enforcement authority and protections or peace officer status to Border Patrol law enforcement personnel. Maine's Peace Officer Statute was enacted partly in recognition of Border Patrol's history of providing valuable assistance to Maine law enforcement and emergency response to the people of Maine whenever called. If this bill leads to the elimination of peace officer status or a degradation in the relationship between State agencies and Border Patrol, local officers will no longer be able to rely on the Border Patrol in situations where the State cannot timely or adequately respond. Border Patrol would be limited in its support of State, local, tribal and territorial agencies within the State of Maine. This outcome would be detrimental to the overall safety and security of Maine communities and particularly hard-felt in the many small border towns where Border Patrol is often the largest and most well-equipped law enforcement presence.

Maine has long benefited from a federal grant program that provides funding to State, local, tribal and territorial law enforcement agencies to support enhanced cooperation and coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and improve overall border security. These funds in Maine are used to combat criminal activity such as drug trafficking, human smuggling and other border-related threats. In the last five years, Maine was awarded over six million dollars, disbursed to 44 state and local enforcement agencies covering 10 different counties. As we understand it, many of these local agencies depend on these funds to supplement budget gaps and shortfalls. These grants are used to fund specialized operations, officer overtime and equipment purchases. This bill would restrict State entities from entering into agreements for funds and cause the Department of Homeland Security to reevaluate the appropriation of these funds in Maine.

The loss of these funds could have significant and detrimental effects on Maine law enforcement agencies and border communities, such as reductions in staffing and needed overtime, the inability to purchase updated and much needed equipment. Importantly, the loss of this funding would also diminish the ability of Maine to address border security and public safety threats in these areas and reduce available resources to combat the growing and complex challenges we

face at the border. These partnerships have been instrumental in reducing crime, enhancing public safety and responding to emergencies across the State. The remote and inaccessible environment in many parts of Maine makes coordination and cooperation between all available law enforcement and first responders crucial to public safety. We've had many bills in the Chamber this session addressing that very issue. These strong partnerships address immediate law enforcement needs and foster trust and collaboration between agencies and the communities that they serve.

Moreover, this bill may jeopardize regularly recurring no-cost joint training and operations between Border Patrol and Maine agencies that not only serve both federal and State interests, but the public good. As criminal organizations continue to exploit border areas for illegal activities—we all know about the drug issues in our State, Mr. Speaker—the loss of these longstanding relationships will create gaps in our collective ability to respond. Furthermore, the disruption of such partnerships could limit the coordination needed to address the public safety concerns that transcend immigration and/or border issues.

In 2024, Border Patrol apprehended approximately 5,108 individuals with criminal histories for offenses such as assault, domestic violence, burglary, driving under the influence, homicide, manslaughter, illegal drug trafficking, illegal weapons possessions, sexual offenses and others. I ask that you vote against this pending motion. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gorham, Representative Sato.

Representative **SATO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'll share is that this bill explicitly allows law enforcement to cooperate with federal agencies. It, in fact, explicitly allows law enforcement to enter into task forces and to continue and maintain task forces that they'd already entered into, that are including, but not limited to, terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking. This bill does not seek to limit law enforcement's ability to investigate and to prosecute and to charge crimes. What this bill primarily aims to address is a narrow scope of specifically immigration. Thank you.

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

Representative **COLLINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday after we did the vote, a member of Senator Collins' office reached out to me and just wanted this Body to be informed that if this passes, Operation Stonegarden grants, which come from Homeland Security, could be in jeopardy, as well as other grant funding that our towns and cities use that will pay for law enforcement.

I personally want to let my constituents know that I do not support this bill and if any other people in this Body want to support it, that's fine, but they should be aware of the consequences if they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Caratunk, Representative Caruso.

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in response to what we just heard about allowing law enforcement agencies to work with federal counterparts.

As I said yesterday, we really have not heard from our local, State or county law enforcement on the Amendment, and we are assuming that just because the lobbyist amendment included a phrase, quote, "including a federal law enforcement agency," end quote, that that would actually open the door to reinstate all of the relationships that we have. We do not know that for sure, because they were not party to our work session. And so, I do not have any confidence that, actually, our

relationships are intact, and it's very concerning and that's why I oppose this. Thank you.

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first time around, I didn't speak on this topic, but I did listen to the other hundred Representatives that did.

The only danger that we're going to have if this bill passes is the fact that there's no protection. We can't stop the federal government from coming here and removing dangerous illegal immigrants or illegal immigrants. We can't stop it. What this bill does is says, well, you're going to have to come in here on your own and do it. I personally would prefer our officers to assist to make sure that it's done safely and properly.

All the stories I've heard of people being dragged off the street, it's a bunch of crap. One in 100,000 people might be taken that are here legally, but that's no different than if I'm arrested tomorrow for robbing the Hannaford today at 11:35 and here I am sitting in this Chamber. There's no difference. I still have to go through a process. I didn't do it, but it happens.

My wife had a green card for almost 10 years. Not once, even with Trump as President, did she come up to me and say, 'gee, Michael, is he coming to get me?' Not once. Anybody with a green card's not living in fear, and if they are, then they need to be counseled. Anybody that actually has a piece of paper in hand saying, 'I have applied for asylum and I'm waiting for my court date,' is not being dragged away. Not one of them. The problem is here in Maine, I have asked a lot of my Democratic friends to show me these people who have applied for asylum that are here in Maine. And so far, not one of them has come through. Not one of them. I said, I'll travel to Portland, I'll travel wherever you want me to, show me one. No one steps up. They're, oh, I'm not doing that. Well, of course you're not doing that, because they're here illegally.

I keep hearing my Democratic friends nationally and here say nobody is above the law. Why is an illegal immigrant above the law? DHS is not trying to come in here and randomly just take people out of here. First of all, they're only coming after the rapists and murderers. They're not even coming after anybody else. But if they happen to take other illegal immigrants out who are not here legally, that's what our laws say. They're not breaking the law, they're doing what's right. We have no right to defend these people, just like I have no right to defend a person that I watch rob a bank. They're criminals.

So, I personally would prefer our law enforcement officers to assist, because it's safer. It's safer for all Mainers. Not to mention, these law enforcement officers can make a little extra income working with DHS, because the federal government pays for them. It reduces the strain on Maine to pay our officers. And I know that they're all struggling and can use the extra work. They're glad to do it. Why are we fighting it? Now, if all law enforcement called me up, and I have a lot of friends around here in law enforcement, and they said, 'hey, Michael, we don't want to do this, this is bad,' I'd stand on the House Floor and I'd tell all my Democratic friends, no, I oppose this. But that's not the case, I haven't had one person call me, not one.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to stop this ridiculous charade that's going on talking about how these defenseless people are going to be hauled away in droves, which has never happened, we've got to stop it and we have to do what is right. Thank you.

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

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to respond to a comment made from the other side of the aisle about law enforcement being allowed to work with federal agencies.

Mr. Speaker, that isn't the issue. The issue is, in fact, the reverse. The federal government will still fulfill what they are going to do. This is in regards to us receiving the benefit of their law enforcement capabilities within our State and, as I pointed out, the six million dollars in funding, which I'm sure was not in our most recent budget.

And to just state that all of the information that I just gave about what was provided within our State came from the U.S. Border Patrol Houlton Sector Station. And so, this directly impacts the area where I'm from. I'm speaking very strongly with the rural areas.

For domestic violence issues, oftentimes Border Patrol is there before State Police can get there, before our sheriffs can get there. We have no local police. Border Patrol along the border in these communities are truly the people who show up first. When there's a bomb threat on a bus, it's Border Patrol that shows up. It's not local departments that have the expertise to deal with this sort of thing.

And so, once again, I'm just asking this Body to truly think about the ramifications and the unintended consequences that can occur putting through a bill like this without more thought. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Presque Isle, Representative Underwood.

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have, in this caucus; in our caucus, we have a *bona fide* Representative from the federal government, a former agent, Border Patrol, and he's an excellent Member.

Also, I'd just like to say that throughout Aroostook County, Central Aroostook County, I know that like the back of my hand, and I've seen at night, usually anywhere between the hours of 6:00 p.m., say, to 12:00 or 1:00 a.m., and you'll see these Border Patrol people sitting on the side of the road from place to place. And it's nice to know that they can interact with local law enforcement, whether it be county, municipal or State, to be able to interact with the State and local and provide them with some degree of assistance if they are needed. With this Enactment of the bill, this bill will interfere with that relationship and I'd feel a lot better and I know anybody in Aroostook County would feel a lot better if this thing is defeated. 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.

ROLL CALL NO. 574

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

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

ABSENT - Lavigne.

Yes, 75; No, 73; Absent, 1; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, with 1 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Report

Six Members of the Committee on **TAXATION** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-431)** on Bill "An Act Regarding Certain Definitions in the Sales and Use Tax Laws Affecting Rental Equipment and Automobiles Used in Transporting Goods"

(S.P. 500) (L.D. 1211)

Signed:

Senators:

GROHOSKI of Hancock

TIPPING of Penobscot

Representatives:

CLOUTIER of Lewiston

FRIEDMANN of Bar Harbor

MATLACK of St. George

SAYRE of Kennebunk

Six Members of the same Committee report in Report "B" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-432)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BICKFORD of Androscoggin

Representatives:

LAVIGNE of Berwick

QUINT of Hodgdon

RUDNICKI of Fairfield

SWALLOW of Houlton

WHITE of Ellsworth

Came from the Senate with Report "B" **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED READ and ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (S-432)**.

READ.

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

Representative RUDNICKI of Fairfield **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 Fairfield, Representative Rudnicki.

Representative **RUDNICKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. LD 1211, "An Act Regarding Certain Definitions in the Sales and Use Tax Laws Affecting Rental Equipment and Automobiles Used in Transporting Goods." The goal of this bill is to eliminate the confusion created by LD 2000 from last session. It placed an unnecessary and unexpected tax burden on businesses with the enactment of the lease stream sales tax.

In January, the Tax Committee heard from golf courses. They were concerned after receiving an MRS notice to lessors of tangible personal property, Maine's shifting to lease stream sales taxation effective January 1, 2025. The confusion is focused on the issue of the tangible personal property and how golf courses handle the transaction with players for use of golf carts. The same issue has arisen in other businesses like the ski industry, where tangible personal property is rented for the use on the business property.

LD 1211 as amended; bill narrows the definition of lease or rental, so that businesses renting equipment for on-site use at their primary location, such as golf carts at golf courses and golf balls at driving ranges or skis, boots, poles at the ski areas or bowling shoes at the bowling alleys and are not collecting taxes for each customer's rental. The sales tax would be collected and paid to the vendor at the time the purchase of the tangible personal property.

At the direction of MRS, the amended bill defined a period and fee cost for the rentals. The Taxation Committee recognized the concerns raised by these hospitality industries that we split 6-6 Reports, both are Ought to Pass as Amended, trying to update this law. Report "B" is the industry-preferred remedy. This Amendment will bring relief without the burden of additional cost and taxes for each customer transaction. Just to ensure that everyone knows, LD 1211 ensures that these hospitality businesses that are the true meaning of Vacationland can avoid unfair tax implications and continue to thrive.

I would ask your support in passing Report "B." Vote down this motion.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Carmel, Representative Thorne.

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the morning prayer, we learned if we keep our mouth shut and our ears open, we'll learn a lot more. I tried my best, but this is something that's near and dear to me.

When I was a younger man, I'd walk when I played golf. It's one of the passions in my life. Now, because of a blocked artery in my leg, I'm required to use a golf cart. Golfing is not a cheap sport.

Mr. Speaker, LD 1211, "An Act Regarding Certain Definitions in the Sales and Use Tax Laws..." golf carts are taxed, renting them. Golf courses are family-owned businesses in most cases. They've been serving our community for generations, providing recreational opportunities and employment for dozens of local residents. Both the golf and the skiing industries are only one arm of the larger recreation, tourism and hospitality business that are the backbone of many small towns here in Vacationland. The current tax structure unfairly burdens these businesses and similar ones to them across our State.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, golf is more than just a pastime in Maine. It's a crucial component of our outdoor recreation economy that attracts tourists, supports local businesses and provides healthy outdoor activities for Mainers of all ages.

Maine offers golf packages all over the State at golf courses and resorts. I just recently last year played for the first time with my grandson. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to play a round with my grandson and find out that he's enjoyed a sport that's near and dear to my heart.

As the Taxation Committee learned, Mr. Speaker, lease stream sales tax is not uniform. States like Illinois, California, Missouri, New Hampshire, Maine; 48 states may use lease stream revenue method, but 13 states do not tax golf carts. The following states do not tax golf carts: Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Tennessee. Some states have the choice of paying sales tax at the time the fleet is leased or via this stream tax.

Maine golf courses pay other taxes, Mr. Speaker. Currently, when a new fleet of golf carts is leased, Maine's golf courses pay leasing companies 5.5% and they remit that to the State. Mr. Speaker, how is the State going to track the impact of lease stream revenue when the tax forms do not separate the revenue generated from the rental of leased equipment?

Mr. Speaker, the Maine Revenue Service held a public hearing and comment period in May. To date, there is still no policy or regulatory guidance to answer the implementation with the lease sales tax. Keep in mind, the tax effective date is January 1, 2025. Mr. Speaker, this is a new tax on Mainers. I would ask that you vote against the current motion, and I would ask that you support Report "B" of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to follow up with the Good Representative from Carmel, 75% of Maine rounds are played, this is of golf, by Mainers. Seventy-five percent. It amounts to millions of dollars. And 90% of these courses are public, 55% of these courses have just nine holes.

The timeline for sales use tax collection started on January 1st of this year, when many of these businesses were unaware of the tax changes to their operations. Maine Revenue's hearing on the proposed rules with comment period closed on May 16th. Now, remember, we started taxing them on January 1st and the comment period did not even close until May 16th. No policy or regulatory guidance has been issued, no clarification on how the businesses are to report these new taxes and many of them are finding out after they're audited that they were supposed to be charging this tax and they're having to go through all of their business transactions. This provision is not in Rule 326, and where does that get administered?

While the Taxation Committee thought they were doing the industry a favor, which we all agreed we were working very hard diligently together to take care of this issue by extending the refund opportunity, the recommendation of the three-year lookback with a three-year recoup period doesn't really cover everything. Most large-dollar leases for golf carts are five years and it's in a seasonal business. So, to put it in perspective, a three-year recoup period means that these industries will be the net loser and northern Maine, given its seasonality, will be a bigger loser than southern Maine, because their season is much shorter.

And so, I'll just end with an example to try to help it make sense because it's; taxes are fun, what can I say? So, a business that paid \$50,000 in taxes under the old methodology and collected \$30,000 in sales tax under the new lease stream still loses \$20,000. How will the State of Maine be able to know this with the way that the tax forms are? It can't.

The industry wants to do the right thing. They have no idea, as the tax forms don't identify sales taxes collected under the lease stream. Currently, there is one box that you put everything in, subject to a 5.5% sales tax, and the courses are already complaining. I would think that the State would want to know the amount of revenue collected under the lease stream by business type, so that they can compare it to the Fiscal Note. I ask that you vote down Report "A" and vote for Report "B."

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Caratunk, Representative Caruso.

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also stand up in support of Report "B."

