

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE  
SECOND REGULAR SESSION  
15th Legislative Day  
Wednesday, February 21, 2024

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

Prayer by Reverend Kerry Mansir, Christ Episcopal Church, Gardiner.

National Anthem by Sammie Angel, Dixfield.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Medical Provider of the Day, Susan Davis Doughty, MSN, AGNP, WHNP-BC, FAANP, Scarborough.

The Journal of yesterday was read and approved.

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At this point, a message came from the Senate borne by Senator DAUGHTRY of Cumberland of that Body, proposing a Joint Convention of both branches of the Legislature to be held in the Hall of the House at 10:45 in the morning for the purpose of extending to the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court, and members of the Judiciary, an invitation to attend the Joint Convention and to make such communication as pleases the Chief Justice.

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Thereupon the House voted to concur in the proposal for a Joint Convention to be held at 10:45 in the morning and the Speaker appointed Representative TERRY of Gorham to convey this message to the Senate.

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**COMMUNICATIONS**

The Following Communication: (H.C. 419)

**STATE OF MAINE  
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT  
163 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0163**

January 12, 2024

Sen. Troy D. Jackson, President of the Senate  
131st Maine Legislature  
Senate President's Office

SHS #3, State House  
Augusta, ME 04333

Rep. Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House  
131st Maine Legislature

SHS #2, State House  
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross,  
I am pleased to accept the invitation to address a Joint Session of the 131st Maine Legislature on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 10:45 a.m. I look forward to discussing the challenges faced and successes achieved by the Maine Judicial Branch over the last year, and an overview of the progress we hope to make in 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,  
S/Valerie Stanfill  
Chief Justice

**READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (H.C. 420)

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

January 24, 2024

The Honorable Troy Jackson  
President, State of Maine Senate  
#3 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

The Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross  
Speaker, State of Maine House of Representatives  
#2 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

Thank you for your invitation to a Joint Session of the 131st Maine Legislature for the State of the Judiciary address to take place on February 21st at 10:45 am in the House Chamber.

I am pleased to accept your invitation.

Sincerely,  
S/Janet T. Mills  
Governor

**READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

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The Following Communication: (H.C. 421)

**STATE OF MAINE  
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HOUSING**

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Troy Jackson  
President of the Senate

The Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross

Speaker of the House of Representatives  
131st Legislature

State House

Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

Please accept this letter as the report of the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing from its review and evaluation of the Department of Labor under the State Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Act, the committee notified the Department by letter dated April 20, 2023 of its intent to conduct a review. The Department submitted its program evaluation report on November 1, 2023.

The committee has reviewed the report and unanimously finds that the Department of Labor is operating within its statutory authority.

Sincerely,  
S/Mike Tipping  
Senate Chair  
S/Amy Roeder  
House Chair

**READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (H.C. 422)

**STATE OF MAINE  
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY**

February 16, 2024

The Honorable Troy D. Jackson, President of the Senate  
The Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
131st Legislature  
State House  
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:  
Please accept this letter as the report of the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology from its review and evaluation of the Maine Municipal and Rural Electrification Cooperative Agency (MMRECA) under the State Government Evaluation Act, Title 3, Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35.

The committee finds that MMRECA's operations are within its statutory authority. We note that MMRECA has not implemented any programs or projects; however, the committee does not recommend any changes to the agency's powers or duties at this time.

Sincerely,  
S/Mark W. Lawrence  
Senate Chair  
S/Stanley Paige Zeigler, Jr.  
House Chair

**READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (H.C. 423)

**STATE OF MAINE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SPEAKER'S OFFICE  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002**

February 21, 2024  
Honorable Robert B. Hunt  
Clerk of the House  
2 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Clerk Hunt:  
Please be advised that pursuant to her authority, Governor Janet T. Mills has nominated the following:  
on February 16, 2024

Kossi Gamedah of Falmouth, Anne Roosevelt of Embden and Peter DelGreco of North Yarmouth for reappointment to the Maine Community College System Board of Trustees.

Pursuant to Title 20-A, MRSA §12705, these reappointments are contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

Mark R. Gardener of Kittery, William B. Eisenhardt of Castine and Anthony Hall of Winterport for appointment to the Maine Maritime Academy Board of Trustees.

Pursuant to Title 5 §12004-C and Public Law 1941, c. 37, §1, as amended by P&SL 1993, c. 27, §1, these appointments are contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

Sincerely,  
S/Rachel Talbot Ross  
Speaker of the House

**READ and with accompanying papers ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

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

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEE**

**Ought to Pass Pursuant to Resolve**

Representative BRENNAN for the **Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs** on Resolve, Directing the State Board of Education to Amend Chapter 115: The Credentialing of Education Personnel, a Major Substantive Rule of the State Board of Education

(H.P. 1424) (L.D. 2221)

Reporting **Ought to Pass** pursuant to Resolve 2023, chapter 54, section 2.

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

The Resolve was **READ ONCE**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Resolve was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED** and sent for concurrence.

Subsequently, Representative TERRY of Gorham reported that she had delivered the message with which she was charged.

**Refer to the Committee on State and Local Government Pursuant to Resolve**

Representative STOVER for the **Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government** on Bill "An Act Establishing a State Calendar for the State of Maine"

(H.P. 1425) (L.D. 2222)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** pursuant to Resolve 2023, chapter 91, section 2.

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

The Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** and sent for concurrence.

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

**CONSENT CALENDAR  
First Day**

In accordance with House Rule 519, the following item appeared on the Consent Calendar for the First Day:

(H.P. 423) (L.D. 646) Bill "An Act to Provide Appropriations and Allocations for the Operations of State Government" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-755)**

Under suspension of the rules, Second Day Consent Calendar notification was given.

There being no objection, the House Paper was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended** and sent for concurrence.

**SENATE PAPERS**

Resolve, to Direct the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Rules and Establish a Study Group Related to Funding and Reimbursement for Mental Health Crisis Resolution Services

(S.P. 951) (L.D. 2223)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** and ordered printed.

**REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** in concurrence.

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

At this point, the Senate came and a Joint Convention was formed.

**In Convention**

The President of the Senate, the Honorable Troy D. Jackson, in the Chair.

The Convention was called to order by the Chair.

On motion of Senator VITELLI of Sagadahoc, it was **ORDERED**, that a Committee be appointed to wait upon the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court; the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine; the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court; and Members of the Judiciary, and inform them that the two branches of the Legislature are in Convention assembled, ready to receive such communications as the Chief Justice is pleased to make.

The Chair appointed the following Members:  
The Sen. from Cumberland, Senator CARNEY  
The Sen. from Cumberland, Senator BAILEY  
The Sen. from Androscoggin, Senator BRAKEY  
The Rep. from Portland, Representative MOONEN  
The Rep. from Cumberland, Representative MORIARTY  
The Rep. from Biddeford, Representative SHEEHAN  
The Rep. from Auburn, Representative LEE  
The Rep. from Falmouth, Representative KUHN  
The Rep. from Skowhegan, Representative POIRIER  
The Rep. from Paris, Rep. ANDREWS  
The Rep. from Hampden, Representative HAGGAN  
The Rep. from Rumford, Representative HENDERSON  
The Rep. from the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Rep. DANA

Subsequently, Senator CARNEY, for the Committee, reported that the Committee had delivered the message with which they were charged, and the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court; the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine; the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court; and Honorable Members of the Judiciary would attend forthwith.