I believe that this is a new tax that hurts Mainers and Maine businesses and, you know, I think of the businesses that I'm a part of and those that I represent, the recreational tourism hospitality industries, many are very small businesses and they have very small profit lines. And these rental taxes are going to eat away at the tourists as well as Mainers' discretionary spending. When people come up on a limited budget, these taxes are going to eat away at the money that could be the tee shirt sales, the ice cream sales, the lunch, it all adds up because, you know, they're getting wet suits, they're renting wet suits, they're renting bicycles, they're renting kayaks, this is happening on the coast as well as inland. And, you know, I just want to be able to help our small businesses keep as much of their profit as possible, so that they stay in business in these tough times. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Kennebunk, Representative Sayre.

Representative **SAYRE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I just wanted to clarify a couple of points regarding this policy.

First off, it should've come as no surprise to folks who served on the Tax Committee when lease stream was passed that this is what lease stream does. It removes from taxation the purchase of an item that is subsequently leased out to users when it is purchased by the business and it shifts that taxation to the time when these items are rented by the consumer. And I would just like to further clarify that if you feel that it is appropriate that golf and similar recreation should have its equipment that is rented out taxed with the sales tax as many other things are taxed with a sales tax, then support the pending motion. And if you feel that golf deserves a special tax exemption, vote no.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Lewiston, Representative Cloutier.

Representative **CLOUTIER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also just wanted to add some further clarification to the Good Representative from Kennebunk's comments. The Report "A" also allows businesses that operate eight or fewer months, so, seasonal businesses, to have a longer lookback period and a reimbursement period of two to three years. So, Report "A" really tries to help out those seasonal businesses in terms of when and how they are paying their taxes. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Carmel, Representative Thorne.

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For clarification, it's not just golf. It's skiing, it's rental of bikes, it's rental of ATVs, it's boat rental, it's go-cart use. Anything that involves payment or rental for any type of thing. I just used golf because that was near and dear to my heart, but skiing as well. So, there's other things that it applies to, not just golf. 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. 575

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Faircloth, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Hasenfus, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Sachs, Salisbury, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Skold, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Bridgeo, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Javner, Lance, Lanigan, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sargent, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Jackson, Lavigne.

Yes, 65; No, 82; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

65 having voted in the affirmative and 82 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended** was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

Subsequently, on motion of Representative CLOUTIER of Lewiston, Report "B" **Ought to Pass as Amended** was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "B" (S-432)** 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 "B" (S-432)** in concurrence.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

An Act to Include in the Ranked-choice Election Method for General and Special Elections the Offices of Governor, State Senator and State Representative and to Make Other Related Changes

(S.P. 660) (L.D. 1666)

(C. "A" S-334)

TABLED - June 13, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative MOONEN of Portland.

PENDING - **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

Representative BOYER of Poland **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: 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.

ROLL CALL NO. 576

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lance, Lanigan, 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, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Abdi, Lavigne.

Yes, 74; No, 73; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

74 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

ENACTORS

Emergency Measure

An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Regulation of Aquaculture Leases

(H.P. 1149) (L.D. 1722)

(C. "A" H-769)

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 5 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Mandate

An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Update Certain Requirements Regarding Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kits

(S.P. 199) (L.D. 549)
(C. "B" S-429)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. In accordance with the provisions of Section 21 of Article IX of the Constitution, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 110 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 Mandate

An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits in the Possession of Law Enforcement

(S.P. 707) (L.D. 1816)
(C. "A" S-427)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. In accordance with the provisions of Section 21 of Article IX of the Constitution, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 104 voted in favor of the same and 9 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

Acts

An Act to Expand the Historic Property Rehabilitation Tax Credit

(H.P. 289) (L.D. 435)
(C. "A" H-773)

An Act to Clarify the Status of Energy Storage Systems with Regard to the Business Equipment Tax Exemption and the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement Program

(H.P. 526) (L.D. 819)
(C. "A" H-770)

An Act to Clarify Certain Terms in and to Make Other Changes to the Automotive Right to Repair Laws

(H.P. 803) (L.D. 1228)
(C. "A" H-764)

An Act to Amend the Credit for Educational Opportunity and Student Loan Repayment Tax Credit

(H.P. 1032) (L.D. 1574)
(C. "A" H-772)

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.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (S.C. 556)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

June 17, 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 as Amended Report and Engrossed Bill "An Act Regarding Penalties for Fentanyl Trafficking When That Trafficking Results in an Overdose Causing Serious Bodily Injury of a Person" (H.P. 838) (L.D. 1263) in non-concurrence.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (S.C. 557)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

June 17, 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 Not to Pass Report from the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs on Bill "An Act to Withdraw from the National Popular Vote Compact" (H.P. 161) (L.D. 252) in non-concurrence.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (S.C. 558)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

June 17, 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 Majority Ought Not to Pass Report from the Committee on Taxation on Bill "An Act to Provide Emergency One-time Relief from the Wild Blueberry Tax for Sellers in Maine and Partial Relief for Processors and Shippers" (H.P. 908) (L.D. 1386) in non-concurrence.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (S.C. 559)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

June 17, 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 adhered to its previous action whereby it committed Bill "An Act to Require Age Verification for Online Obscene Matter" (H.P. 1244) (L.D. 1873) and accompanying papers to the Committee on Judiciary 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.**

ORDERS

On motion of Representative OSHER of Orono, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1338) (Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and Representatives: Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford, GOLEK of Harpswell, MOONEN of Portland, RANA of Bangor, ROEDER of Bangor, SATO of Gorham, SKOLD of Portland, WARREN of Scarborough)

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JUNE 2025
AS PRIDE MONTH**

WHEREAS, the Stonewall riots that began on June 28, 1969 sparked the LGBTQ rights movement in the United States; and

WHEREAS, during these riots, LGBTQ citizens, led by transgender women of color, rose up and resisted police harassment that arose out of discriminatory criminal laws that have since been declared unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, in the decades since the Stonewall riots, Pride celebrations have taken place around the country every June to commemorate this historic turning point for the LGBTQ community; and

WHEREAS, following the 1984 murder of Charlie Howard, a young gay man in Bangor, LGBTQ Mainers came together to form the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance, now known as EqualityMaine; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, the Maine Civil Rights Act was amended to include explicit protections for LGBTQ people, ensuring the law served to protect against bias-based threats, harms and hate crimes; and

WHEREAS, as a national leader for LGBTQ equality, Maine has included protections for LGBTQ people in parentage and antibullying laws; and

WHEREAS, Maine has continued to improve access to relationship equality, passing laws that extend hospital visitation rights to same-sex couples in 1999, require health insurance companies to offer to employers coverage for domestic partnerships in 2001, extend inheritance rights and next of kin status for funeral and burial arrangements and conservator rights to same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples in 2004 and include domestic partnerships in the law governing family medical leave in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the people of Maine voted to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in 2005 and in favor of marriage equality in 2012; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Maine was the first state in the nation whose highest court ruled it unlawful for a school district to prohibit a transgender student from accessing the bathroom consistent with that student's gender identity, interpreting for the first time amendments to the Maine Human Rights Act that expanded protections to include sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, since 2018, Maine has added a nonbinary gender designation for state identification cards and birth certificates, prohibited transgender exclusions in health insurance plans, banned the harmful practice of conversion therapy and secured state-level benefits for veterans who were discharged from the military due to their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, members of the LGBTQ community have served their neighbors and our State as Legislators and local elected officials, leading on countless issues important to the people of Maine; and

WHEREAS, despite years of progress, members of the LGBTQ community in the United States and around the world still face discrimination, violence and proposed rollbacks in state and federal protections, and bias-based crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity are on the rise; and

WHEREAS, here in Maine there is a commitment to protecting the civil rights of LGBTQ Mainers and to treating all people fairly and equally and with dignity and respect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize June 2025 as Pride Month as we continue to work toward full equality for our LGBTQ family, friends and neighbors.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Orono, Representative Osher.

Representative **OSHER**: I rise to speak in recognition of Pride Month and to celebrate the extraordinary courage and contributions of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community, abbreviated as LGBTQI+ community, and the legislators who have worked to advance bills that improve our laws so they do not discriminate against and do expand the rights of LGBTQI+ people.

Pride Month is a time to celebrate LGBTQI+ Americans that have summoned the courage to live authentically and proudly, even when it meant putting their lives and livelihoods at risk. And now, a brief history. In 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York, brave LGBTQI individuals protested the violence and marginalization they faced, boosting a civil rights movement for the liberation of LGBTQI people that has transformed our nation. At Stonewall, the patrons stood up against the harassment by police as the officers attempted to enforce New York State laws that criminalized the wearing of clothing of the opposite gender. In fact, a person perceived as male who dressed in clothing customarily designed for women could be arrested in New York for impersonating a female as recently as 2011. This and laws like it were the remnants of 19th century laws prohibiting wearing the dress of the opposite sex. The pushback by patrons of Stonewall turned into a melee, and that melee into a riot. The protesters that filled the streets in New York City that June and the people who attend Pride celebrations annually assert that the politics criminalizing the behavior of particular individuals and groups are not acceptable.

After Stonewall, here in Maine and around the world, harassment, ridicule and violence against LGBTQI people and those that support them have continued. In 1984, in Bangor, a group of teens harassed, beat up and threw Charlie Howard, a young gay man, into the Kenduskeag Stream where he drowned. Charlie had been walking down State Street with a friend. As he usually did, Charlie was carrying a purse and wearing women's clothing. These boys who attacked him were participating in a hazing ritual common at the time, beating up gay people.

Equality Maine, then known as the Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance, was founded in response to the murder of Charlie Howard. In the four decades since, they've worked to build support for legislation to protect LGBTQI Mainers from discrimination and they regularly advocate for LGBTQI rights here in the State House. In 1990, the first out lesbian legislator, Dale McCormick, was elected to the Maine House. She and her colleagues amended the Maine Civil Rights Act in 1993 to include protections for LGBTQI people. In 2001, the Legislature passed a bill requiring insurance providers to provide health care policies that include domestic partnership coverage to employers that request it. In 2004, we passed a bill to establish domestic partnerships for same-sex couples. And in 2005, we amended the Human Rights Act to include protections for LGBTQI Mainers. In 2009, we passed the Marriage Equality Law, but it was rejected by the voters in a referendum that fall. In 2012, Maine voters returned to the issue and legalized marriage equality. The initiative made Maine one of the first U.S. states to pass same-sex marriage by a popular vote.

In 2014, the Maine Supreme Court ruled against my town of Orono, our school district, RSU 26 had denied Nicole Maines the use of a bathroom in alignment with her gender identity. The case marked the first time in any state court that ruled denying a transgender student access to the bathroom consistent with their gender identity is unlawful. We like to say that Maine leads. In this case, we saw that Maine led by stating that transgender children's rights to use the bathroom of their gender identity should not be abridged.

In 2019, we banned conversion therapy on LGBTQI minors in the State of Maine and that same year, the Legislature banned the gay panic defense. In 2024, we voted to protect Maine's providers of reproductive care and health care for transgender people from attacks based on other states' law by passing the shield bill.

The work of advocating these initiatives is not for cowards. As we worked on another version of that concept in 2023, the Judiciary Committee and I, the bill's Sponsor, received death threats by email. The State Police tracked the perpetrator down and he's been convicted, but the recent assassination and attempted assassination of legislators in Minnesota reminds us that violence against those who stand up for the civil rights of others is an unfortunate truth and the results can be deadly.

Included in this Pride Month Resolution is a salute to the 37 LGBTQ politicians that have served in the Maine Legislature since 1980. This session, there are 12 LGBTQ legislators. I thank them and the many dozens of allies here in the Legislature that helped pass the laws that make Maine a more fair place for everyone. And I'm grateful for the progress Maine and the U.S. have made so far in the pursuit of equality, justice and inclusion. And this Pride Month, I'm pleased that so many of us here in the House and the majority of our colleagues in the Senate have reaffirmed that Maine will not target and discriminate against transgender Mainers. Let's celebrate Pride Month by recommitting ourselves to continue to celebrate the

accomplishments of and to protect the rights of LGBTQI people in Maine.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Blue Hill, Representative Milliken.

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak with love for my friend Holly Eaton, an LGBTQ single mom from a small island community off the coast of beautiful Hancock County. My words are my own, Mr. Speaker, don't worry, but I speak in honor and love and support of Representative Eaton.

Today and all month, we celebrate the courage that it takes to live openly and authentically and we remember those who have paved the way. One of those people was Harvey Milk, a Navy Korean War veteran and the first openly gay elected official in the United States. He knew that visibility could save lives. He said, 'hope will never be silent,' and yet, far too often, we still are. In fact, just last week, Defense Secretary Hegseth ordered that the USNS *Harvey Milk* be renamed in an attempt to further remove queer people from history and from everyday life.

This harm is especially felt in small rural communities like mine and that of Representative Eaton. In rural America, silence can be lethal. When we don't allow people to express who they are, when we shame them or punish them for showing up in the world honestly, we commit a kind of harm that cuts deep. It's a harm that isolates. It tells young queer people that they don't belong, that their story doesn't matter. And part of the reason that harm persists is because of stories like Harvey Milk's are still not being told in our schools. Neither is the story of Marsha P. Johnson, a beautiful black queen from New York who fought heroically against a violent NYPD on the night of June 28, 1969, at Stonewall Inn, a popular gathering spot for queer folks in Greenwich Village.

LGBTQ+ history is treated like a footnote, if it's mentioned at all. The silence sends a message that queer people didn't exist or didn't contribute or weren't worth remembering. But they did exist, and they do exist and their stories are essential not just to Pride Month, but to the full, honest history of this country and this State. Queer history is all over our history.

Prior to his death, Harvey Milk said, 'if a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door.' Harvey Milk was assassinated on November 27, 1978, by a colleague on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. His murder harmed and continues to harm every LGBTQIA+ person in this country. If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door. Today and every day throughout Pride Month, I commit myself to helping to destroy every closet door across Maine and beyond that keeps people from being safe and keeps them from being their authentic selves. Happy Pride Month, Mr. Speaker.

Representative RUDNICKI of Fairfield **REQUESTED** a roll call on **ADOPTION**.

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 Adoption. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 577

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Bagshaw, Carlow, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Daigle, Drinkwater, Flynn, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Haggan, Henderson, Lance, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Paul, Perkins, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, Wood P, Wood S.

ABSENT - Blier, Campbell, Caruso, Collamore, Fredette, Hymes, Javner, Lavigne, White R.

Yes, 93; No, 47; Absent, 9; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

93 having voted in the affirmative and 47 voted in the negative, with 9 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED** 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.

On motion of Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1339) (Cosponsored by President DAUGHTRY of Cumberland and Representatives: FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, MOONEN of Portland, SMITH of Palermo, Senators: DUSON of Cumberland, HARRINGTON of York, PIERCE of Cumberland, STEWART of Aroostook)

JOINT RESOLUTION TO EXPRESS THE LEGISLATURE'S DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE DEATHS OF MINNESOTA REPRESENTATIVE MELISSA HORTMAN AND HER HUSBAND MARK HORTMAN

WHEREAS, we have learned that targeted shootings of two Minnesota state lawmakers took place on the morning of Saturday, June 14, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, were fatally shot inside their home in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota in the early morning; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Senator John A. Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, were also shot multiple times in an earlier attack allegedly by the same assailant, but Mr. Hoffman and his wife are expected to survive; and

WHEREAS, a suspect in the shootings has been apprehended; and

WHEREAS, both state lawmakers who were shot served critical roles in the Minnesota State Legislature, with Mrs. Hortman having served as Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives for a six-year period that ended this year and Mr. Hoffman, a fourth-term state senator, chairing the Senate Human Services Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, pause in our deliberations to extend to you, the members of the Minnesota State Legislature, our deepest condolences for the deaths of your colleague State Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, and we offer our prayers and wishes for the well-being of State Senator John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette; and be it further

RESOLVED: That we condemn political violence and wish to express our horror, grief and outrage and our concern for the victims of these shootings; and be it further

RESOLVED: That we extend to you our goodwill and hope for healing and our thanks for your service, and we offer our support in any work you undertake to ameliorate the divisions in our civic life that give rise to these acts of violence.

READ.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Biddeford, Speaker Fecteau.

Representative **FECTEAU**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, sometimes the bad things that happen in our nation and in our world can feel distant and maybe hollow, as just another headline in the news. And of course, there's far too often headlines where bad things are happening. In this case, the news from Minnesota over the weekend struck me with a profound sense of sorrow and grief and loss. Because in this case, the headline from Minnesota was not just another headline for me. It was a headline about someone I knew, someone I served with and someone who I appreciated so much for her leadership, her tenacity and just her general good spirit.

Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman and I served on the board of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee for several years together. She was determined, she was quiet and she was funny. Melissa and her colleagues in the Minnesota Legislature have had a pretty narrow majority and also have been part of a very narrow minority. I think we all know what that's like here in this Chamber. And in this instance, I think what tells me a lot about Melissa's character and who she was, was I also got to know the person who she replaced when she became Speaker of the Minnesota House, her predecessor, who then became the Minority Leader while she served as Speaker. And I got to know him because he's also, or at least, at the time was a lobbyist for a national firm and he always spoke glowingly about Melissa's leadership. And I think you can learn a lot about who someone is based on what their foes say about them. And in this instance, Melissa was respected, she was admired and she was a formidable foe. Because she worked diligently, she worked hard for her caucus, but most importantly for the people she represented and for the state she loved, the great state of Minnesota.

I shared over the weekend sort of my raw feelings about how this tragedy impacted me and how I felt. And I can't help but think about the division that continues to worsen here in our nation. The inflamed rhetoric which is less and less about the issues that we debate here in this Chamber every day and more and more about how certain leaders, certain leaders are inherently evil just because of their party affiliation, their policy position or both. And I said perhaps it's because my family is evenly split when it comes to politics that I have never

understood how this hate and contempt can be so impairing for some in our communities.

I'm not sure what lessons will be learned in the aftermath of the absolute tragedy that is the assassination of a political leader and her husband, Mark, and the attempted assassination of a State Senator and his wife, but I hope, and I think Melissa would as well, hope that what we learn from this is that we cannot continue to normalize this contempt we have for each other, this contempt that we have for another party and that we will not normalize political violence in this nation.

My heart and prayers are with Melissa's family, Mark's family, their friends and all Minnesotans and those who feel the gravity of this travesty. I wish Melissa had more time here on Earth, because we were all the better for her, the state of Minnesota was. I wish her and her family; I wish her and her husband; I wish they rest in peace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Buxton, Representative Carlow.

Representative **CARLOW**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what has always distinguished the United States from lesser nations is our refusal to submit to the great and mighty woes which test our democracy. These trials come in varied forms and are called by many titles. But today, it is the agency of hate which we have been summoned to confront.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I have been privileged to serve in this House for several years, and for all our faults, for all our failures, for all our disappointments, I have never, ever felt hate. And that line etched in sand is our last defense against the siren song of anarchy. That line so fundamental to our American identity was crossed in the most brutal way Saturday morning.

I, like most of our colleagues in the House, never had the privilege of meeting Representative Melissa Hortman, but I have heard from countless media reports and personal accounts that she was a woman of strong integrity, character and courage. Mr. Speaker, I was especially moved by the tribute shared by the Representative from Biddeford, Speaker Fecteau, over the weekend and just now on the Floor. And as this tragedy unfolded in the press, I've learned more and more about Representative Hortman's life and legacy and I've come to see that she shares a story remarkably similar to many of us. That of a beloved wife, a mother, a woman of faith, a civil servant, a lawyer. I see in her life a profound example of the American story and the power of service. And in her death, I see our own worst impulse manifesting a mortal evil which we are duty bound to defeat.

This Saturday's assassination is not just an attack on two people, it's not just an attack on the state of Minnesota, it's not just an attack on the dignity of public office, it's an assault on the entire Republic, leaving a deep and festering wound across the face of this nation. This blow comes at a time of grave peril for our people, when we are bound more by our party rather than our nationality. But we've been here before in our history and the American people brought to the edge of depression and despair and, indeed, to the very extremity of extinction have never, ever, ever let go of the hope and the promise of this civilization, to the hope and the promise that we are not a lesser nation nor a lesser people.

So, with clear eyes and confidence, I dare to say that we will persevere in this sacred covenant, that Melissa Hortman's memory and mission will inspire us in our service and that in renewing the oath and prayer, so help us God, we will overcome. We will overcome. I convey my deepest condolences to the Hortman family and all the people of the state of Minnesota. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

The House was called to order by the Speaker.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I began this session with a memorial I wish I didn't have to share, and it looks like I'm going to end with one.

As most people in the Chamber probably know, I am from Minnesota. I feel sometimes like I'm turning into Rose Nylund from the Golden Girls. And people, somebody I know used to joke with me and said, 'if you go out in the world and you meet a stranger and you find out they're from Minnesota, if you talk long enough, you're going to find out that you're their cousin or you went to school with their cousin.' And I said, 'no, that's not true.' It turns out in this case, it is. I know her.

Last year, I went home to Minnesota to visit a friend and to go to the state fair. While I was at the state fair, I went to the Democrats' booth and in Minnesota, we're the Democratic Farmer Labor party, not just the Democrats, and there's this sort of feeling in Minnesota that everybody is approachable. You can talk to anyone. So, as I was talking with a rural organizer, I mentioned that I was interested in running for Speaker of the House. And she said, 'oh, you've got to talk to Melissa Hortman.' And I was like, 'yeah, the Speaker of the Minnesota House is really going to make time for me.' But when I got home, I emailed. And I didn't expect anything. I expected a polite email from a staffer at best, but before I knew it, she had scheduled time to talk to me. And as we talked on Zoom, she gave me amazing advice. Just the most incredible, warm, thoughtful advice. And then she asked who else was running. And Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned your name, she said, 'oh, I know him, I know him so well. You sure you still want to run?' Which is how Minnesotans gently say, 'think of something else.'

I won't talk about the assassination. I won't speculate on the whys or the hows, but I will echo what other people in this Chamber have said in my own way. That every time we choose hate over hope, every time we choose fear over courage, every time we choose violence over dialogue, we might as well put our finger on the trigger. I think the greatest thing that I've learned from being in this House is how easy it is to reach across the aisle. How easy it is to make friends. And I'm very appreciative for that.

Before I signed off with Speaker Emerita Hortman, I asked her if she would please relay my greetings to Representative Dean Urdahl, who was my eighth-grade social studies teacher, and tell him that despite his best efforts, I still turned out a Democrat.

She was a good woman. She was kind. And she gave me time. She gave time to this nobody Representative from Maine that she didn't know from Adam. But just because; just because that's who she was. So, to Speaker Emerita Hortman, *mange takk, tusen takk*; many thanks, a thousand thanks.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honorable Members of the House, I'm absolutely appalled and heartbroken by the assassination of former Minnesota Assembly Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, and also the attack on Minnesota State Senator John Hoffman and his wife. This is a moment of deep sorrow and a powerful wakeup call for all of us.

We must as a nation dial down the political rhetoric. This is not who we are. We resolve our differences at the ballot box, not in violence, and certainly not through political assassination. Political disagreements are part of democracy, but hatred, violence and dehumanization have no place in the American public life. When we protest, it must be peacefully, with voices, not weapons, with ideas, not intimidation. We can still disagree passionately, but we must never lose sight of each other's humanity. There's so much more that unites us as Americans than divides us. We must restore civility, compassion and a sense of collective responsibility in our public discourse. It's time to do better for the memory of Speaker Hortman and for all victims of political violence. Let us recommit ourselves to peace, to dignity and to one another. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Moonen.

Representative **MOONEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Colleagues of the House. I knew Melissa as well. I had met her a few times over the years at legislative events around the country, and it was always casual and hadn't gotten to know her particularly well at any of those, but in my first term as Majority Leader, I had the opportunity to participate in a retreat sponsored by NCSL where they invited nine leaders of both parties from all over the country together for a week. And there were only nine of us, it was a very small and intimate group, talking about the work that we do and the challenges that we face across party lines. And Melissa was one of those nine. And everyone was allowed to bring spouses, kids, whatever, for this week-long retreat. And all eight of them did except for me. And not only was Melissa there, but her husband, Mark, and her daughter, Sophie. And since I was alone for a week, Melissa and Mark and Sophie were very, very kind to invite me to join them for dinners, lunches, drinks throughout that week.

I am one-half Minnesotan. My Dad and my stepmother and my little sisters and numerous members of my extended family all live in Minnesota. So, we bonded over our love for that great state, our love for the work that we do in our respective Legislatures. And I agree with everything you said. She is; was smart, kind, funny, relentless. It's been really amazing to see her colleagues in both parties in Minnesota talk about her and how much they loved working with her even when they disagreed. It's been amazing to see the press, the Governor, lots of folks talking about how consequential she was, how much she got done for the people of Minnesota and it's really sad that that time has come to an end and she can't get more done.

I just want to convey my sorrow and my sympathies to Sophie and her brother and the people of Minnesota. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Subsequently, the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED** and sent for concurrence.

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

On motion of Representative LAJOIE of Lewiston, the following House Order: (H.O. 33)

ORDERED, that Representative Joseph F. Underwood of Presque Isle be excused Jun 16 for health reasons.

READ and PASSED.

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

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

SENATE PAPERS

Non-Concurrent Matter

An Act to Fund Collective Bargaining Agreements with Executive Branch Employees and Continue the Voluntary Employee Incentive Program (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 1335) (L.D. 1987)

(S. "A" S-421)

FAILED of **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED** in the House on June 17, 2025.

Came from the Senate **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY SENATE AMENDMENTS "A" (S-421) AND "B" (S-435) in NON-CONCURRENCE**.

The House voted to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

SENATE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (7) **Ought Not to Pass** - Minority (6) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-59)** - Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** on Bill "An Act to Exempt Nonprofit Agricultural Membership Organizations from Insurance Requirements"

(S.P. 381) (L.D. 893)

- In House, House **RECONSIDERED** its former action whereby the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-59)** on June 2, 2025.

- In Senate, Minority (6) **UGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-59) in NON-CONCURRENCE**.

PENDING - PASSAGE TO BE ENGROSSED. (Roll Call Ordered)

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

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

We are losing our family farms. My grandmother grew up on a farm on Lower Street in Turner. The cost of insurance, both health insurance and other insurances, as well as property taxes, is making it the cost of farming unsustainable and difficult to keep up with. This bill will help our farmers save their farms. It allows them to purchase a health plan that is affordable. There are guardrails in this bill. It is made very clear that this is not considered or being sold as an insurance product and that it is not being regulated by the Bureau. The farmer that is looking for this is looking for this as a way that if there is an extreme situation where they need to have their; a life circumstance that needs to be covered, that they would have this coverage.

Farmers are a very proud people. It's very difficult for them to want to go to a hospital at all. That's true of I think a lot of self-employed folks. And I do believe that farmers are smart enough to figure out this type of insurance. They deal with contracts all the time. And I know, having come from a farming community and representing farming communities, that farmers take care of each other. They're the first ones, when someone falls on hard times, to take up a collection or organize a spaghetti or bean supper to make sure that nobody who has fallen on a hard time goes without. That is what this bill does. It allows them to be able to enter into their own health product that is cheaper than that which they can find anywhere else. And that's what we're trying to do is help our farmers keep their farms.

And this has been endorsed by organizations such as the Maine Aquaculture Association, the Maine Association of Conservation Districts, the Maine Christmas Tree Association, Maine Farmland Trust, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, the Maine Organic Milk Producers, Maine Beef Producers Association, Maine State Pomological Society, Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association, Ornamental Horticulture Council and the Maine Wild Blueberry Commission, among others. I think this is something that was in place before the ACA, where the ACA came in, this product unfortunately went away. It is a way that we can help our farmers to be able to keep their farms and have some insurance or have something for coverage if they end up having an unfortunate accident or in the case of an unplanned health event. I would encourage this Body to let's help our farmers and support the pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Livermore Falls, Representative Lyman.

Representative **LYMAN**: Thank you. So, this bill would allow the Maine Farm Bureau to offer an affordable health coverage option to Maine farmers through a partnership with the Tennessee Farm Bureau, a program that's been supporting farmers for 75 years.

I grew up on an eighth-generation apple farm in Turner, where my family has owned and operated Ricker Hill Orchard since 1803. We grow apples, blueberries and cranberries on over 300 acres and our farm has been a cornerstone of our community for more than two centuries. My ancestors endured wars, economic hardships and harsh Maine winters to keep this farm going and have dedicated their life to continuing that tradition. At Ricker Hill, they're not just growing crops, they're cultivating memories, traditions and a way of life for our family and the families who visit us each season. But today, I'm here to talk about a challenge that jeopardizes that heritage, the soaring cost of health coverage for Maine farmers.

Farming in Maine is a calling, but it's also a gamble. Farmers face unpredictable weather, rising expenses and health coverage that's often out of reach. I've seen plans with costs so high that many farmers in my community, including some of my closest neighbors, go without. At Ricker Hill, they've managed to maintain coverage for family, but it's a constant struggle. I know farmers who've avoided doctor visits, skipped necessary care or lived in fear of injury because one medical emergency could mean losing their farm. This isn't just a financial burden, it's a health crisis, a family crisis and a community crisis. When farmers can't afford coverage, our rural communities suffer and our food supply becomes less secure.

So, why this bill? Why now, in 2025? Maine has had an estimated 7,036 farms. This figure represents the lowest number of farms in Maine in at least 25 years. Maine has also lost farm acreage with the State having 1.23 million acres in 2022, down from a peak of 1.45 million acres in 2012. As a

member of a farming family, I can tell you it's a hard industry in which to survive, no less thrive. Farmers are under enormous economic pressures, including our dairy industry that is losing money right now on every single gallon of milk they produce.

Now, let me tell you about the bill in front of us. This bill will allow nonprofit agricultural organizations such as the Maine Farm Bureau be exempt from the definition of health insurance under the Maine Insurance Code. In doing so, it will allow the Maine Farm Bureau to offer an affordable health coverage option to thousands of Maine farmers and their employees through a partnership with the Tennessee Farm Bureau, a program that's been supporting farmers for 75 years. More importantly, let me tell you who and what the Farm Bureau is. They are located and operate in every one of the districts represented in this Chamber. They are our neighbors, our friends and the ones who feed us every day. And the former Representative mentioned all of the organizations that support this bill. Farmers taking care of farmers is not a new concept. That is precisely what is proposed in this bill.

I know that the Committee of jurisdiction had raised valid concerns in past hearings and many have worked hard this year to address them in this version of the bill. But the way the Committee worked the bill was atrocious. First, they tried to push us toward the Consumers for Affordable Health Care. We tried to work with this nonprofit, but they're all about the Cover Maine health care insurance exchange. Cover Maine is worthless here, since it is meant for individual policies and not group health plans. Then the Consumers for Affordable Health Care had the audacity to lie to the Committee and say the Farm Bureau made no attempt to work with them. So, not true. In fact, the Superintendent of Insurance also lied when he said unmarried pregnant women would not have coverage under our proposal. He had no such knowledge of that because it wasn't true.