The Chair welcomed to the Convention the Honorable Justices of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court: Associate Justice Andrew Mead; Associate Justice A. Mark Horton; Associate Justice Catherine Connors; Associate Justice Rick Lawrence; and Associate Justice Wayne Douglas.

The Chair welcomed to the Convention the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, accompanied by the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine.

The Chair recognized in the Gallery, the following Members and guests of the Judicial Branch: Chief Justice Robert Mullen of the Maine Superior Court; Chief Judge Brent Davis of the Maine District Court; Deputy Chief Judge Lea-Anne Sutton of the Maine District Court; Amy Quinlan, State Court Administrator; Tom Hild, Chief of Court Finance; Barbara Cardone, Director of Legal Affairs and Public Relations; and Julia Finn, Legislative Analyst.

The Chair also recognized in the Gallery, the Constitutional and Statutory Officers of the State of Maine: Secretary of State, Shenna Bellows; Attorney General, Aaron Frey, State Treasurer, Henry Beck; and State Auditor, Matt Dunlap.

The Chair requested the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, to please step forward and address the Joint Convention.

Chief Justice **STANFILL**: Thank you, everyone. They've now given height, so, I can see over the podium and that's always a good thing. Good morning.

Before I came here today, I was thinking about this tradition. As you may recall, I accompanied the Chief Executive for her State of the State address, and she accompanied me here today to the Chamber for the Joint Convention of the Senate and the House. This is extraordinary symbolism. Think about it, that of the three branches of government coming together to talk, to listen; it's the very heart of our democracy and something I know I cherish and I hope you do, too.

Governor Mills, President Jackson, Speaker Talbot Ross, distinguished Members and guests of the 131st Maine Legislature, people of the State of Maine, I am happy to be here and in the spirit of democracy, I am so pleased to update you on the State of Maine's Judiciary, Maine's third branch of government. To start, I will thank all of the men and women who comprise the Judicial Branch for their hard work, their dedication, their perseverance in serving the interests of justice and the people of the State of Maine. I am grateful every day for the extraordinary people in the Maine Judicial Branch. President Jackson introduced the Members of the Maine Judiciary who are here with me today. All of them actually have roles in the administration of the courts, not just as judges. The Supreme Judicial Court operates really like a Board of Directors for the Judicial Branch. I thank each of them for their counsel and for their support. The Trial Chiefs, who kind of scrambled to get up onto the balcony, who are also there; Judges Mullen, Davis and Sutton; really operate like the Executive Committee for the Judicial Branch. So, they are also sitting judges but are critical for our operations. I thank them for all of their insight and hard work every day. You also were introduced to some of our mighty administrative team. Amy Quinlan is the State Court Administrator. Under Maine Law, she is the head of the administrative office of the courts, basically the non-judge head of the courts. She is responsible for the administration and management of the court system. And this has been a challenging year for her, as we experienced some turnover at the highest level, but she has brought her through. And with her is, in fact, our newest member, Tom Hild, who is our Chief of

Finance and Administration, as well as Barbara Cardone and Julie Finn, who I know you know.

I also want to specifically recognize some other members of the Judicial Branch who are not in the room today. First, our amazing Family Division. This is headed by Caroline Jova. Now, the Family Division is a small but extraordinary group of behind-the-scenes folk who support all the programs in our family and child protective dockets. They're brilliant. And this year, I want to give them special recognition, as did the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. The Coalition awarded the Family Division its Champions of Change Award for their efforts in implementing procedures and trainings that are trauma-informed and help increase access to justice for survivors of domestic abuse and violence. I also want to take a moment to recognize the mighty team leading our revitalized rollout of Maine eCourts: Chris Oberg, project manager; Lisa LaMothe, the Odyssey Senior IT business analyst; Andy Frechette, our new Clerk of Courts for Lewiston and Auburn, who took the reins this year; Kyle Ferrill, Christen Haskell, Sarah Pelletier and the entire Court Operations team and, of course, Judge Oram. You, together with all of the other numerous team members, have turned this project into a success; and I will report a little bit more on that; and it is a success and we can't do it without you. You transitioned to Maine eCourts in Lewiston and Auburn the very same week in October as the unimaginable tragedy of the mass shootings which so directly impacted all of them. You are vested in your communities, our Judicial Branch team is, and they kept working through it all and came out stronger. Finally, Julie Howard, our Manager of Court Operations in York County. Together with everyone else at the new York Judicial Center; Facilities, Clerk's Office, marshals, judges; they seamlessly consolidated operations from four different existing courthouses into a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility without missing a beat, an undertaking that was truly breathtaking in its scope.

This morning, I would like to talk about Maine courts in the 21st century and what is needed to serve all of Maine's citizens as we move forward, but first, I will give you a look back over the past year. I want to thank you for the resources that you gave the Judicial Branch in the last biennial budget and I want to tell you what we're doing with them. Last year, I discussed the backlog and the delays of cases that began even before the pandemic forced us to limit the number of jury trials and court appearances in person. Courts, as you know, are faced with ever-more-complicated cases. There are new technology demands, we have overburdened and decreasing numbers of counsel or attorneys to handle the caseload and it's an increasingly frustrated public. People are angry, they're agitated; when they come to the court, especially. Our front-line clerks and marshals bear the brunt of it and they are also increasingly, in turn, stressed out and burned out. So, we do continue to struggle to provide appropriate security, which really means something different now than it used to mean, and it's leading to courthouse closures when we don't have enough marshals, but hopefully fewer and farther between. Filings for more serious types of criminal cases, felonies, are increasing, even as some other filings are decreasing. And we discussed last year that there's been a marked increase in filings over the last number of years for protective custody cases as well as cases where serious mental health issues need to be addressed.

So, in 2023, we asked the National Center for State Courts to perform a Weighted Caseload Study, and some of you have seen the results of that. They look at what judges and clerks are doing, what we're able to do and what the system needs for judges and clerks. The National Center has done those studies

across the country and we were happy to have them assess our operations as well. For several weeks, clerks and judges tracked every minute of their time and what they were doing. For those of you in private practice, it was like being back in private practice as a lawyer again. We thought we got away from that. As a result, we were able to give you objective evidence of what our personnel needs are for those areas, judges and clerks. It really didn't do the whole operation, it was those two primary areas. According to the May 2023 report, the Maine Judicial Branch needs at least nine more trial court judges and 40 more clerk positions. There were some more judge positions and a handful of more clerk positions created after that in the biennial budget. But those are numbers just to handle our existing caseload appropriately, that's not a matter of catching up on the backlog, that is just to provide the appropriate service that we need to provide. So, in our biennial budget request last year, we focused on beginning to shore up those operations to the frontline people that you all see and depend on when you come to a courthouse; those judges, the clerks, the marshals. We were clear that what we were asking for was really not enough to ultimately right-size the court system, but it certainly would start us on its way and, frankly, I was also being realistic that given the hiring challenges and everything else that we are all familiar with, not just the Judicial Branch, that it would take time to recruit, hire, onboard new personnel. You listened. Thank you. We didn't get everything we asked for, we didn't receive any new clerk positions until this coming July, but you did give us a meaningful increase in positions in the biennial budget that began last July and so, I really am here to say thank you.

The biennial budget did give us additional judge positions and it added resources as well in other areas; additional marshals and court attendants, courtroom technology positions that take over the recording, the Zoom functions and the like in the courtroom. E-filing specialists allowing centralized and consistent review; initial review of electronic filings, some trainers and field operation specialists to support and train court clerks who are spread, you know, all over the State, a couple of positions in the Service Center, which is our central phone-answering and record search group in Lewiston. The tasks we ask of our court clerks have expanded tremendously. No more are they sitting in the back room, writing in nice little handwriting in the docket books like when I started. But the new positions, which we are well on our way to filling, will also help take pressure off of those clerks' offices as their scope of their tasks have expanded and allow the clerks to focus on doing what the clerks need to do. We don't have all the positions we need. Remember, the National Center said we needed nine more judges and 40 more clerks to do our jobs. So, you know, down the road, there's going to be additional requests, but I am really grateful for the positions that you gave us and creating the right-size Judicial Branch for the State of Maine is not an instant fix, it is a long-term process.

So, what's the result? Well, right after the State of the Judiciary address last year, I was asked if I could describe the State of the Judiciary in one word. And although I hesitated to say it, I did: Frail. So, we're not yet hale and hearty, but I am pleased to report that we are nowhere near as frail as we were a year ago. Indeed, I am hopeful. Hopeful that with new resources, we can continue to create a justice system that meets the needs of Maine people in the 21st century. I feel it when I go to my courts, I feel it when I am with the people I work with; people are more hopeful. I want to share with you, then, some of the accomplishments we've had over the last year. What I really wanted to do was play you a video that; a little short four-

minute year-end video that our mighty communications team had created really just for internal consumption for a year-end celebration, but it turns out, just like a lot of our courtrooms, this Chamber is not really equipped for it. So, I did, however, distribute it electronically and if you have a chance, it's four minutes, it's really short, I hope you enjoy it.

I'm going to start with what is perhaps the biggest achievement of all, the restart of the Maine eCourts implementation. Last year, I explained that Maine eCourts is a fully integrated electronic system for filing docketed case management. It's really a huge undertaking and it crosses all systems and users. Many of you have heard it called Odyssey, I've called it Odyssey. That's really the Tyler Technologies name for the suite of products that we're using and Tyler is retiring that name, so, I'm avoiding using it. We call it Maine eCourts, and that's what we will continue to call it. Users, of course, can file electronically, be notified of filings, access dockets documents remotely. And so, just like our current docketing system, which we call MEJIS, it will need to be integrated with law enforcement for bail, protection orders and the like, they instantly can go out to law enforcement officers. So, toward the end of 2020, we had implemented the system for civil, child protective and family matters; except for protection orders because of those integrations and civil violations, so, except for that; in the Bangor District and Superior Courts as well as in the statewide Business and Consumer Docket. And we had previously gone live in our Violation Bureau. All the tickets are done that way now. Unfortunately, it was a little bit rocky in the rollout in Bangor and the business courts, and when I came in as Chief; and I told you this last year; I really felt we needed to step back and figure out how to do this better so that we didn't go any further off the rails, to be honest. So, we paused and we obtained an independent assessment, and I know that some of you were frustrated; I heard about it; at my decision to pause the rollout because I know we're way behind where former Chief Justice Saufley said we were going to be at this point. But it turned out to be a heck of a lot more complicated than we thought. And the analysis and the reorganization that we did behind the scenes when we paused has paid off. This past October, as I said, we successfully rolled out; really seamlessly rolled out Maine eCourts for the family, civil and child protective type cases in Lewiston and Auburn. It went beautifully and it's a better product now than when we were rolling it out a couple years ago. We learned lessons on how to train, how to introduce people to it, how to make it work. And so, now, we think we're able to, you know, lather, rinse and repeat, as we expect to put it in the family and civil case type package in Rumford, Farmington and South Paris courts in, actually, just a few weeks; and then Augusta and Waterville a little later this year and from there on, throughout the whole State. Now, criminal dockets and protection from abuse cases and harassment cases; those require, as I say, integrations with the Department of Public Safety. Department of Public Safety, however, does report they're on track to finally gear up for them this year. And, again, it's another one of those things where a lot of work has happened behind the scenes, it's just that we haven't been able to implement it. So, we hope to add protection orders, abuse and harassment protection orders, to the Lewiston-Auburn dockets in Maine eCourts hopefully in June and thereafter, later in the year, even start with the criminal cases and, again, I think, you know, once we get those first implementations in, hopefully it will continue to be a matter of lather, rinse and repeat as we move it out across the State. So, our goal is to have it in all trial courts by the end of 2026. Why does it take so long? Because it literally, physically takes going

to each courthouse; remember I told you last year, it also means changing from Apple to PCs? All of that, the rewiring and everything that has to be done. So, it's, you know, we have a small team doing it, so, we can't just do it statewide all in one fell swoop, I wish we could. But it's a success and I'm pleased to report.

I also want to update you on the backlog of cases created during the pandemic. So, I'm pleased to report we've made some progress there as well. Overall, there's a little increase, a 3% increase in the statewide rate at which we closed cases; we call it our clearance rate and yes, like every other business, you know, we track these things; at which we closed cases in 2023 compared to 2022. Now, that goes across all case types. Some have seen much greater increases, some not so much. In criminal dockets, which is one, obviously, that we all hear about and involves a huge number of cases, both the numbers of pending cases and the average age of pending cases; and remember those are the two components of a backlog, how many cases are pending and how long they're taking. So, both the number of cases and the average age of cases is down, and not just by a tiny bit, it really is down in the criminal dockets. We've been working hard at it. Last year, I reported we had about 60% more criminal cases pending than before the pandemic. In fact, it had been even higher at some times, but it was about 60% when I was here last year. We're down now to only about 40-45% more than before the pandemic. Still a lot, but that's a pretty significant decrease, you know, we've been able to chip away at the number of cases pending.

Now, the downside of that news is that much of the improvement in the criminal docket can be attributed to a couple of criminal blitzes that we did, a couple of weeks where we sort of put all hands on deck in Androscoggin, and we did it in Kennebec as well, and it really resolved a lot of cases. There's also been a decrease in the number of cases filed this year. But the blitzes involve coordination with prosecutors, rearranging of scheduling for all the other case types, you know, use of additional judge resources, even active retired judges and as well overtime for the clerks' offices. So, although it helped a lot, that's a short-term concerted effort, not something that can really be sustained for the long term. And the reality is not all other dockets have improved as much, and a biggest concern to me, the average age of family cases is still increasing. It is longer now than it was six months ago. I hope with the addition of more District Court judges; four just got sworn in; this will improve. We still have a few vacancies, so, we're waiting. The sobering fact is, however, that no matter how hard we work, and we do, we're not providing timely and safe resolution even in priority cases, those involving liberty and families and children, much less the plethora of all the other cases. The stresses of that are being felt, in fact, by all justice partners. So, we have appointed counsel through the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services, as well as all the different civil legal service providers who also all are fighting their own battles for funding.