Then, the Superintendent and Democratic Committee Members asked for a contract to look at. Why would such a contract ever exist? No program is up and running to offer such a document. In fact, do contracts exist now for the Paid Family Medical Leave program? I'd venture to say no. It's like Obamacare, right? You have to pass a law first to see what's inside of it.

Another lie told during the hearing is that MaineCare is a viable option and there would be no claw-back provisions for those over age 65. It is actually age 55 and over and MaineCare represents an existential threat to farming families, since many farmers are generational. The average age of farmers is 57 years old. In most cases, MaineCare wouldn't apply due to means testing. But back to the original point. The Tennessee Farm Bureau has operated under a similar model for 75 years with minimal complaints. And we're confident this will provide the accountability the Committee seeks while keeping costs manageable.

As an industry, we don't need the Cadillac of insurance options here, we simply want to have access to the tractor. Mr. Speaker, I ask that we vote against the motion or we vote in favor of supporting this bill. Thanks so much.

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

Representative **COOPER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm speaking in support of LD 893. This bill would allow Farm Bureau to offer their health care products to qualifying members only. While this product may not meet all of the requirements of traditional health insurance, it does in fact provide an affordable health plan that fills a gap in the ag community.

Back in 1987, my wife and I were expecting our second child. Unexpectedly, our second son was born via emergency C-section over four weeks early. Our son spent 24 hours in Maine Med's NICU unit. Being 24-year-olds just getting life started, working on our family farm for about \$200 per week, health insurance was not an easy fit in our budget. Fortunately, we were able to afford Farm Family's health insurance plan at that time through Maine Farm Bureau. With hospital bills well over \$15,000, being 24 years old, not knowing what went on, been through an emergency C-section, the bill seemed enormous. All of the bills from the hospital, delivery, transport back and forth from Maine Med were paid, excluding a few hundred dollars' worth of my wife's care, with zero hassle with the insurance. All we did was submit the hospital bills, insurance covered it. I've never dealt with an insurance company of any type that paid that easily.

Without that option of the Farm Bureau health plan, I have no idea what we would've done and how we would've managed after that. The current plan proposed by Maine Farm Bureau for eligible members appears to be very similar; in reading it, it is clear that the items, the payment, the setup; to what was available back in 1987. While not perfect, the plan provides an option for some level of health care for our ag community. I urge you to support LD 893.

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

Representative **CLUCHEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to be clear about something. This bill is not actually about helping farmers. This is a straight-up scam to make money off of Mainers that are having a tough time affording health insurance.

So, for anybody who is confused about thinking that this is actually, like, a good product to buy, I would encourage you to look at the bill. On page two of the Committee Amendment, one of the things that this plan is going to have to do is disclose to anyone who's buying it that if the plan does not pay medical expenses that are eligible for payment under the plan, for any reason, the individual covered by the plan may be liable for such expenses. So, they're just straight-up saying, even though it's in the plan and it's supposed to be covered, we can decide for any reason not to cover it, and we're putting that; what we're proposing is to put this into law, to make that an okay thing to do. And then it also says, an organization that's doing this shall establish a complaint procedure for resolving disputes related to coverage. So, what I'm, like, how would you create a process to manage disputes when in law, we would be saying no, no, for any reason, they can just decide not to pay it.

This is not insurance, this is not about helping farmers. This is a scam. Don't fall for it. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wilton, Representative Hall.

Representative **HALL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in total disagreement from the Representative from Bowdoinham.

I've been a member of Farm Bureau pretty much my whole life. I've had this insurance policy before when they had it through Maine Farm Family. It's good insurance. It's something that farmers can afford and it's kind of like a co-op, where we can get together and farmers can help farmers out. I stand in strong support of this. Thank you.

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

Representative **FOLEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise in support of LD 893.

LD 893 is not a debate about health insurance, because LD 893 does not provide health insurance. It provides a choice for our farmers to purchase health coverage through the Tennessee Farm Bureau, a trusted program that has been around since 1947. In fact, before the ACA, many of the Maine farmers participated in a similar program through the New York Farm Bureau. They liked the options they could purchase and, more importantly, they liked the pricing of those options. Many will argue the plan through the Tennessee Farm Bureau is not very good health coverage protection. And while you and I might not purchase that type of coverage, it isn't our choice to make. It is our farmers, their families and their employees who should make that choice.

Many farming communities in this; Maine's farming community is in a crisis as a result of continued expenses and climate pressures. The margins are thin and getting thinner. In 2022, the census of agriculture shows a seven percent loss of farms since 2017 and 20% disappearing every two years. The soaring cost of health coverage is a barrier. Many farmers go without, risking their health and their farms.

The HCIFS Committee heard stories of farmers duct taping severed fingers or avoiding hospital care during heart attacks or other emergencies. LD 893 offers a solution, a plan that can save farmers up to 70% on premiums, covering doctor visits, hospital stays, prescriptions, emergencies, with no lifetime caps. For a family of four, this could mean the difference between keeping the farm or selling out. Many families either don't have coverage or must hold down a job off-farm solely for the insurance benefits.

During testimony, we heard of the struggles many families face. One young family of four talked about insurance coverage they used to have at a premium cost of \$12,000 a year, with a \$5,000 per person deductible. They would need to incur almost \$32,000 of health care and insurance cost before using one penny of coverage. The spouse had to give up working on the farm to go to work in order to get health insurance they could afford through their new employer, leaving her family to tend to the farm without her.

During testimony, we heard from a farmer, Jonathan Tibbetts of York County, testified that LD 893 would allow him to offer coverage to his three full-time employees who currently rely on spouse's insurance or go without. This supports the next generation of farmers, noting that the 4-H and FFA kids aspire to farm, but face barriers like unaffordable coverage. LD 893 will help close that gap.

In order to address concerns raised during the Committee hearing, the bill was amended several times, providing transparency. Farmers must complete a navigation process to explore options like CoverME.gov or MaineCare before enrolling, ensuring informed choices.

Preexisting conditions. The plan considers and accepts some preexisting conditions after a six-month waiting period if disclosed up front, ensuring fair and honest access. Some will say it doesn't cover maternity, which is untrue. There is a nine-month waiting period before maternity is covered. Once the nine months have passed, maternity is fully covered as any other condition.

Oversight. A memorandum of understanding with the Insurance Bureau ensures a complaint process modeled after Tennessee's 75-year success. This, combined with an internal three-tier review process will ensure complaint resolution and sufficient appeals to have farmers' voices heard if they feel a claim should be covered.

Market impact. Eligibility is limited to active farmers who filed a Schedule F U.S. Census definition or a Schedule C for agriculture as the principal activity, targeting a small group of people. This ensures the risk pool disruption is minimal.

As noted before, many agricultural organizations support this bill and it's fully endorsed by the Maine Agricultural Council of Maine. We trust our farmers to grow our food, to be good stewards of the land they cultivate, the crops they raise and the food they put on our tables. Shouldn't we allow them the right to make the choices for themselves? Please follow my light and let's trust our farmers.

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

Representative **MATHIESON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make this brief, because I don't think I'm going to change any hearts or minds with my speech, but I do want to just address a couple of things.

I have heard multiple times that this is a less expensive option for a health plan. There is a reason why it is less expensive. It is not regulated, it does not guarantee coverage for preexisting conditions, it can deny coverage entirely. It does not guarantee that there will not be waiting periods. It does not guarantee coverage for any office visits, hospitalizations, pharmaceutical coverage, behavioral health coverage. There is no oversight from the Bureau of Insurance in terms of its fiduciary responsibility, hence the policyholders and providers could be left with the responsibility of payment of service.

The other thing that has been left out of this conversation is insurance is a risk assessment. When you have multiple people in health insurance that are sick and are healthy, that spreads the risk. When you have a product that is very cheap and you have a Farm Bureau Association that you can get a membership in, that a young person can get this plan through, they are going to leave the regulated market. This is what happened in Tennessee. Twenty percent of the regulated market is now not available in rural areas. So, now we do not have in Tennessee a regulated market for people to actually access regulated health care.

I feel so strongly that this is a movement in a direction where we will be starting to lose our private carriers in Maine. I hope that you will reconsider and vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Engrossed as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-59). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 578

YEA - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lance, Lanigan, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Bluegess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

NAY - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Faircloth, Friedmann, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer,

Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Skold, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Hasenfus, Lavigne.

Yes, 76; No, 71; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

76 having voted in the affirmative and 71 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-59)** in concurrence.

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

SENATE PAPERS

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 132) (L.D. 210)

Minority (5) **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report of the Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS READ and ACCEPTED** in the House on June 18, 2025.

Came from the Senate with the Majority (8) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS READ and ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-759) AS AMENDED BY SENATE AMENDMENT "E" (S-438)** thereto in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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, this morning in regards to this bill, I thought this Body took an important step in sending a message in regards to not only the ability of us to work together, but also to recognize those important values that both sides represent, both in the middle and not in the middle. And I heard comments in regards to concerns about people living in mobile homes who smoke cigarettes, and I think those are real concerns, Mr. Speaker. And again, I would suggest to the Body that had there been more bipartisan work on this budget, the previous vote would've been a different outcome.

The posture that this bill is in is such that if we are able to sustain the vote that we had earlier in the morning, I believe that the proper action at that point in time would be to send the bill back to the Appropriations Committee and have the Appropriations Committee do the important work that would need to get done at that point in time. And I agree with the previous speaker who indicated that in many ways, whether it be nationally or here in Maine, that the legislative Body not cede its authority as a co-equal branch of government to the

Executive. And I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that this budget reflects over 99% of the Chief Executive's priorities in regards to where she would like this budget to go. And so, I would concur with the comment, both nationally and here in Maine, that we not cede that power to the Chief Executive. Because the 151 of us in this Body represents the peoples' House. We come from small districts and some people represent half a county due to such small populations and towns. And so, I think it's duly appropriate that we as the peoples' House exert our proper role in this process. I believe that we have failed to do that, I think we still have time to do that, I hope we have time to do that and we do choose to do that by staying with our votes that we had this morning and sending a message that we are going to be a co-equal branch of government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **WARREN**: I rise in opposition to the pending motion and wanted to speak briefly, just to be on the record as to my vote. I would agree with many who would say that there are really critical proposals in this budget, but others go to increasing tax breaks for the wealthy, well-connected, profitable business centers and those who can afford to pay more, while other critical initiatives are left out entirely.

Further, I cannot support the way that the AFA Committee chose to fund this budget. Our budget is largely funded through regressive tax proposals that further burden the middle class and working families, finding money in particular to close critical gaps by those who are addicted to nicotine and streaming services that many of my constituents use every day. We have a wide number of options available to us today that would allow us to fund these investments responsibly, to fund more of the critical needs that we know exist across our State, Mr. Speaker. We could ask corporations and those who are wealthier to pay their fair share or reduce tax breaks on large businesses. But unless we are willing to do any one of these things, I cannot in good conscience support this spending.

I don't necessarily ask anyone to join me, I just wanted to be on the record in my firm opposition and what is certainly a very difficult choice.

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

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in opposition to the pending motion, and for a variety of reasons.

Last Friday, this Body voted 143-0 to fund the Maine Veterans' Home. Today, despite repeated warnings that the Maine Veterans' Home will close in the next couple of years, there doesn't seem to be any funding for the Maine Veterans' Home in this budget. And while we're not in a posture to right that wrong, I can tell you that effort was made in the Other Body, and I'm very disappointed that it didn't succeed. That's yet one reason why I oppose the pending motion, Mr. Speaker.

Another, if I could take a brief moment to pull up some testimony on my phone from a former Member of this Body, I would gladly do so, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say that rural patrol in Washington County has been a critical issue since the minute we began this session. That, as lawmakers, repeatedly, from Washington County, we met with the State Police back in December, working with the Administration, the Chief Executive and others, they wouldn't have been in that room had they not had permission to be. That's generally how that works and we have time and again, Mr. Speaker, made it our initiative to push for rural patrol from the State Police to help rural Maine taxpayers. Help them out, help them through with rural law enforcement.

And a former Member of this Body reached out to the Chairs of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, the Honorable Dave Burns, who many of us have served with, who now serves as the chairman of the Washington County Board of Commissioners and since my eyesight is not what it ought to be and my phone is not cooperating, I'm going to try to paraphrase what he had to say in that email. And that message indicated that the former Member was a member of the State Police and joined the State Police back in the early '70s and noted that there has not really been any significant investment in increasing State Police presence, certainly in rural Maine, since; for decades. So, I find that a problem.

The Representative from Newport has mentioned that there are some 2,000 empty positions or thereabouts. We ought to be able to have found four for rural patrol in Washington County. We ought to have been able to have found four, but we didn't, here we are. And I won't get into the reasons others on my side of the aisle have spoken against this proposal, but I can tell you there's, it seems to be widespread dissatisfaction, whether on the left or the right, with this proposal and it absolutely needs to go back to Appropriations and there needs to be a do-over.

So, I will leave it at that, Mr. Speaker, and say that I'm voting against the pending motion. Thank you.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 579

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lance, Lanigan, 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, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Warren, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Crockett.

Yes, 75; No, 73; Absent, 1; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, with 1 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the House voted to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act Establishing Alternative Pathways to Social Worker Licensing"

(S.P. 528) (L.D. 1298)

Majority (8) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-396)** in the House on June 17, 2025.

Came from the Senate with that Body having **INSISTED** on its former action whereby the Minority (5) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (S-397)** in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford moved that the House **INSIST**.

Representative BOYER of Poland moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Poland, Representative Boyer.

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've championed alternative pathways for different professions in our state and we have a dire issue with the lack of social workers in this state and I think we don't need to study it anymore and I ask for a Roll Call.

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on his motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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. I rise in support of the pending motion.

As a clinical social worker, I decided to run for office back in 2018 because of our mental health waitlist in this State. Those have changed because of improvements that this Body has made and there's not going to be one policy that fixes it, but we currently have 10,000 Mainers waiting on outpatient waitlists. We have 422 children waiting for home and community-based treatment. In Piscataquis County, the average wait time is 214 days, and we know it's too long. Maine tragically saw a double homicide across the river recently and in the *Morning Sentinel* just today, I read a cousin of the victims said the family had repeatedly warned Social Service officials that the teen needed psychiatric help, but was told no beds were available.

Now, we know we have beds in Maine, we don't have the workforce to support it. I understand that people are concerned about this policy, they're concerned about the implications of it, but let me say this, we've created a licensure path that requires clinical supervision, that requires currently 3,200 hours of work in the field, and this alternative pathway raises that by 1,600 hours, an additional year of supervised work. We say that for conditionally licensed social workers, it's adequate adding 48 supervised hours with 1,600 hours of work to ensure that people meet the nine clinical competencies, to make sure that mental health providers are skilled, have on-the-job training and understand after completing the bachelor's and Master's degree program, when we understand the national exam and all of the data that's come out in the last three years indicates there's huge discrepancies. There are discrepancies, Mr. Speaker, for older Mainers trying to take and pass the test, there are

discrepancies for non-native English speakers, there are discrepancies for people with learning disabilities.

And I have a colleague I spoke with yesterday who gave me permission to share her story. She graduated in 2013 as a clinical social worker. It's 12 years later and she's attempted to pass the national board seven times and because of her own learning disability, she's failed. She's decided to leave the field because she can no longer manage her lack of self-confidence, she's paid over \$10,000 out of pocket in her own clinical supervision to maintain her conditional license and I think it's time on behalf of everyone waiting for services for us to try something different, and I believe that LD 1298 does that and I ask folks to support the pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Old Orchard Beach, Representative Gramlich.