One area that's not looking up, and that is appointed counsel. We are in a constitutional crisis, folks. The State is obligated to provide an attorney in most criminal cases. The State is also obligated to provide attorneys to parents in child protective cases, those cases where the Department has stepped in to protect children. We also have to provide guardians ad litem in all those cases. And by the State, I mean all of us. This is not one branch of government, this is all of us. We depend, at this point, primarily on the private bar for this, but there are fewer and fewer lawyers available and willing to take cases. We have people sitting in jail every day. Frequently, there's a dozen or more in Aroostook County alone on any given

day without counsel in jail because there's no one to take their case. Raising the pay, as happened last year, to \$150 an hour, has not solved the problem. You'll hear, I'm sure, those of you who are involved, from the Maine Commission, but I will say the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services says the onus is on the courts to appoint counsel, but we of course are constrained by the very Statutes that created the Commission. We can only appoint attorneys on the Commission roster, and there are none. Our trial courts spend hours every week just trying to cajole attorneys into taking these cases. So, I hope adding some public defenders, which is happening, will help, but it's going to be a while before we really see robust results from that. And in the meantime, I fear the system really will collapse. Although it's a problem we can't control in the courts alone, it is something we are all in together.

So, onto more uplifting points; that one is pretty depressing, certainly for me; we had a lot of achievements in 2023, so, I'd like to run through a few of them. The new York Judicial Center in Biddeford. Some of you attended the open house and the ribbon cutting ceremony, had tours. As I mentioned, Facilities, Clerks' Office, marshals, judges worked hard. They seamlessly consolidated operations from four different courthouses that were spread around York County into the one brand-new, state-of-the-art Judicial Center in Biddeford without missing a beat. And just to give you an idea of what that means, I think the Clerk Manager calculated that it was two and a quarter miles of paper files that had to be moved. Two and a quarter miles; 12,000 feet of paper files that had to be moved. Huge effort, but it was worth it and the facility is wonderful. With the additional training positions, we've been able to restart and expand critical training for clerks. I know that doesn't sound very glamorous, but with 245 clerks spread out in 32 different facilities, our small number of operations trainers have been kept very busy. A well-trained workforce, as we all know, is our primary tool in creating efficiencies, and we are seeing the results.

We created new video resources for self-represented litigants. Remember, other than criminal cases, especially in the District Court, most cases, one or more of the people are representing themselves. So, we have; you can check them out, if you want entertainment, you can check out our videos on divorce and parental rights, protection from abuse and harassment cases, small claims cases, how to enforce your divorce or parental rights decree. We also created some new short-form brochures including evicting a residential tenant who doesn't pay rent and overview of small claims court. Again, engaging reading, but necessary for all of the people that we serve.

We expanded a pilot project appointing an attorney to juveniles when the State files the case, rather than depending on a lawyer of the day at their initial appearance. In other words, getting their attorney assigned to them earlier in the process, which seems to be strengthening the relationship with counsel, allows the attorney earlier contact with the juvenile, the family, to explain the court process, the rights and also to advocate for the juvenile. We think it's been really successful and we expect to have that expanded statewide in 2024 in conjunction with the Commission.

We increased our outreach to schools. We're trying to broaden civics awareness. Public trust and confidence, as we all know, in all of our public institutions is just eroding at a rapid rate, including the courts. And part of that is we need to make sure people understand what we do. So, some of you may have attended oral arguments at the Supreme Judicial Court at the Skowhegan High School, the Winthrop High School, the Greely

High School in Cumberland; those were all places we went in October of this year. We also welcomed several different school groups into various trial courts who come and watch and see what we're doing. And we hope to continue to do even more as we move forward. And, by the way, if any of you want to host oral arguments in your town, in your district, just let Julie or Barbara know, and we'll finalize the next round in October shortly; and Lewiston, we're looking at you. You have the current high school mock trials champion, so, we're thinking that might be a good match.

We're expanding internal communication to try to keep employees engaged. Again, we're spread out all over the place, and so, trying to make sure everybody still feels like they are part of this team. So, we have a new Employee Engagement Committee tackling employee satisfaction, training, communication and recognition. We've adopted remote technology internally. We created a virtual suggestion box; don't always want to see it but, you know, we have one. We have regular short Zoom lunch and learns throughout the branch at the lunch break. We have occasional Ask the Chief Zooms, monthly Zooms of all jurists, monthly email updates to everybody, quarterly newsletters and that little four-minute video that I distributed is another good example. So, the latest effort, by the way, is a pop-up spirit store for Judicial Branch branded goods, you know, so, you can have your fleece or your T-shirt. Our team is extraordinary but they are unappreciated and overworked, so, it's important that we keep everybody involved in our mission and I think, again, it's working. People are simply more hopeful at our workplaces than they were a couple years ago.

We shared our expertise with others. For example, there was a presentation by our team at the New England Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative. Judges Eric Walker and David Mitchell, in particular, are extraordinary champions and experience significant success in their treatment courts. I think some of you heard from Judge Walker earlier this year, I heard he was over here. And we received recognition. As I mentioned, the Family Division team was awarded the Champions of Change from the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. Magistrate Lindsay Cadwallader received the Children's Advocate Award from the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Judge Chuck Dow received a significant achievement award from the Waterville Bar Association. So, I am proud of everything we've been able to do.

So, where are we going? Well, we need to build on that momentum and continue to right-size the Judicial Branch so we can meet the needs of Maine people in a timely and efficient manner. No custody dispute should have to wait years before the case is heard. No one should be in jail for months or even a year or more before their trial. No business should have to wait years before their dispute is resolved. And again, this means, of course, the addition of judges but also, critically, the staff to support them; clerks, marshals, law clerks, courtroom technology assistants; and the administrative staff, frankly, to make it all work. We're a large organization, so there's Human Resources and all of the other needs that go along with that. Judges can't do it without all of those people.

But there's another really big category of needs that we have to talk about as we move forward for a 21st century court system, and that is technology. Traditionally, we've always said that our budget is really basically two parts, it's people and courts, people and buildings. You know, we have 32 different; really 33, if you count the administrative office; facilities across the State. Courts and the way we do business, however, have changed really more rapidly in this century; really in the last

decade; than it has for hundreds of years. Technology is no longer a luxury, it's not an afterthought. It has to be a part of the infrastructure of the court system. It needs to be maintained, upgraded, updated on a regular basis. In the past, we didn't always do that. We would install new technology, a new recording system, without really thinking about oh, it's going to have to be maintained, upgraded, replaced at some point. As a result, for example, we have recording systems that don't work in two of our beautiful Penobscot Judicial Centers, although they may have been replaced by now, that's happening. But that's just an example. So, in the 21st Century, we really have to look at technology as part of the infrastructure, just as the buildings, the courthouses, are infrastructure across the State. So, we have to plan to maintain, to upgrade, to improve it, just as we maintain roofs and HVAC systems, sometimes better than others, but we try to. Maintenance includes replacement at various interludes and we have to fund it the same way we do infrastructure.

When Maine eCourts was conceived and contracted for, a prior Legislature authorized us to receive bond funding to purchase and install the system. But, of course, there are annual fees and licenses and maintenance and changes and upgrades not covered by the bond funds. You asked us to raise the money to cover all of those things ourselves by tacking on surcharges on filing fees, fines and the like. And we did that. And the biggest source of revenue, then, to pay those costs was the surcharges, frankly, that were imposed on traffic ticket fines, because that's just, by far, the largest volume of filings that we talk about. The volume of those fines dwarfs anything else. But ticket numbers are going down and they were going down even before the pandemic. I don't know, the officers just aren't writing tickets like they used to. But they are going down even as more serious charges are going up. And so, the funds generated are not enough to pay, as the cost of maintenance, of course, and everything else is going up, those funds are going down and so there's a big gap. We're going to be almost a million dollars short, in fact, this year, on that. So, it's not a sound plan for the long run. Because, of course, the higher the fees are, the more they get waived, people can't afford them and you're imposing those fees often on the people who can least afford them and who most need access to the courts. And it's not just ongoing maintenance and fees for Maine eCourts, by the way. Technology goes way beyond that. We now demand technology in the courtroom that our predecessors never dreamed of. Think about it. Much of our evidence is now in electronic form. So, bodycams, social media, you know, recordings of various kinds. The jurors, witnesses, attorneys, the judge, everybody needs to be able to see it and hear it in the courtroom. So, that means courtrooms have to be equipped with display screens. Maybe this Chamber should, too, I don't know, but display screens, appropriate sound systems, computers. We have to electronically record every case, which means a sophisticated system of recording and microphones so that every word is captured as people move around the room. We need to be able to hear everything everybody says. We have to accommodate the remote appearances of parties, witnesses, attorneys. And because most court proceedings are constitutionally required to be public, you can't just do that from your laptop. We cobbled together what we call Zoom carts, by the way, during the pandemic. You know, it's like a big TV cart that we wheel in and out. But that's just one screen. So, if the TV faces the judge, no one else can see it. If a witness is on a screen, that witness needs to be able to be seen and heard by the judge, by the parties, by the lawyers, by the public. We need public access kiosks in courthouses for accessing electronic

files. That's one of the things when you have an electronic filing system. We need robust Wi-Fi and cell service at all our courthouses. Right now, there's pretty limited cell service at the York County Judicial Center, so, it's difficult for attorneys and court users to access their files and communications. I mean, that's how everybody works these days, they bring their devices to the courthouse. We can enhance it, but it's a six-figure cost.

We need to increase the safety of everyone in our courthouses, which means not only marshals but also technology; security cameras, recordings, screening, control rooms. And the way we control the flow of traffic in courthouses is a big part of that. We need to protect against the increasing frequency and sophistication of cyberthreats. We are the keepers of immense amounts of sensitive and personal data, which can't go unprotected and which we must safeguard to the best of our collective ability. So, there are more and more demands for data from everyone, from you, in many forms and layers. And data helps us understand. It helps us understand how we got to where we are, measures the cost-benefit of programs, strategies, helps us plan for the future. So, we're building a data warehouse but, again, it's a continuing process.

So, looking at the future, all of that technology, of course, needs technical people to keep it running. One example, we need to upgrade Maine eCourts from Odyssey to the 2023 version. Like everything else, right? You get those little notices that say you have to update your software? Well, we get them, too, and so, we now have to upgrade, or will have to upgrade to a later version now called Enterprise Justice instead of Odyssey. But it's not as simple as just plugging in your laptop and letting it upgrade overnight, you know, it doesn't work that way. These are semi-customized systems, they involve a huge effort from testing to reconfiguring to actually doing the upgrade. So, that's just an example of what we're talking about and you all know that instinctively because we all see it all the time across all of our systems.

But, of course, those information technology positions need competitive pay. I previously explained to you that the low judicial salaries in Maine; after all, we were 51st in the country; affect all salaries in the Judicial Branch, which sets an unrealistic salary ceiling for the very skilled and high-level administrative positions, particularly in the area of information technology. By the way, the last budget we saw, frankly, the biggest judicial salary raises we've had in many a year and, believe me, we appreciated it. But I also have to tell you that the same thing happened across the country given recent inflation rates and we're pretty much still down at the bottom, so, just thought I'd let you know that.

All of what I've just been talking about, much of that is for another day. I'm not asking you to do anything specific with it, I'm really just talking about where we have to go in the future. I just want to start the conversation. But turning to this year, I am going to talk about a couple of specific requests. In our supplemental budget request, for example, we did ask that you support, and I know the Chief Executive included it and we appreciate that, sustainable funding program for the Maine eCourt system. As I say, we can't really do this on the backs of taxes and fines and fees on filings. It needs to shift the cost of system maintenance from that to the General Fund. We're building a new infrastructure, folks. Technology is that infrastructure, and it's not inexpensive, and that alone is about three and three-quarters of a million dollars for the two years. So, those are hefty numbers for a supplemental budget, but it's the only way we can pay for and support the technology that we need to keep our courts operating. Remember, we did try it, you asked us to; we tried to do it through fines and fees and



surcharges, but it just isn't working. The gains for access for citizens across the State of an electronic system is, of course, critical. Aligning the courts with modern-day business platforms used by other industries, frankly, for decades and, you know, we are one of the last courts still pretty much operating in paper. Maine people demand nothing less. And there are other requests, but that one is critical.

Bonding. LD 2090 is going to come in front of you as well, to allow us over the next number of years to build three new courthouses. Courthouses themselves, the buildings, the needs in our buildings, have changed. We're continuing to try to modernize the court buildings to meet the needs of staff and of the public, to be efficient and safe places to work and to come to. So, the plan is to construct a new courthouse in Ellsworth. If any of you want to come visit the rabbit warren that is there, we would welcome you and give you a tour, but a new courthouse in Ellsworth and that will have to be at a completely different location. We've been working with the local community on that. To add on as well to the District Court building in Skowhegan, which would allow us to consolidate the Superior Court, which is now currently across the street in a 200-year-old building and, similarly, to rehabilitate the building next door to the Lewiston District Court so we can move operations from Auburn and consolidate them with Lewiston. So, all of those construction projects will be a combined District and Superior Court facility. Again, that creates additional efficiencies in the clerks' offices, utilization of marshals and everything else. I know some of you have toured some of the outdated facilities that are currently in use. I mean, some of the buildings that we're talking about are over 200 years old and they have insufficient space for courtrooms. They have few conference rooms for private conversations. You know, many years ago, when I practiced law, I had, you know, conferences with clients out in the bus stop out in front of the building. They have a lack of wiring infrastructure to support current technology and basically, you know, they don't have the wiring to even be able to install some of this. It's outdated equipment for heating, for ventilation. Modern security needs, as I mentioned, are primarily actually achieved by the way we control the flow of people, so that there's public space, private space, and that's impossible in those spaces. It's simply not an atmosphere conducive to the administration of justice. So, we know the cost is hefty. It's going to be slightly over \$200 million in the long run. Unfortunately, construction costs are, of course, rising faster than just about anything. Anybody who ever has tried to do a renovation or build in the last few years, you know what I'm talking about. So, if we postpone the construction, it's just going to have a higher price tag at a future date. So, these are projects that take years to accomplish. This is long-range planning, obviously, that I'm talking about here that we need to address, so, we hope you'll support that.