Representative **GRAMLICH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Colleagues of the House. I rise today to speak in opposition of the pending motion and to support the Majority Report of LD 1298.

Let me begin by expressing my respect and appreciation for the efforts of the bill's proponents, stakeholders and advocates who have worked diligently to bring this proposal forward. I know they share the same goals that I and many others in this Chamber do, namely expanding access to high-quality behavioral health care across our State and building a strong, diverse and sustainable workforce of licensed social workers. However, Mr. Speaker, despite these shared goals, I must stand in strong opposition of the Minority Report due to a number of significant unresolved concerns, both practical and policy related, and as such, again, I would support the Majority Report.

I offer this perspective as someone who has worked in this field of social work for nearly 35 years. I am a licensed master social worker. My career has taken me from the front lines in the roles of Department of Health and Human Services in Bangor, to leadership positions in Augusta and into the classroom as an adjunct faculty member and field coordinator in the Department of Social Work at the University of Southern Maine. I have also served as Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers Maine Chapter. Through these roles, I've supported countless individuals navigating the education, training and licensure process. I say this, Mr. Speaker, to emphasize that my concern comes from a deep understanding of what is at stake when we talk about professional licensing and public safety.

There are legitimate concerns about, or as advocates and proponents of the Minority Report will tell you, the flaws with the current licensing exam. Mr. Speaker, I completely agree that this is a flawed exam. These standardized tests are not indicators of effective practitioners and that the State of Maine indeed does face a shortage of skilled mental health providers. Report "A," Mr. Speaker, is the answer to some of these concerns, creating a thoughtful process to examine solutions while ensuring that the public has licensed professionals who are adequately prepared to practice safely and ethically. If we do not move forward with Report "A," Mr. Speaker, we will be on track to introduce a new supervised work experience pathway for applicants who do not pass the national exam. While it includes additional time under supervision once an applicant fails the exam, it only requires an attestation that the license seeker intends to practice under supervision in order to gain full unconditional license. If the applicant fails the exam with their attestation of intent to follow up with supervision again, the applicant will still receive their full, unconditional license to practice. It seems that the system is backwards, Mr. Speaker.

It seems to me that if somebody fails the licensing exam, they have to give evidence that they have indeed completed additional supervision.

These issues, Mr. Speaker, could present serious legal implications. Allowing individuals to practice under a poorly thought-out alternative pathway could expose them, their clients and their employers to significant civil and criminal liability. Importantly, the Minority Report does not address these liability concerns.

Finally, I must raise a critical concern related to the social work interstate compact. The 131st Legislature acted decisively to bring Maine into this compact, opening doors for mobility, flexibility and broader workforce participation. But if we eliminate the national exam requirement, Maine licensees will be disqualified from participating in the compact, creating a two-tier licensure system that could be burdensome to administer and unfair to future social workers.

Mr. Speaker, I support innovation in licensing. I support reducing barriers to entry, especially for under-represented groups. But we should absolutely not substitute one flawed system for another, which does not even include rulemaking, by the way, so, there's no additional opportunity to address the many concerns within the policy.

Failure to Insist on the Majority Report, Report "A," would undermine the rigorous ethical standards of our profession and puts both social workers and the public in an unacceptable position. The stakes are simply too high, Mr. Speaker, to move forward without greater clarity, infrastructure and consensus from all stakeholders that Report "A" would provide, which would be to have an opportunity to get the stakeholders to the table to further study this very important issue. I'm confident, Mr. Speaker, that if we had the opportunity to sit at the table and figure this out, we would have a product that would satisfy all of the stakeholders and protect the integrity and fidelity of our profession. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FOLEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't agree more with my Good Colleague from Old Orchard Beach. One of the concerns I had on the Committee and why I supported the Majority Report was the fact that the impact it will have on the compact. It would disqualify our licensed folks in the State from practicing outside of the State. It would open up liability.

There is a better pathway forward to find an alternative, that is with the Majority Report, let's have the commission meet over the summer, come back to the Committee next January with a report, so that we could fully vet this system and come up with a much better solution. So, I thank my colleague from Old Orchard Beach and I ask you to please reject the Recede and let's Insist and work it.

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

Representative **CRAFTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to add off of what the Good Representative from Old Orchard Beach mentioned around serving NASW. NASW is in support of this Recede and Concur, as well as all of the schools of social work in the State of Maine; the Maine Primary Care Association, the Behavioral Health Community Collaborative with its eight providers, the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services and its 35 members, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, NAMI, the Consumer Council System of Maine. And I just want to be clear that 86% of first-time clinical test takers pass the test in Maine. Those 86% will continue to have access to take and pass the test, which will continue to be

required to participate in the social work compact. This is not a pathway to replace what we have, it's an alternative to help bring along the folks who aren't able to, for a host of reasons, pass this one exam and to give them an alternative to proving their competency. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Brennan.

Representative **BRENNAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. Since 1998, I've been licensed by the State as a clinical social worker. I'm the past president of the Maine Association of Social Workers, the Maine chapter of National Association of Social Workers. I've taught social work and public policy at both the University of New England and the University of Southern Maine. And over the last 20 years, I've spent a considerable amount of time dealing with licensing issues.

When this issue started to become prominent across the country two or three years ago, I spent some time looking into it. And what I found out is that there's a lot of confusion across the country on how to address this issue about testing. Some states have had moratoriums, other states have found alternative pathways and some states have said, we're going to continue to use the test and do what we've done in the past. That's why I think the Majority Report has taken the most prudent step, which is to say, let's spend the next six months looking at what other states have done and also what will work here in the State of Maine.

Now, as many of you know, I serve on the Education Committee. Almost every year, we have bills in about certification, teacher certification. Modifying, changing, doing something different with teacher certification. Every time that we act hastily and every time we don't spend looking at best practices, we almost always get it wrong and we have to go back and do it over again. This is an opportunity for us as a State to get it right, to take the time to do it and to make sure that we have an alternative pathway for persons to get licensed, but we do it in a way that meets professional standards and protects the public.

So, I'm going to be in opposition to the pending motion and hope that we can go on to the Majority Report. 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, I appreciate the words of the Good Representative from Old Orchard Beach, and as someone who interacts with the Department of Health and Human Services on many cases, I find it troubling that we're having this conversation. And many times when we're talking about our most vulnerable people in the State are children. These are not the group of people where we want to go back and say, we'd like to have a do-over. You know, well, we didn't get that one right. I mean, what are the outcomes? I mean, the outcomes of getting it wrong are substantial, including death. I mean, this is not something to fool with.

You know, and many times, and I think we can all play out in our mind, right, what does this sound like in a courtroom, right? I mean, we all know many times that many of these cases get decided on experts and who has a license and who doesn't have a license, you know, but if the testimony coming forward is from someone who's sort of in an apprenticeship program, doesn't have a license, testifying on behalf of DHHS, that certainly doesn't look good. It certainly isn't going to look good for the outcome, at least in my opinion. And so, I guess I just don't quite understand. I understand we have the need, but this is not the solution. The solution is, is to help people get the

proper understanding in how to work the test and how the test may become better, but people need to be licensed. This is not one of those situations where we want to have a front-page story saying, well, the Maine Legislature said we didn't need to have licensed social workers and someone got the call, but they didn't make the right call, and so, you know, now we have this front-page story on, you know, maybe a child death, I don't know. But I certainly don't want to be in that position.

So, I will be supporting the Good Representative from Old Orchard Beach in regards to this motion. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Brunswick, Representative Arford.

Representative **ARFORD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I will not repeat what my colleagues have said, I would just like to add a few more comments in support of the Recede and Concur motion before us and in support of going forward with an alternative pathway.

I first want to make sure that everybody understands before they vote that this bill has a five-year sunset. What that means is that once it passes, it is guaranteed to a five-year end date before which it will be reviewed, the board of social work will be involved intimately with this, whatever complaints, whatever problems have been experienced during that timeframe will be considered. And if at that point in time it's determined that this program is simply not benefitting the people of Maine in the way that I believe it will right now, the program will no longer exist. So, that's important, that's sort of our failsafe.

And the other thing I want people to understand is there's at least 17 other states that are doing some version of this. In fact, there's at least three other states that are doing an alternative pathway at the highest level of licensure, which is a licensed clinical social worker. So, we are not the first out of the gate here, folks. Other states are doing this and it's working well.

So, when we consider this vote, I just want to make sure that people have the facts before them, because the people of Maine need this. This current test is, in my opinion, it discriminates against people who have not grown up with English as their first language; in fact, English is their second language. And the facts and the data demonstrate that the greatest number of people failing this test are people who fall into that category, that do not have the lived life experience of people who are in environments where people are going on to higher education, are taking very complex and difficult tests like this.

We need to think about what the State of Maine needs right now, what our children need, what people need. And I'm just really hoping that people will vote in favor of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You've heard me quite a bit this session talking about the disparity; how much the rural areas are being disparaged. I mentioned it earlier today.

Christmas is a time when a lot of people have struggles, but if you are struggling and needing to deal with that struggle last Christmas, you would still be on the waiting list for another month and a half before you could meet a counselor. That's an awful long time for a 12-year-old to wait and deal with a situation.

I thank the Good Representative from Newcastle for bringing this bill forward. Mr. Speaker, there is some real concerns here. I heard my colleagues on both sides of the aisle mention the lack of ability for our counselors to work in other

states because of the compact. Mr. Speaker, that's the last thing on my mind. I have a 12-year-old in Piscataquis County that's been waiting since Christmas to have a counselor, and it's still a long way away. If there's something we can do to lighten up the red tape and to allow people to work through the process of a bureaucracy to prove themselves and then get to work helping people, why would we not do that?

This isn't a bill to do away with standards, this is a bill to make an easier pathway. How often do we see in our life that there are hurdles that we throw in front of people, you know, in transportation, we deal with this. You know, last year, you could ride in a tractor-trailer with your uncle who drives a tractor-trailer for a living until you developed a proficiency, take the written test and then, get an appointment to go and prove yourself to the person at the DMV and then get your CDL license. But we've thrown more hurdles in front of them now. Now, you have to go and pay a school to get that same opportunity.

Verdict's out, maybe in 10 years we'll find out that all traffic accidents went away. But I hope in that time we find out that the 12-year-old that's been waiting since Christmas for a counselor has had the opportunity to have a counselor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **MATHIESON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could not agree more that we are in grave need of behavioral health providers in the State of Maine. I am a strong supporter of alternative pathways and decreasing speed bumps for licensure.

This bill is very difficult for me. I want to be very clear what this Recede and Concur does is it allows somebody, once they have finished their education and they take their exam and they pass their exam, they get an unencumbered license to practice as a social worker. If they fail their exam, they get an unencumbered license to practice as a social worker.

The Committee was very clear that they were very interested in trying to get an alternative pathway. They asked for parameters around an internship or possibly a limited license option. That wasn't presented to us in Committee, what was presented to us was what I just indicated. The Committee came together with the Majority Report, which I won't talk about, because I think we're talking about the Recede and Concur, but I hope that you all understand that this is decreasing the professionalism of this industry if we are not holding the minimum requirements of licensure at the same level. I ask you to please vote no on the Recede and Concur. Thank you.

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been listening to the conversation and I'm a little perplexed, because if we go ahead with this, then we might as well do it with doctors, lawyers, nurses and pilots, because we have a shortage of all of them.

Being on the Health and Human Services and the Government Oversight Committees, I have issue with this. Why would I want a social worker going to see a family and that social worker couldn't pass the test? See, to me, no matter what profession it is, I would rather have a hundred great, well-educated social workers that can pass the test than a thousand that can't. Because when they knock on that door and they make the wrong decision, it's a pretty dangerous decision. We're not talking about a cashier at Hannaford. So, with kids dying in our State, one recently, I have a huge problem with this. I wouldn't want my doctor to be somebody that couldn't pass the State and national boards. My wife had to pass them. She

would've loved to skip it, she thought the boards were hard and terrible. She still had to pass them.

So, I'll tell you what, there's no social worker that can't pass the test that's coming to my house to see my child. It's not happening. I won't even let them in the door. No disrespect, I just think it's unfair. Do we need more social workers? Sure. But I think maybe the best avenue is, if the Representative is correct who said that the test is unfair or whatever, instead of passing this bill, why don't we pass a bill that says that they have to correct that test? Make it better. Not easier, just correct the wrongs. Because I can assure you that the test that the Representative from Portland here took as an MD wasn't a cake-walk. My test to be a professional pilot was horrible. It was tough. But I passed it, and I had to. I couldn't fly any of you in that plane without it. Not only that, I have to take a test every six months to make sure that I'm safe. I think it's the right thing to do. But if the test is flawed, it doesn't meet requirements for people who have a language issue or whatever, fix it. You don't let people slide through and say, well, they'll get this extra training or they'll be with somebody for a few months. Seriously? A social worker is an important job. I've dealt with them now for 29 years. It's an important job. And with kids dying in our State? No, Mr. Speaker, there's red flags here.

So, like I said, I'm not disagreeing that something has to be done and that we need more social workers. I'm just saying, maybe we need to sit back, think about this and do what is prudent and not just move forward because, hey, we need social workers. That's not the solution. Thank you.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 580

YEA - Abdi, Albert, Arford, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Boyer D, Boyer M, Carlow, Copeland, Crafts, DeBrito, Dhalac, Ducharme, Flynn, Friedmann, Geiger, Golek, Lanigan, Lookner, Macias, Mason, McCabe, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Osher, Parry, Poirier, Pugh, Rana, Rollins, Sato, Shagoury, Sinclair, Warren, White J, Yusuf, Zager.

NAY - Adams, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gattine, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Quint, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Skold, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Webb, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Crockett, Hasenfus.

Yes, 39; No, 108; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

39 having voted in the affirmative and 108 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR FAILED**.

Subsequently, the House voted to **INSIST**.

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

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act to Revise the Growth Management Program Laws"

(H.P. 1299) (L.D. 1940)

Report "B" (5) **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** of the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT READ** and **ACCEPTED** in the House on June 17, 2025.

Came from the Senate with Report "C" (1) **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** of the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (H-768) in NON-CONCURRENCE**.

Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Kennebunkport, Representative Gere.

Representative **GERE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we spent some time yesterday talking about LD 1940, and now coming before us from the Other Body is Report "C." And I want to just take a few minutes to make sure everyone realizes that this is a different Report. It moves in the language around the planning process from 1751, with the addition of a few items that are important to note.

The first is a definition of affordable housing, the second is a definition of placetypes. We also have a definition of rural area and in addition, some additional provisions including encouraging the widest possible participation in the planning process and encouraging municipal collaboration and collaboration with State agencies. In addition, it adds an important goal, which, I will quote it, "to encourage orderly growth and development in areas of each community and region while protecting the State's rural character, working lands and natural resource-based industries and preventing sprawl and sprawl-associated impacts on public health, safety and welfare." It also provides that the Office of Community Affairs will develop rules and guidance after convening a stakeholder group with the Housing and Economic Development Committee invited to participate in all of those meetings.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of those times when the will of the Body, as expressed here, has gotten a different response from the Other Body, and I will say that, for me, this does bring together some of the things we talked about yesterday. So, we have 1751 and then we've got; and I will say, it's a couple of small items that provide communities that would like to use placetypes in their planning the ability to do that, and the ability for that to be included in guidance from the Office of Community Affairs.

I appreciate and ask support for the pending motion, so that we can get these very small additions into the bill. Thank you very much.