One more thing I'd like to mention about where we're going in 2024; treatment courts, also known as specialty dockets. They can be tremendously successful in turning around the lives that are derailed by the opioid epidemic and other substance use issues. In criminal dockets, we are trying to rehabilitate rather than be punitive. In the child protective dockets, we are supporting parents in recovery in order to try to facilitate reunification of the families torn apart by substance use disorder in the State. As effective as they can be, however, these dockets are resource-intensive, and I put the brakes on it for a little while ago, but with the increase in judicial positions and the supporting clerks and marshals starting July 1st, we look forward to working toward expanding those dockets, particularly in Aroostook County, where planning is already underway.

To wrap up, there are still many gaps in our judicial system, in our justice system, and many needs that can't be paid for with taxes and fines. There are needs without which courts can't function in the 21st Century. There are needs required to serve the Maine people, to meet our constitutional obligation of providing meaningful access to justice for all. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the successes that we've had in the Judicial Branch in the last year and my vision for a 21st century court system for Maine, for next year and for beyond. Thank you for having me.

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At the conclusion of the address, the Chief Justice withdrew amid the applause of the Convention, the audience rising.

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The purpose for which the Joint Convention was assembled having been accomplished, the Chair declared the same dissolved.

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The Senate retired to its chamber amid the applause of the House, the audience rising.

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(After the Convention)

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The House was called to order by the Speaker.

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

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At this point, the Chair recognized the Representative from Durham, Representative GALLETTA, and he was added to the roll call of the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

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#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEE Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Establish a Community-based Reentry Program in All Department of Corrections Facilities"

(S.P. 650) (L.D. 1633)

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook

ARDELL of Monticello

HASENFUS of Readfield

LAJOIE of Lewiston

NEWMAN of Belgrade

NUTTING of Oakland

PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-533)** on same Bill.

Signed:  
Senator: BEEBE-CENTER of Knox  
Representatives:  
LOOKNER of Portland  
MATHIESON of Kittery  
MILLIKEN of Blue Hill

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

**READ.**

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

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Majority Report of the Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-522)** on Bill "An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State"

(S.P. 684) (L.D. 1721)

Signed:  
Senators: PIERCE of Cumberland  
VITELLI of Sagadahoc  
Representatives:  
GERE of Kennebunkport  
GATTINE of Westbrook  
GOLEK of Harpswell  
LOOKNER of Portland  
RANA of Bangor

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

Signed:  
Representatives:  
BLIER of Buxton  
BRADSTREET of Vassalboro  
CAMPBELL of Orrington  
MORRIS of Turner

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-522)**.

**READ.**

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-522)** 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-522)** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **MARINE RESOURCES** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Resolve, to Establish a Grant Program to Issue Shellfish Licenses to Qualified Disabled Veterans

(S.P. 775) (L.D. 1915)

Signed:  
Senators: RENY of Lincoln  
BEEBE-CENTER of Knox  
MOORE of Washington

Representatives:  
HEPLER of Woolwich  
DAVIS of East Machias  
EATON of Deer Isle  
GIFFORD of Lincoln  
LANDRY of Farmington  
SIMMONS of Waldoboro  
STROUT of Harrington

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-525)** on same Resolve.

Signed:  
Representative: THORNE of Carmel

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

**READ.**

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

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Majority Report of the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Require Disclosure of Campaign Funding Sources"

(S.P. 621) (L.D. 1590)

Signed:  
Senators: HICKMAN of Kennebec  
BRENNER of Cumberland  
TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin

Representatives:  
SUPICA of Bangor  
ANDREWS of Paris  
COLLINGS of Portland  
MALON of Biddeford  
MONTELL of Gardiner  
RIELLY of Westbrook  
WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-532)** on same Bill.

Signed:  
Representatives:  
BOYER of Poland  
HYMES of Waldo  
RUDNICKI of Fairfield

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

**READ.**

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

Majority Report of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-757)** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit Unauthorized Paramilitary Training" (H.P. 1354) (L.D. 2130)

Signed:

Senators:

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox  
LaFOUNTAIN of Kennebec

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook  
HASENFUS of Readfield  
LAJOIE of Lewiston  
LOOKNER of Portland  
MATHIESON of Kittery

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

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

ARDELL of Monticello  
MILLIKEN of Blue Hill  
NEWMAN of Belgrade  
NUTTING of Oakland  
PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft

**READ.**

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

Representative NUTTING of Oakland **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 Carmel, Representative Thorne.

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in opposition to the pending motion and I also rise to indicate to the Members of the Chamber that I will not be speaking out in opposition to this, nor will I be roll calling it, I've already been beaten to the punch. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Monticello, Representative Ardell.

Representative **ARDELL**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I oppose this bill. LD 2130 is a bill that contains problematic elements. First, defining civil disorder as two or more persons damaging property is to cheapen the term civil disorder. Under this definition, constitutionally protected self-defense could be considered civil disorder. Additionally, the bill discusses assembly with one or more persons to conduct constitutionally protected activity. The right to assemble is a civil right and this bill wanders into territory protected by our Bill of Rights. The bill contains a civil element that would allow the State of Maine to engage and prevail with a civil case with a burden of proof of less than clear and convincing evidence, but merely a preponderance of the evidence. Preponderance is a very, very low standard to compromise our civil rights. The bill provides government the ability to engage constitutionally protected industry through civil means with a low burden of proof in a civil case.

But probably worst of all, this bill provides for an easier tool than is already provided for in existing conspiracy law. A conspiracy involves two or more persons who plan to violate a

specified unlawful act and then take an overt act toward that unlawful act. However, I know that prosecutors do not like to have to explain conspiracy laws to jurors, in the fear that they would not understand the Statute and, as a result, not vote in favor of a guilty verdict. It's supposed to be hard. It's supposed to be difficult for the government to prove their burden of proof in criminal cases. This bill weakens that structure. I really ask this Body to maintain the strength of our rights and to maintain the strength of our existing law by not permitting this tool; this unconstitutional tool to weaken those rights. And in that, I close, but I ask this Body to seriously consider exactly what we're doing here and exactly what the rights of our people are. Thank you.

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

Representative **OSHER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in support of LD 2130. I proposed this bill because last year, a white supremacist organizer purchased land in Springfield, Maine, and declared his intent to build a paramilitary training camp with the goal of making Maine a white ethnostate.

Because of the efforts to build training facilities across the U.S., 26 other states, including Vermont, have passed laws prohibiting paramilitary training. There are laws in Maine against paramilitary organizations parading in public, but there are no laws prohibiting training that's for a goal of civil disorder. In passing this bill into law, Maine would be the 27th in the country, the second in New England, to make training for civil disorder illegal. LD 2130 will explicitly prohibit persons from leading or engaging in paramilitary training with a goal of civil disorder; that's defined as public disturbance involving an act of violence by a group of two or more persons that causes an immediate danger or injury to another person or damage to the property of another person or results in the injury to another person or damage to the property of another person. The bill would allow the Attorney General to bring a civil action against individuals training for civil disorder. This means that the AG can bring an injunction.

With this law, public safety officers will be able to address actual danger to individuals who are here in Maine. We know from the data from the FBI that attacks against Jews, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ people and those who advocate for justice in the face of injustice have increased significantly. We also know that many perpetrators of violent attacks have been trained in paramilitary training facilities or have been influenced by the leaders of the organizations advocating for or sponsoring paramilitary training facilities. I and others who sponsor bills and in other ways advocate for the marginalized here in Maine are already targets of those who believe that threats and intimidation are acceptable forms of communication. What if they also believe that violence is an appropriate way to express their discomfort? Let's vote to draw the line here in Maine and make training others for civil unrest to be against the law.

Since January, I've been receiving hate mail and hate messages that include death threats. At first, they called me dyke and tranny, but the past few weeks, the emails began to include my Jewishness, saying that the bills I introduce are part of a Jewish plot and that I should be killed to prevent me from carrying out that plot. While hate speech is not new, the taunts and transgressions against immigrants around the State and in Bangor, near where I live, the swastikas and KKK graffiti spray-painted on the car of a Pakistani-American family and antisemitic posters outside my synagogue are evidence that significant increase in hate crimes being reported across the country are also happening here.

Vote for the bill in solidarity for those who you know in Maine who are working to support disenfranchised and create

policies that protect the public and help public safety officers to do that work. Vote for the bill because there are people of color and dykes and Jews and trans people and Muslims and indigenous activists and immigrants in Maine right now whose lives are in danger.

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Member needs to direct all of her comments directly to the Chair.

The Chair reminded Representative OSHER of Orono to address their comments toward the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative OSHER: Vote for the bill to reduce the chance that we'll be shot in our homes or walking to our cars or going to meetings by those who have been trained to do that. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Fairfield, Representative Rudnicki.

Representative RUDNICKI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just have a question, if I may pose it through the Chair?

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative RUDNICKI: Would this bill shut down other organizations such as Antifa, BLM and the radical climate groups as well? Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Member has posed a question to anyone who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from New Gloucester, Representative Arata.

Representative ARATA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, there are no words to adequately express the rage and revulsion that I experienced upon hearing that a Nazi training group had moved to my precious State. How dare they try to resurrect the horrors of this shameful ideology of hatred and death? How dare they attempt to undermine the principles of cooperation, tolerance and respect that we have worked so hard to establish? How dare they come to this very building to spread their detestable message and to try to intimidate my fellow Mainers, my colleagues and my friends? I cosponsored this bill with the hope that we could do something to stop them. I wanted the Committee to combine their experience and their intellect and thread the needle of prohibiting Nazi training groups while also maintaining the constitutional rights of everybody. Unfortunately, that was an impossible task. Not every problem in society can be solved by a law. This bill doesn't accomplish what I'd hoped for and could even violate the rights of innocent Mainers.

Now, ironically, hate groups are allowed to exist because they can enjoy the same constitutional rights that they want to deprive others of. It's also ironic that even as they call for discrimination against others, we also have the right to discriminate against hate groups. As they promote their reprehensible ideology, Mainers don't have to associate with them. We don't have to rent to them, sell to them, hire them, work for them or allow them in our gyms, our restaurants, our stores or any of our other businesses. The last neo-Nazi training group left because Mainers made them feel unwelcome here and, if we have to, we can do it again in the future, without a new law.

Now, finally, Madam Speaker, I want you to know that although I must oppose this bill, know that if those cowards ever come back here again to our State House to protest your civil rights, that I will gladly go out there and face them, and I am confident that this entire Body will stand side by side against their foolish hatred and their pathetic attempts at intimidation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative WHITE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The premise that my colleague mentioned is certainly understandable. Hate has no place in our society. However, this goes so far beyond that. This bill strips away our First Amendment rights, it strips away the core of the Second Amendment. And so, often we get caught up in an argument that sounds good on the surface, but there's a reason why this bill came up in all those State Legislatures and the U.S. House. I don't think it's because a handful of foolish bigots moved to Northern Maine for a very short time. I took an oath to this Constitution at least six times in my life; maybe seven; and I really just can't understand how this can be overlooked. We're writing a vague law that certainly could easily be misused and I beg that anyone that thinks right off the top that this is a good idea that you pay a little closer attention and see what's just beneath the surface.

Our Second Amendment in the U.S. Constitution doesn't say to own and use, it says to keep and bear. Those are very specific words. Those words imply to keep, as in a castle; keep a secretive and large amount, even; and to bear implies training. The militia of our forefathers, our founding fathers, was all the people that weren't involved in the government. The right of the people to step up and protect themselves and be able to protect themselves comes with responsibilities, and that responsibility is to know what you're doing. So, it is our right and before executing that right, the responsibility of the citizenry to be well-trained, that falls into the well-regulated part of that militia that's spoken of in the Second Amendment.

So, I'm going to leave it at that. I know that these speeches sometimes get long, but please think long and hard before we take away someone's right to associate with others or our right to exercise what our founding fathers had foresight enough to put down in writing. Please. Thank you.

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

Representative QUINT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This bill is vague, with no appropriate guardrails, and it is overreach. I am the Representative of Springfield, and so, this took up an awful lot of my time during the off-session. And one of the hardest things for me to understand and adapt to is I represent everybody, even those who people did not like in my district. The people that moved to my district that I do not agree with their philosophy, I was also their Representative. And as their Representative and; as all of the other constituents in my district, as their Representative, it is my responsibility to protect their rights. I don't always have to agree with what they're doing. There are many groups that have done things that I do not agree with, but I will always stand up to defend their rights. This bill, once again, is vague and it does not have proper guardrails. It is government overreach. Thank you.

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

Representative FAULKINGHAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to oppose the pending motion. When I weigh this bill versus the oath that I have sworn to the Constitution on multiple occasions, I am compelled to rise and speak in opposition to this bill.

The First Amendment guarantees the right to peacefully assemble. It doesn't guarantee the right to peacefully assemble to people I agree with, it doesn't guarantee the right to peacefully assemble only if you're liberals or only if you're conservatives or only if you're this or only if you're that. It's for all people, and there's reasons for that. The Second Amendment states that; a

well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. It begins with a well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, and it ends with shall not be infringed.