Representative **COLLAMORE** of Pittsfield **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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 Pittsfield, Representative Collamore.

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

Report "C" is a Minority Report of one. This bill, as well as a bill on the same subject matter, were worked through multiple work sessions and Report "C" was a last-minute Amendment that, while a well intentioned way of trying to bring together various elements from both of the growth management bills before us, it missed critical elements to support all Maine communities.

Mr. Speaker, please vote down this motion and insist on the Ought Not to Pass that was the will of the Body before. Thank you.

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

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I remind you once again, thanking the Good Representative from Freeport for pointing this out to me yesterday, LD 1940, "An Act to Revise the Growth Management Program Laws," was testified in opposition to by the Maine Municipal Association and their 70-member policy commission. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Windham, Representative Cooper.

Representative **COOPER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm going to reiterate yesterday's speech. I'll keep it real short.

Our planner is opposed to this, he said it makes their job much more difficult. He's a professional planner, years of experience. The Maine Association of Planners is opposed to this. I believe most of us have that letter here. This makes their job more difficult, it does not fix the problems that were claimed. Thank you.

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

Representative **SACHS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, the Amendment is now the other bill in its entirety, with a few tweaks that were found in 1940. So, the opposition from the planners should be minimal, because it's the same bill.

I also do want to note for the Good Representative from Wales, who has now called me out twice, I believe what I said yesterday was those who testified, not submitted testimony. I'm aware later on that MMA submitted testimony, but I was not incorrect as I sat through four and a half hours of supportive testimony on my bill that the few that testified who were not in support were planners.

This of course would not be the bill that I would choose, but I do have to say that in the spirit of those communities who came before us and said, we would like to do this type of planning, that this would be a way forward, with a few small tweaks. So, I appreciate that, and I appreciate all the support for the original bill as well. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Kennebunkport, Representative Gere.

Representative **GERE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I just wanted to wrap up my comments by emphasizing that I think in this process it's been really interesting to see the level of engagement.

It is very clear to me that communities are very focused on thinking about their futures and planning their futures, and I would just encourage the Body to really consider the fact that not every community is the same and there are many communities, again, as we heard from in Committee, who would like the flexibility. And I know that so often we talk about

providing communities with that flexibility and this is one small way, all it does is provide a definition of a term that can be used, and then, communities are free in looking at placetypes to define their own. They can look at their own communities and they can define their own. There would be no list provided, if; whatever they want to call things, they can call things. And I think that's very much in the spirit of Maine's independence and our local communities being able to go in the direction that they want to go in.

So, I would again just encourage folks to keep that in mind when you're thinking about the ability of your own community to do that. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Caratunk, Representative Caruso.

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I oppose this Amendment that's coming over from the Other Body.

This would remove the growth area exemption for small municipalities. It does not resolve the issues that were in the Majority motion. It removes the completeness review step, which is the State's ability to inform municipalities of missing elements. I know that's—coming firsthand from someone who wrote our comprehensive plan—that's an important step. It mandates that the State issue a finding of inconsistency rather than help municipalities address missing items, and that will result in longer, more expensive and inefficient review processes. It also creates a schedule of implementation that will cause financial hardship and time to municipalities because of how it is written and it doesn't give sufficient time for comp plans that are currently in process.

So, for these reasons, I oppose this measure.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Naples, Representative Walker.

Representative **WALKER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to this. And I would just like to point out that there are three Reports that came from the Committee, only one of them is bipartisan and that is Ought Not to Pass.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Westbrook, Representative Salisbury.

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll speak briefly because a lot of my comments have been already spoken, but I am standing in opposition to this motion. I am still concerned about this Report "C." It was an attempt at a compromise, but I still feel like it falls short of the ways that we wanted the comprehensive planning to become easier for the communities that we represent. So, I will be voting against this motion.

This process, this growth management plan, has come a long way in my experience from last session to this session. I spent a lot of time over the summer and fall learning more about the process and working with our community's planner, and it's really important work that's been done by the Maine Planners Association. This thoughtful planning, it takes a lot of time, there has to be a lot of collaboration and support.

So, I'm concerned about that this amended version of the bill does not accomplish the goals, so, I am again going to be voting against.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from South Berwick, Representative Roberts.

Representative **ROBERTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief. I have never said this, I did not intend on rising, but as the Sponsor of 1751, I will say that to be clear, Report "C" does not mirror that bill and has many significant flaws, and I'll ask my colleagues to follow my light.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Kennebunkport, Representative Gere, having spoken twice requests unanimous consent to address the House for a third time. Hearing no objection, the Representative may proceed.

Representative **GERE**: I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I usually let incorrect information slide if it's not going to influence, but I did want to correct two things. The amended bill that we're looking at does not require a finding of inconsistency and it does not prevent the Office of Community Affairs from reaching out to the community to provide additional information. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Madison, Representative Ducharme.

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most people know that I'm a defender of Home Rule. So, when I look at these things, one of the first things that I do is I do a word search for words like shall and must.

This Amendment has 11 instances of the word shall, and I'd just point out a couple of them. A municipality shall employ the following guidelines consistent with goals of this chapter. The municipality shall establish development standards, shall establish timely permitting procedures, shall ensure that needed public services are available, shall prevent inappropriate development, shall adopt land use policies and ordinances to discourage incompatible development, shall identify which rural areas qualify as critical rural areas. That's too much shall coming out of Augusta for me. I'm voting no.

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

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in opposition, and I just have to say that as we're contemplating this, the question, the general rhetorical question I would have is, why would we consider it appropriate/wise/prudent—whatever word you want to use—to adopt a Report that was submitted not even by a Member of this Body and that none of this Body signed onto in Committee? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 581

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Bunker, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Faircloth, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Osher, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Runte, Sachs, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Skold, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Brennan, Bridgeo, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Frost, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lance, Lanigan, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Milliken, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Roberts, Rollins, Rudnicki, Salisbury, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Crockett, Hasenfus.

Yes, 62; No, 85; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

62 having voted in the affirmative and 85 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR FAILED**.

Subsequently, the House voted to **INSIST**.

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

ENACTORS Acts

An Act Regarding Certain Definitions in the Sales and Use Tax Laws Affecting Rental Equipment

(S.P. 500) (L.D. 1211)
(C. "B" S-432)

An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources
(H.P. 845) (L.D. 1270)
(H. "A" H-771 to C. "A" H-746)

An Act to Fund Collective Bargaining Agreements with Executive Branch Employees and Continue the Voluntary Employee Incentive Program

(H.P. 1335) (L.D. 1987)
(S. "A" S-421; S. "B" S-435)

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.

An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor

(S.P. 218) (L.D. 556)

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

On motion of Representative KESSLER of South Portland, was **SET ASIDE**.

The same Representative **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 Winter Harbor, Representative Faulkingham.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the pending motion.

I think that the people of Maine have had a tough day today. We have implemented a whole pile of taxes that certainly don't target rich people, certainly don't target the wealthy, Mr. Speaker, as we saw in the passionate speech from the Representative from Blue Hill. She is aware, as we are all aware, that the taxes that are soon to be coming on the Maine people are affecting predominantly poor and middle-class Maine people. So, why do we want to make this day worse for them and pass a bill that might not allow them to have oil to heat their homes? That might not allow them to use the heat source of their choice to get through the cold winters in Maine?

Mr. Speaker, I think after today is done, the people of Maine are going to have a hard enough day that we don't need to reject a law that allows people to have the choice of how they heat their homes. I urge the Members to vote yes on the pending motion.

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

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise in support of the pending motion. I don't think it's fair for a municipality to say no, that I can't supplement my heat source with the fuel of my choice, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, we have cold days in winter. And if my heat pump can't keep up and I need to burn propane in my heater to keep my family warm, I should have that right. I ask you to support the pending motion and support individual free choice. Thank you.

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

Representative **KESSLER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that there's a gross misunderstanding of what a municipality seeks to do when they wish to have a building code that has stricter emissions standards than what has existed. And ultimately, what this deals with is new construction when a home is built, it's going to be built right, it's going to be built tight and there's going to be such little energy required, you're not going to need to burn dirty fossil fuels that are more expensive to heat your home.

Towns like mine want to move to a future where we don't have to be breathing our neighbors' exhaust. So, I do not support the pending motion. Thank you very much.

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

Representative **WARREN**: I just wanted to rise briefly in strong opposition to the pending motion.

This bill is propped up and fueled by the fossil fuel industry. We have to let communities in our State make choices on their own. If they want to be more progressive, if they want to think of the future in a way that our State at this level in Augusta can't, we ought to let them do that.

I hope that you'll support the opposition to this pending motion. I hope that you'll support our communities. I hope you'll support a future that can be fossil-fuel-free. This is a prospective piece of legislation. We have to get off fossil fuels, meet the urgency of this moment. I hope that you will read the bill, what's actually before us. I hope that you will vote in opposition to this pending motion and defeat this legislation.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Poland, Representative Boyer.

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2023, approximately 60% of the global electricity was generated from fossil fuels. We're not ready to go full electric, our grid can't handle it and we should preserve choice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remember a few years back when it was being promoted by our forest products industry just how carbon-neutral and how much of a blessing our forest land is. And while that is a big part of our State, there are a lot of folks in rural parts of this State that still do what insurance companies haven't railroaded out of existence, by the way, that still do burn firewood and still do enjoy the warmth of a fire. And I would hate to think that a municipality would get in the way of that.

So, I absolutely believe this bill needs to move forward for that alone, although as others have mentioned for other reasons is good reasons to support it, but I will definitely be sticking with my committee vote, my vote all the way through, and supporting the enactment. Thank you.

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

Representative **ANKELES**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly, I can count votes, but I just want to go on the record and say I fear that this will be one of the more environmentally unfriendly bills that this Legislature ends up sending to the Chief Executive's desk this session. Thank you.

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.

ROLL CALL NO. 582

YEA - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Golek, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lance, Lanigan, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Moonen, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

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

ABSENT - Crockett, Hall, Hasenfus, Sinclair.

Yes, 78; No, 67; Absent, 4; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

78 having voted in the affirmative and 67 voted in the negative, with 4 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

(H.P. 132) (L.D. 210)
(S. "E" S-438 to C. "A" H-759)

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

On motion of Representative FREDETTE of Newport, was **SET ASIDE**.

The same Representative **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: 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.

ROLL CALL NO. 583

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

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

ABSENT - Crockett, Hasenfus.

Yes, 74; No, 73; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

74 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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 Biddeford, Representative Malon.

Representative **MALON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent to address the House on the record.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Biddeford, Representative Malon, has requested unanimous consent to address the House on the record. Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

Representative **MALON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very quick, on this day in 1864, the First Maine Heavy Artillery Regiment division engaged in an assault on a heavily fortified position before Petersburg, Virginia. This resulted in the greatest single loss of life in one Union regiment during the war. All told, the First Maine sustained one of the highest casualty rates in the war, with 423 Mainers killed in combat and another 260 dying of disease.

A monument to the First Maine stands in Petersburg, which is a battle that the Union did not win, but came at a time where the Union's resolve and fighting spirit was well on its way to defeating the forces of tyranny. The First Maine's gold battle flag still hangs sideways in the Hall of Flags, and I found it appropriate to honor our brave forebearers here today.

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

Representative **ARFORD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request permission to speak on the record.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Brunswick, Representative Arford, has requested unanimous consent to address the House on the record. Hearing no objection, it is so ordered. The Member may proceed.

Representative **ARFORD**: Had I been present when the Roll Call votes on LDs 451, 878, 1080 and 14 and 697 were taken, I would have voted in favor, or yea, for all five bills. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to pose a question.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you. So, when we adjourn, we will be coming back presumably, potentially for the Chief Executive's veto day. Is it the intention to adjourn; will we be coming back any other days other than that?

The SPEAKER: At this point, the intention would be to come back to consider objections from the Chief Executive, as well as any bills that are being moved off the Appropriations Table.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matter, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment yesterday, 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 - Report "A" (7) **Ought Not to Pass** - Report "B" (5) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-718)** - Report "C" (1) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-719)** - Committee on **JUDICIARY** on Bill "An Act to Enact the Maine Consumer Data Privacy Act"

(H.P. 710) (L.D. 1088)

TABLED - June 16, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative KUHN of Falmouth.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF ANY REPORT.**

READ.

Representative KUHN of Falmouth moved that the House **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought Not to Pass.**

Representative POIRIER of Skowhegan **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought Not 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 Rumford, Representative Henderson.

Representative **HENDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. You know, given the subject matter that I've debated in this House over the last couple months, from guns to babies to transgender issues, it's interesting that I find myself the most nervous to debate privacy. And I think maybe perhaps because it's something that I never intended to be really passionate about, but I just; I inherited that passion maybe due to, out of necessity, where the Judiciary Committee has worked on this; at least the Judiciary Committee I've been on has worked on this the last couple probably two and a half years.

Just for a little bit of a history lesson, and I'll do my best not to make this super long. I understand this is one of the last, I think, maybe 20 bills that we'll take up tonight, and I'm between everyone and summer vacation, so. But this is a rather complex issue. I think the concept of privacy in general is relatively simple, but the implementation of it is rather complex.

So, the bills that we have before you are a product of a number of years of work, and those years go beyond just the Members that are in this room right now. There are former State Senators that have a hand in this, a former Representative from Saco, I hope that she's blessed and well and healthy wherever she is tonight. And I don't want to exaggerate, but maybe a hundred or more, probably more than a hundred of hours of just committee work, not including the meetings and Zoom calls and 11:00 p.m. readings.

So, the bill that, or technically, bills that we have before us, and my hope is that the Body would allow some leniency here as we talk about this bill, because the Minority Report is actually the one that I'm referring to as the Ought Not to Pass, and then there's another Minority Report that's a competing bill. But the measure that you have in front of us is a result of a piece of legislation that came out of the Judiciary Committee at the end of the 131st. That measure and its competing measure were effectively voted down at the end of legislative session of last year. And the bill that you have before you right now is actually the only true bipartisan piece of legislation when it comes to privacy that this Body is going to take up this year. It is a true bipartisan effort. It was a bipartisan effort in the 131st. The language that you see in the, I think, the 15- or 18-page bill is the result of work that was done by the Representative from South Berwick and the Representative from Rumford, which happens to be me.

So, this is a true bipartisan effort. And again, although the implementation is complex, the idea is super simple. What this bill does is it simply tells businesses what information they can collect and then what they can or can't do with it once that information is collected. I think that we can all understand and recognize, or at least most of us can recognize that it's really imperative that Maine has a strong data privacy law. It was quite evident in 2023, it was evident in 2024 and here we stand in 2025, we need a comprehensive consumer data privacy plan. And we need one that strikes a balance between consumer privacy and the ability for our businesses and our small businesses to continue to do their everyday marketing. And I'm not here to tell you that I think that my bill is 100% perfect or that it's not going to need tweaks in the future, but I am here to tell you that this bill does not take it too far. And I know that there are competing measures in front of this Body that do.

I don't need to tell us how many small businesses are in the State or how they're a cornerstone of our economy or our workforce, we all know that, that might take me too long, but let's just imagine that I laid that all out in front of you, how important small businesses are. To build on that foundation, there's a couple things that this bill does I think that differs from the competing measure. One is it puts the consumer; that is you, Mr. Speaker, and every Member in this Body. I think there was a joke made earlier in this session that some of us have done some Amazon shopping maybe while sitting in this Chamber. Well, I would also argue that a number of us have done Google searches and X searches and right now, our information is being tracked. But this bill puts the consumer, you, in the driver's seat of how you want businesses to handle your private information.

There are a number of guidelines on the kind of information that can be collected. First, any information a business collects must be relevant and it has to be necessary in relation to the

purpose that they're collecting it. So, Mr. Speaker, if you decide that you want to go buy another red tie—I like red, and red looks good on you—if you want to go buy another red tie from an online source, they don't necessarily need to know what color hair you have. So, this would direct businesses that they can't collect information that's not relevant to the purchase. But this also gives consumers the freedom to choose what's done with their information.

So, there's some information businesses simply need to know. If you go and order online, a business needs to know where to ship your product, so, they have to know your address, right? They have to know your name. They probably have to know what credit card that you're using in order for you to pay for it, so, there's some info that they need to know, but this makes it so that the consumers can choose what is done with their information while it's in the possession of that business. This empowers consumers with clear right to access, can correct any data or even request that the controller or the business delete any of that data. And there's opt-out of processing of personal data for targeted advertising.

I know that there have been; I think we use the fancy word misrepresentation, but there have been some lies that have tried to discredit the consent piece. And one of the lies that I've heard in reference specifically to this bill when trying to discredit consent, a consumer's consent for a business to use their information, is, well, how good is consent if it's buried somewhere in a privacy notice? Well, I would have to agree with you. And although I'm not the smartest person in the room, it's one of the reasons I enjoy being a legislator is I'm never the smartest person in the room, I myself and the other states that have already put this and implemented this recognize that consent doesn't have any value if it can simply be buried in a privacy notice. That's why the language before you is carefully crafted to ensure that it can't be buried in a privacy notice. And it does that in a couple ways. One, you have the overall privacy notice, which is kind of a main umbrella that talks about what categories of personal data that you have, why they're processing your data, what your rights are as a consumer, but then there's also that smaller piece which is a notice of sale or targeted advertising. And this is the real crux, right? This is the big one. And this is really where the two bills completely differ, or I should say, one of the ways that the bills completely differ is when it comes to the notice of sale of targeted advertising.

Now, if any of you have ever searched anything on Google or maybe mentioned to your significant other that you wanted to go on a trip and then, a couple days later, Facebook has these advertisements, right? So, I went and I searched a couple years ago and I bought a bass guitar. And on my personal computer, I googled Guitar Center, went on, purchased a bass guitar. Like 12 hours later, I'm scrolling through Facebook and I've never seen Guitar Center as an ad on Facebook in my life, but there it is, offering me like 18% off of the bass guitar I just bought. So, it was maybe not as intuitive as I want them to be when they're targeted advertising, I wouldn't've minded the discount a little bit before that, but that's the targeted advertising piece, right? Well, when it comes to the notice of sale or targeted advertising, if a business or a controller sells or uses personal data for targeted advertising, that's the big if, they must, must, must clearly and conspicuously disclose that they are doing that with your information. It can't be buried somewhere, it can't be five pages deep in a consent form. And consent has to be given by the customer, it must be explicit, informed and freely given. And Mr. Speaker, affirmative consent is not simply agreeing to terms and conditions. And how they do that is it has to be done through a conspicuous link. That link has to say, do not sell my personal

data. I don't think it can get any more inconspicuous, or conspicuous than that, rather. Or a clear and conspicuous link that says, opt me out of targeted advertising. Or they can simply put the links together.

Now, why do I feel like it's important for a customer to choose what businesses do with their information? And contrary to the opposing measure that's in front of us, there's some information businesses simply can't collect. Which means if I go buy a canoe on L.L. Bean and I want 20% off of an oar, I can't opt in to that. I can't opt in to targeted advertising.

And I understand that this floor speech may be taking longer than some appreciate, but I will just say that there have been a number of bills that have come before this Body that I have kept my mouth shut on, because there are other Members who have been passionate about an issue and cared about an issue. And although I might have intellect on it, this is a team and this is a group and we're working towards the same goal. So, I understand that this is probably not the most exciting floor speech that you've ever heard. I can try to make it funnier if you guys want, but I'm wrapping it up here for those who are concerned with the length of my speech.

So, when it comes to the notice of sale or advertising, in order for a business to do targeted advertising, I have to opt in to that, right? So, me, as a consumer, has to say yes, I want it. So, the consent piece is huge.

And I guess I'll wrap up by just talking about the importance of uniformity. And for Members on the Committee, I think a couple of you just rolled your eyes or maybe groaned a little bit, because uniformity has been talked about a lot. Currently, there are 17 other states who have implemented this framework across the nation. And typically, I don't really care what other states do, because other states aren't Maine and we have our own framework set up, we have our own things set up. So, what other states do, when I think about other legislation, typically doesn't play a role. But with this, it really does. The interstate operability is necessary when it comes to businesses, especially when it comes to businesses with New Hampshire. New Hampshire is our only border state and New Hampshire is one of the three New England states that have implemented this framework. It's less confusing for businesses, it's cheaper to follow, it makes digital businesses easier. When privacy laws are the same, sharing data and doing online businesses across states becomes simpler and safer.

And I guess the last thing I'll say is I've heard this bill over the last few days, I know that this has been a pretty hot topic in caucuses. I've heard this bill referred to as a really bad Republican privacy bill. And I will say only one of those things is true. It is a privacy bill. There are 17 other states who have implemented this and this is not a Republican bill. Of those 17 other states, at the time that this framework was implemented, nine of them were under Democrat control and eight of them were under Republican control. This is truly a bipartisan effort and it's one that really strikes a balance between consumer protection, ensuring that the customer knows what's happening with their information, can tell the business what's happening with their information and it also ensures that businesses can still use that information, with the consumer consent, can use that information to advertise for their business.

So, I would encourage my colleagues that are so inclined, that have not been bored by hours of caucus meetings, to please vote down the Ought Not to Pass and really give this privacy bill an opportunity here to make it to the next level. Thank you.

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

Representative **KUHN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's true that from shopping to dating, health care to banking, entertainment to travel, every swipe, scroll and click we make generates a trail of data that can be deeply revealing. No doubt, these linkings can produce convenient results; however, left unchecked, this vast trove of data makes us vulnerable to a myriad of risks including civil rights violations, identity theft, financial exploitation and unlawful discrimination. This includes harms that are happening right now, even in states that have enacted this same type of bill that is under consideration, and I'll get into why that is or how that is, but first, what is this vast data collection allowing?

First, let's talk about civil rights. In the area of policing, police departments can now circumvent warrant requirements by buying sensitive data directly in the marketplace, including geolocation data, without a warrant. This enables police to place certain devices in the vicinity of a crime scene, for example. Or in states where abortion is banned, can buy geolocation data with data from a period tracker app to identify where and when reproductive health care was provided. This type of data collection is truly the arena for reproductive surveillance.

Let's talk about discrimination. The use of sensitive data in AI decision making algorithms has resulted in numerous negative outcomes. For example, a University of Chicago study recently found that Facebook's algorithm used personal data to deploy targeted housing advertisement that discriminated against Black, Hispanic and Asian users by offering higher interest rates to some applicants over others. Similarly, data about gender has been used to filter job postings based on historical gender stereotypes. So, showing, for example, ads for mechanics more frequently to men and ads for preschool teachers more frequently to women.

And then, that gets us to the risk of breach. Cyberattacks and subsequent data breaches are ubiquitous and pose significant threats to consumers' personal and financial security. Limiting collection on the amount of sensitivity of personal data on the internet helps us reduce the risk of sensitive information falling into the wrong hands. And I can't overstate the frequency and the profundity of these data breaches. Just in 2024, United Healthcare had a breach that put the personal medical information on one-third of all Americans at risk.

So, here is the problem, bills like the one before us that are in place in other states purport to protect consumers but, in fact, they allow these harms to persist. These state-level laws are based on a consumer consent model which does offer consumers some new rights. For example, they can request and correct and delete data that has been collected about them. However, the fundamental check on business practices remains with the businesses. It is contained in the privacy policy the company writes for itself, allowing a company to collect, process and sell any data at all, so long as their practices are disclosed in the terms and conditions page and the consumer consents. Yet who is reading the terms and conditions pages? Almost no one. In fact, a 2023 study showed that it would take the average American consumer 46.6 hours to read the privacy policies of the typical websites they visit in a month. That is more than one full work week per month reading privacy policies. And that is why people don't do it. They click allow or accept or whatever the prompt may be, so that they can get on to do whatever task they want to be doing and that results in practice in no informed consent at all.

This bill also critically goes beyond legalizing the harmful practices that are leading to the outcomes I described previously, but goes past it to remove existing consumer protections here in Maine under Maine's internet service provider law, which with limited exceptions provides broadband internet service providers from using, disclosing, selling and giving access to customers' personal information without affirmative consent. Consumers have to access their ISP to get on the internet. They have no choice. And the ISP has access to troves of information. This current law is an extra protection enjoyed by Maine consumers that would be stripped away with the adoption of this legislation.

If we accept this bill today, we will legalize the very data collection and sale practices that have led to the legal civil rights violations, identify theft, financial exploitation and discrimination described earlier and make us more vulnerable to data currently collected under the ISP laws. I urge my colleagues to support the pending motion and reject this bill to protect Maine consumers.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rumford, Representative Henderson.

Representative **HENDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in case my first floor speech wasn't long enough, I thought I'd add a couple of remarks.

You know, I understand and can respect some of the concerns from the Representative from Falmouth. Her and I have actually been working together for two years, seatmates, actually, on this issue in the Judiciary Committee. So, although we've come to different conclusions, we've heard a lot of the same concerns.

You know, this bill being marketed as an anti-internet service provider or an ISP repeal bill; yes, I did implement a repeal of the internet service provider law. But if we take a look at the history from the research I've done, when the ISP law was first implemented, the Attorney General came forward, their office came forward and said that they needed a large Fiscal Note, that they needed additional positions to be added in order to be able to enforce this law. While an Amendment was added to the original bill, that was never adopted. So, I suppose if I was an internet service provider and there was a law on the books with no teeth that told me how to interact with consumer data, I would probably not want that repealed, either. But currently, right now, if we adopt the opposing measure, we're going to have an internet service provider privacy law plus a new privacy law, where it directly conflicts with each other, where in some instances, a consumer or a business internet service provider is going to be required to have a consumer both opt in and opt out of certain measures. So, the repeal of the internet service provider piece is incredibly important.

You know, it was mentioned the United Healthcare was breached, their information was breached and as terrible as that is, either of these privacy laws wouldn't impact that, because there are full exemptions for health care providers.

The statement that, under this measure, that consumers could sell any data is simply not true, and I think I outlined that in my first testimony. And then, as far as the 46.6 hours it would take to read privacy policies, that's why this language specifically tells the controller and the businesses that the privacy notice must be easily accessible, clear, meaningful and in plain language that's understandable by a reasonable consumer.

So, I think that that dispels all of the concerns from the Representative from Falmouth. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Pugh.

Representative **PUGH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in regretful support of the pending motion and in opposition to 1088. And I say regretful only because I hate to be on the other side of the issue from my Good Friend from Rumford, who I agree with very often. But we've ended up on different sides of this, and I'd like to take a minute to explain why that is. Specifically, I'd like to talk about the kind of information that ISPs have about us and why I believe it's so important that we keep every available protection in place.

During the course of our Committee work, we had the ISPs come to us and state that they didn't feel they had actually very detailed information about us. And Mr. Speaker, I'm a curious person and I have a little bit of technical expertise, so, I decided to run a little experiment. So, for one Sunday last month, I decided to capture all of my own internet traffic to simulate what the ISP was seeing about what I was doing. And quite frankly, I was shocked by what I found. I actually wanted to print it out and bring it with me, but there was an issue, because it was more than 700 pages long for 24 hours. And the thing to understand about this is that this is not just capturing when I go to Google and I type in a URL or I type in a search. Every single device on our networks, whether it's a phone or a toaster, is constantly pinging telemetry servers, constantly sending information about what we're doing back home. And what this means is that for just me, one person, computer and a cell phone, I sent out over 18,000 records for just a 24-hour period. And when you drill down into this information, the granularity is frankly quite remarkable. You can see every kind of device that I have on my network, you can see when it's activated. You can see what kind of security system I have. You can see when I arm it and when I disarm it. You can see when people come over to my house, because the internet traffic spikes. You can see down to the minute what time I go to bed at night and get up in the morning. And this is only over 24 hours. If you start to take this and expand it out to a week, a month, a year and what you do is you take that and then you combine it with the amount of digital information. So, now you have physical telemetry and you have digital telemetry. And if you combine those two things, what you end up with is a shockingly accurate profile about me that is extremely valuable not just to advertisers, but also to every single cybercriminal in the world who would love to get access to that.

This is where I'm at with this, Mr. Speaker, is these corporations have a truly shocking amount of information on us already. It is growing by the minute, as we speak, right now. And we as guardians of the public trust should do everything we possibly can to zealously guard this sensitive information. And with due respect to all of the work that I know went into 1088, I can't support it, because I think that the goal is to have strong, strong safeguards and to minimize the data that is being collected. That's what I think the way forward is, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Caratunk, Representative Caruso.

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today not only as a legislator, but as a small business owner and a prior small business owner. And I know, you know, I'm someone who knows firsthand what it takes to build a business from the bottom up. Over the course of several years, my business partner and I, and later my husband and I, poured ourselves out into small businesses. An outfitter shop, bed and breakfast, an outdoor recreation outfitter that was part of the

recreational tourism industry and hospitality industry that much of Maine, given we are the Vacationland state, relies on.

We navigated the unique mix of challenges that many seasonal businesses in rural Maine experience, like the limited season that brings customers in. I also co-founded the Forks Area Chamber of Commerce to work hand in hand with local small businesses that created and creates our local economy. We all do what we do because we believe in the unique treasures which Maine offers, the people who live and work here in Maine and the need for a strong and versatile local economy to support our communities. As legislators, we can't ignore the realities of running a business in the 21st century. Today, if a customer from New York or Massachusetts or even right here in Maine wants to find a place to stay, to fish, to raft, to experience Maine's incredible outdoors, that discovery starts online. The way small businesses reach new customers is through digital tools that help connect the right service to the right person at the right time.

The Report "C" would limit Maine businesses' ability to reach new consumers with their services and products by only allowing targeted ads if a consumer goes directly to a specific business's website. That's a big if. This would put small businesses at a major disadvantage to large national establishments that are located in Maine.

Representative **LEE**: Point of Order.

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair will inquire as to why the Representative from Auburn, Representative Lee, has raised a Point of Order.

Representative **LEE**: Mr. Speaker, I believe that we're discussing Report "A." The Representative's comments are geared towards Report "C" at the moment.

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative LEE of Auburn asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative CARUSO of Caratunk were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Chair has provided tremendous latitude to discuss the topic at hand at large, which, when you have an Ought Not to Pass Report before you, it's kind of hard not to discuss the underlying matter.

The Chair advised that the remarks of Representative CARUSO of Caratunk were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you. So, what I'm saying is we don't want to put small businesses at a disadvantage to large national establishments that are located in Maine or located in New Hampshire or in nearby competing areas. We need to have data privacy that protects consumers and Maine's small businesses. You know, small businesses don't have a big IT department, they don't have big marketing departments. Maine's economy is powered by small businesses and we need policies that support their growth rather than undermine it. So, for that reason, I am opposing the Ought Not to Pass, and I'm supporting small businesses for Report "B."

If we really care about consumers having a say in their data, then we need to vote Ought Not to Pass on this and support the people of Maine by giving them control over their data. Mainers do need data privacy legislation, but it has to be a balance between consumer protection and small businesses with consumer consent to be able to use the information that is available for both parties to be successful. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Auburn, Representative Lee.

Representative **LEE**: Mr. Speaker, this bill will not reduce the data that Big Tech is able to collect from us. How do I know this? Because Big Tech likes this bill and they hate the other bill. Why do they hate the other bill? Because it will limit the

amount of data they can collect from us. That's what they've told us at work session after work session after work session. My friend from Rumford said she heard it called a Republican bill. I don't call this a Republican bill, I call it a Big Tech bill. It's the fox guarding the henhouse and our data, our children's data, well, that's the hens. Please oppose the motion.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 584

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Cloutier, Cluchey, Copeland, Crafts, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Faircloth, Farrin, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, 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, Skold, Soboleski, Stover, Supica, Terry, Walker, Warren, Webb, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

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

ABSENT - Crockett, Hasenfus.

Yes, 77; No, 70; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 2.

77 having voted in the affirmative and 70 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought Not to Pass** was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

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 Winter Harbor, Representative Faulkingham.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the House in possession of LD 556?

The SPEAKER: The Chair understands that LD 556 is being held by another Member.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, having voted on the prevailing side of the last action on LD 556, I move to Reconsider.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would inform the Representative from Winter Harbor, Representative Faulkingham, that it is the tradition and custom of the Chamber that only the Member who has requested the hold can move to Reconsider.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Auburn, Representative Libby.

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to speak on the record.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Auburn, Representative Libby, requests unanimous consent to address the House on the record. The Chair would inquire, first and foremost, for the purpose to which the Member will be rising, knowing the Member is currently --

Representative **LIBBY**: There is no bill before us. Thus, I will not be participating in debate. I simply want to be heard on the record.

The SPEAKER: The Member may not proceed. The Chair will inform the Body the Representative from Auburn will have an opportunity to address the House at a point in which we have completed the work that's before us.

SENATE PAPERS
Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act to Clarify Tariff Rates for Nonresidential Customers Participating in Net Energy Billing with a Distributed Generation Resource"

(H.P. 1188) (L.D. 1777)

PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-756) in the House on June 18, 2025.

Came from the Senate **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-756) AS AMENDED BY SENATE AMENDMENT "A" (S-439)** thereto in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **FOSTER**: Mr. Speaker, if there's any Member in the House that could provide the details of the Senate Amendment to LD 1777, could they do so now, please?

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Dexter, Representative Foster, has posed a question through the Chair to any Member who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Scarborough, Representative Warren.

Representative **WARREN**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to answer the question.

This is a technical amendment I worked on with our Public Advocate. It clarifies the phase-out of the program, moving it up from June 2026 to December 2025, and more technically defines the terms of the phase-out for these projects. Further and finally, it makes clear that the phase-out means no NEB agreements can be entered into after December 31, 2025, under this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, as someone who supports this Amendment for the record and to avoid any future misinterpretation or application of this new Statute language, it is my intent in supporting this amended bill that we have a firm deadline which protects Maine ratepayers to the greatest extent. Our intent here is not to create yet another easily fungible system for the solar industry fraught with loopholes and gray areas, but a hard and firm deadline with which every

requirement must be legitimately met by the solar developers benefiting from the net energy billing program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Subsequently, the House voted to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

ENACTORS
Act

An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Laws
(H.P. 1169) (L.D. 1751)
(C. "A" H-766)

Was 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.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (S.C. 560)

MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

June 18, 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 Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report and Engrossed Bill "An Act to Exempt Electronic Smoking Devices or Other Tobacco Products Containing Ingestible Hemp from the Tax Imposed on Tobacco Products" (S.P. 767) (L.D. 1960) and all accompanying papers in non-concurrence.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (S.C. 561)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

June 18, 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 Indefinitely Postponed Bill "An Act to Protect Health Care Workers by Addressing Assaults in Health Care Settings" (H.P. 351) (L.D. 532) and all accompanying papers in non-concurrence.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (S.C. 564)

**MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

June 18, 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 Report "C" Ought to Pass as Amended Report and Engrossed Bill "An Act to Revise the Growth Management Program Laws" (H.P. 1299) (L.D. 1940) 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** with the exception of matters being held.

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Resolution: (S.P. 795)

**JOINT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE OBSERVANCE
OF JUNETEENTH ON JUNE 19, 2025**

WHEREAS, for 158 years, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, also known as Emancipation Day, Emancipation Celebration, Freedom Day, Juneteenth Independence Day and Juneteenth, has been one of the most recognized African-American holiday observances in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the day freedom was proclaimed to all slaves in the South by Union General Gordon Granger, on June 19, 1865 in Galveston, Texas, more than 2 1/2 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the determination of the first people from Africa, approximately 11,500,000 of whom survived the awful voyages across the Atlantic and who were brought to this country and enslaved in chattel slavery and

whose descendants served as slaves for 200 years before the horrific institution of chattel slavery was abolished; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of chattel slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, over a century after the Emancipation Proclamation and after years of informal annual celebration, Juneteenth was declared a federal holiday in 2021 by the President of the United States and the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, "Until All are Free, None are Free" is an oft-repeated maxim that can be used to highlight the significance of the end of the era of chattel slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth became an official state holiday in Maine in 2022; and

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize the historical significance of Juneteenth in order to advance racial equity, human dignity and justice; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, recognize the observance of Juneteenth on June 19, 2025, and encourage people in our State to participate in Juneteenth observances.

Came from the Senate, **READ and ADOPTED.**

READ and ADOPTED in concurrence.

ENACTORS

Act

An Act to Exempt Nonprofit Agricultural Membership Organizations from Insurance Requirements

(S.P. 381) (L.D. 893)

(C. "A" S-59)

Was 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.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

SENATE DIVIDED REPORT - Report "A" (6) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-252)** - Report "B" (6) **Ought Not to Pass** - Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** on Bill "An Act to Create the Small Business Capital Savings Account Program"

(S.P. 95) (L.D. 195)

- In Senate, Report "A" **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED READ and ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-252).**

TABLED - June 5, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative MOONEN of Portland.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF EITHER REPORT.**

On motion of Representative GERE of Kennebunkport, Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended** was **ACCEPTED.**

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-252)** 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-252)** in concurrence.

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

ENACTORS Act

An Act to Reduce Costs and Increase Customer Protections for the State's Net Energy Billing Programs
(H.P. 1188) (L.D. 1777)
(S. "A" S-439 to C. "A" H-756)

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

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Camden, Representative Doudera.

Representative **DOUDERA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief, I'm not going to Roll Call this, but I just wanted to express my concerns and kind of implore the Public Advocate if she is listening that, you know, we have a lot of folks who did buy into the community solar model and also a lot of municipalities who have been working really, really hard to adopt clean energy. And I'm just really hoping that she's going to keep them in mind and kind of usher them along, so that they can see these projects through to fruition, because, you know, this was good for our State, ultimately, and I feel like they've got a little bit hanging in the wind. But I see the way that things are going, I see the way the sun is shining, I'm not going to make a big deal about this, but I just wanted to speak up for those communities who already had things in the pipeline, that they can hopefully get them finished. Thank you.

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

Representative **WARREN**: I just wanted to rise briefly in support of the pending motion and also to just thank the Good Representative from Camden.

I just want to state that if we want to sustain public support for the clean energy transition, we have got to ensure that these costs are not unfairly growing or that they're not unfairly passed on to those who can least afford to pay them. We need to ensure that this program and these rates are sustainable, and that is what LD 1777 does. It's a very carefully thought out, well considered, quite nuanced and also at times, difficult choices had to be made and we made them in a cooperative, collaborative, over a long period of time, with a wide variety of stakeholders. Our intent here is to protect ratepayers, to preserve our commitment to renewables, but fix a program that if left unchecked threatens both. None of the choices before us are easy, there's many protections particularly for consumers, for municipalities, for the community solar model, but climate change and our fight for it demands fairness, it demands justice. Climate change, it demands we consider economic fairness if we want to see a future for clean energy investment.

For all of those reasons, I hope that you will support this current motion. Deep respect and thanks to all who have been a part of this process. I think this is a difficult decision but I also think it's the right one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Subsequently, the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Order: (S.P. 796)

ORDERED, the House concurring, that when the Senate and House adjourn, they do so until the call of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, respectively.

Came from the Senate, **READ** and **PASSED**.
READ and **PASSED** in concurrence.

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 Auburn, Representative Libby.

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to speak on the record.

Numerous Representatives **OBJECTED** to Representative LIBBY of Auburn speaking on the record.

The SPEAKER: This Chair will order a division. If you're in favor of the Member from Auburn having her comments on the record, you will vote yes, if you are opposed, you will vote no.

The Chair ordered a division on the request of Representative LIBBY of Auburn to speak on the record.

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

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Mr. Speaker --

The SPEAKER: The Chair would ask the Representative from Auburn to not be standing while other Members are addressing the Body. That's pretty much the practice here. The Member may proceed.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Mr. Speaker, I rise with a concern that we're objecting to a Member of this Body having the opportunity to speak on the record. Mr. Speaker, it's nearly a daily occurrence that this occurs. If this is going to be the practice going forward, I will object to any Member on the other side that wants to speak on the record, Mr. Speaker. I request a Roll Call.

Representative **GREENWOOD** of Wales **REQUESTED** a roll call on the request of Representative LIBBY of Auburn to speak on the record.

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 Portland, Representative Moonen.

Representative **MOONEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just would hope that you would repeat; if someone objects to unanimous consent to address the House on the record, then the House decides by majority vote. Is that correct?

The SPEAKER: The Chair answers in the affirmative. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Belgrade, Representative Frost.

Representative **FROST**: Mr. Speaker, I just have a question. I would like to pose a question. If this might be an apology, I'd be happy to vote yes.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bridgton, Representative Cimino.

Representative **CIMINO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a question for clarification. So, my understanding is that the Representative from Auburn should be able to vote, but she cannot speak, correct?

The SPEAKER: The Chair will; the Member from Auburn is able to make procedural motions, which inherently require someone to speak. However, the Member may not engage in debate. The Representative from Bridgton, Representative Cimino, may proceed.

Representative **CIMINO**: Thank you. So, she is able to vote, correct?

The SPEAKER: The Member has been voting. I think we've both seen that.

Representative **CIMINO**: Okay, so, may I continue?

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **CIMINO**: Thank you. So, for her to be able to then go ahead and log her votes, her past votes from when she was not able to vote because she was not here, that would require her to speak, but it's not during debate, so, why is she not being allowed to speak and do her votes?

The SPEAKER: The question before the Body is not whether or not the Member will be allowed to speak. The question before the Body is whether or not the Member will be allowed to have her remarks be on the record or off the record. Regardless of what the outcome of the vote, the Member will be able to log into the Chamber's atmosphere how she would have voted had she been able to on these Roll Calls. The Member may proceed.

Representative **CIMINO**: So, why is she not entitled to be able to go ahead and have it on the record and speak on the record to her votes only? She's not debating anything, she's not in violation of the censure, she's just vocalizing and on the record what her votes are.

The SPEAKER: In order for a Member to have their remarks on the record, it's always; the Chair has done this previously many times. During announcements, a Member asks for unanimous consent to address the House on the record, and that requires the unanimous consent. If one Member objects, we take a vote, as we are about to do so right now.

The Chair recognizes the Representative from Buxton, Representative Carlow.

Representative **CARLOW**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no quibble with your interpretation of the unanimous consent process, but I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **CARLOW**: Is it true that a Member can direct a question to another Member and their response is not considered rising for a third time in debate, so therefore, the rule wouldn't need to be suspended if they had already risen twice to speak on a motion?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would; I believe the Chair will answer in the affirmative to the Member's question, that if a Member wishes to rise for a third time in the course of the debate, it requires the consent of the Body for the Member to rise for a third time. The Member may proceed.

Representative **CARLOW**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a Member posed a question to the Body through the Chair and a

Member who had already risen twice previously on that same question pressed their button to speak to answer the question that was posed through the Chair, is that considered debate?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would answer in the affirmative, that if a Member rises for a third time to answer a question, that is not considered part of the debate. The Member may proceed.

Representative **CARLOW**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, since answering a question is not considered debate, is it also true that I could pose a question through the Chair to the Representative from Auburn with respect to how she would have cast her votes had she been present on those Roll Calls?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would inform the Member that debate has to be related to an item. There is no item before the Body at the moment. The item before the Body is speaking on the record. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Sanford, Representative Lanigan.

Representative **LANIGAN**: Sorry, I meant to push the yes button for consent to speak. Sorry.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Auburn, Representative Lee.

Representative **LEE**: May I ask a question to the Speaker?

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **LEE**: I'm curious, whether on or off the record, when someone speaks the votes that they would have taken, do those count as official votes, or are they merely symbolic, performative and have the same effect if they were spoken on a Facebook Live, for instance?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would answer in the affirmative. They do not reflect on someone's voting record. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Berwick, Representative Lavigne.

Representative **LAVIGNE**: I just want to take this opportunity to say anything that's ever gone wrong or if anybody had a bad day, it was probably my fault and I'm very sorry. Can I go home now?

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Moonen.

Representative **MOONEN**: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pose two questions to the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **MOONEN**: Would a motion to Adjourn be in order at this point, and if so, is it debatable?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would answer in the affirmative. A motion to Adjourn is in order and a motion to Adjourn is not debatable.

Representative **MOONEN** of Portland moved that the House stand **ADJOURN** until the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, respectively, pursuant to the Joint Order (S.P. 796).

Representative **GREENWOOD** of Wales **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ADJOURN** until the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, respectively, pursuant to the Joint Order (S.P. 796).

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 Sanford, Representative Lanigan.

Representative **LANIGAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Point of Order, there's already a question laid on the Table that we have not addressed yet.

The SPEAKER: The motion to Adjourn takes precedent over the question that's before us.

Representative **LANIGAN**: Even though we're *sine die* and we've been called back? No?

The SPEAKER: We're not Adjourning without day. That's not what the Joint Order said.

Representative GREENWOOD of Wales moved that the House stand **ADJOURNED WITHOUT DAY**.

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on his motion to **ADJOURN WITHOUT DAY**.

The SPEAKER: The House will be at ease. We have to determine whether or not a motion to Adjourn without day takes precedent over just a simple motion to Adjourn.

At this point, the House went at ease pending a Ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER: In accordance with *Mason's Rule 445*, Part 2, the Body cannot Adjourn *sine die* without consent of the Other Body. The Senate has gone for the day and can't consent. The motion is not in order. The motion in order is Adjournment, a Roll Call is in order.

The Chair **RULED** that the motion of Representative GREENWOOD of Wales was out of order pursuant to Section 445 of *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure*.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is to Adjourn pursuant to the Joint Order (S.P. 796). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 585

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Foley, Foster, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hall, Hepler, Jackson, Javner, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lanigan, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Osher, Parry, Pluecker, Poirier, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Skold, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Webb, White R, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Flynn, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Hymes, Lance, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Olsen, Paul, Perkins, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmursal-Burgess, Smith, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, Wood P, Woodsome, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Crockett, Hasenfus, Pomerleau, Soboleski, Underwood.

Yes, 96; No, 48; Absent, 5; Excused, 2.

96 having voted in the affirmative and 48 voted in the negative, with 5 being absent and 2 excused, and accordingly the House adjourned at 9:38 p.m., until the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, respectively, pursuant to the Joint Order (S.P. 796).