Madam Speaker, this bill was a knee-jerk reaction to a handful of Nazis up in Springfield, a group that everybody in here sees as vile and disgusting, and they've left. But the types of activity that this bill seeks to address, the types of illegal activity, are already covered by existing laws. This law will infringe on constitutional rights and it should be voted down today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bill not just as a Representative of my district but as a friend and a neighbor. My district is vibrant and diverse, including the many faith traditions of our residents. We are united by many things, but the greatest uniter is the respect with which we treat each other. As a brief but illustrative aside, I receive the most polite, well-reasoned communications from my constituents who disagree with me. It's a blessing to represent such deeply honorable people. Even in such a respectful environment, we are not immune to disturbing hate crimes. Once, a Muslim friend of mine had his car vandalized in his own driveway. In true Bangor fashion, a local car detailing business stepped up to clean the spray paint off his car for free. In another instance, a swastika was painted on the road outside of one of Bangor's synagogues. The Rabbi of this synagogue is my beloved neighbor. I'm happy to share that many members of our neighborhood and community reached out to the congregation to ask if we could help members feel more secure.

The reason I share these stories is not because the Bangor community can't step up to help the very people targeted by hate groups such as those that attempted to form a paramilitary training camp in my county, but because we should not have to. I have seen residents of my city come to the aid of people time and time again. I have seen my community repeatedly stand up to those that would have us live in fear and say not here, not now, not ever. When the paramilitary group began its operations, my constituents expressed extreme concern and distress because we all realized one thing. We as individuals can respond to individual incidents but repelling a coordinated campaign of hate and fear from a paramilitary force is beyond the capacity of individuals, good-hearted though they may be.

Over the course of my time in the Legislature, I have heard Members of this Body from both sides of the aisle speak eloquently against hatred. I know that we all want our constituents to feel safe in their homes and their communities. I won't ask anyone to follow my light, but I will ask you to follow the light so perfectly embodied by my community; the light of dignity and respect. To quote Shakespeare, so shines a good deed in a naughty world. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Palermo, Representative Smith.

Representative **SMITH**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I did not plan on rising today, but I did want to bring a different perspective to this bill. I wanted to read a little bit from a voicemail that I received recently. "You are such an ignorant, simplistic whore. It's unfortunate your mother didn't have an abortion in the first place, you worthless;" something starts with a C word. "You're a disgrace and embarrassment to the United States of America and will be judged accordingly by history as

your ancestors will utterly F'ing despise you to your very F'ing core."

That's just one of many lovely emails and voicemails I did receive over the past several months. And I stand here in opposition to this bill, because people do have the right to leave messages and emails and even forming groups that this person may be forming in. We all live with a modicum of fear, you might say, in our lives that someone could swat our house at 3:00 in the morning. I've had that discussion with my family and how we would react as well. We all are standing up for what we believe in and there are people that oppose us. Some at campsites in northern Maine or at campsites in southern Maine, I'm not exactly sure. But I do know that we have laws in the books and that if I felt that these people; of course, they were cowards and didn't put their number down; if I felt that they were indeed going to be violent towards me, I would certainly call the police or someone to look into this situation. I think we have those in place to protect us and I think that an overreach here is happening. I think it's being looked at with only one lens of a white supremacist group when there are plenty of other groups with weapons and who are organizing against other sides that we need to be very careful about what we tread on here, and I don't think that this is the bill that we should be advancing. Thank you.

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

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We've heard a lot of discussion back and forth on what constitutes paramilitary and with your permission, I'd like to read the definition as Wikipedia defines it. "A paramilitary is an organization whose structure, tactics, training, subculture and function are similar to those of a professional military, but which is not part of a country's official or legitimate armed forces."

Madam Speaker, I am no longer in the United States Air Force. I am retired. I'm a retiree. I am no longer part of an official military organization. However, I do assemble, I do meet with other retired members of the military; and it's called the American Legion, it's called the VFW, of which I belong to. And when we arrive at our meetings, a lot of our members are carrying. They have weapons on them. We meet, we assemble. Are we a paramilitary? Are we a danger to this country? By definition, we would fit into this category which would prohibit organizations like the American Legion, like the VFW, from assembling, and make us outlaws. Madam Speaker, I urge Members of this House to vote against the pending motion and not make retired military members who belong to these organizations criminals. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would just like to point out; thank you to my Representative Colleague from across the aisle; that we did not use the definitions from Wikipedia. There are very specific definitions contained in the bill which would make it very clear that the presentation of what he just suggested would not be covered under this bill and would be exempt. It's very clear in this bill that what we're talking about is training or demonstrating that is intended to be used in or in the furtherance of civil disorder. Let me read that again. Training or demonstrating that is intended to be used in or in the furtherance of civil disorder, and civil disorder is also very clearly defined in this bill. Thank you.

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

Representative **CYRWAY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a question to the Body. Would that include video games for children and for adults as part of their training?

The SPEAKER: The Member has posed a question to anyone who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Zager.

Representative **ZAGER**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, Honorable Colleagues in the House. In 2021, I was in a bipartisan discussion, casual discussion, not on policy *per se*, but about current events, and it's actually more Republican than Democrat. And we were talking at one point about the rise in hate crimes; this was a few years ago; that had been seen in the years preceding that and, of course, everyone is against hate crimes in that group. There had been a very large rise in racist and antisemitic crimes, in particular. Maine was no exception. And one legislator said, I want to speak out before it's too late. I want to speak out before it's too late. Too late would be waiting until after a hate group consolidates and exercises paramilitary capability. Too late would be waiting for a hypothetical perfect instrument, for pretty much any instrument that can be used for good can also be used for harm. But we still should adopt duly vetted, reasonable and good instruments, such as this bill.

The amended version of this bill helps prevent current and future hate groups from using our State as a paramilitary training site. If a group knowingly, intentionally trains others for civil disorder, not peaceful assembly as guaranteed by the Constitution, certainly not at the VFW meetings that I attend or any other peaceful assembly. There's, of course, sensible exceptions in the bill. Self-defense; self-defense is not touched by this bill. ROTC; Reserve Officer Training Corps; drill at University of Maine, Maine Maritime Academy, for instance, would be untouched by this bill. Legitimate law enforcement and of course peaceful assembly.

This Body deliberates often weighing the rights, one right against another. That's why this is a difficult enterprise that we're engaged in. So, how do we balance the legitimate exercise of rights that have been brought up with the right of people not to be terrorized? That is a right, to not be terrorized. Articulated in many documents, not only in this State but in many other states and in our Federal Statutes. In the hearing on this bill, Attorney General Frey testified on a number of technical legal grounds. Number one, he pointed out the Supreme Court of the United States has already recognized that states have the authority to impose such prohibitions. The Supreme Court of the United States is, of course, very familiar with the First, Second and all the Amendments of the Constitution, and the Supreme Court has already said that it is legitimate for states to have some boundaries, and that's what LD 2130 is contemplating. The Attorney General also said that Maine's Constitution prohibits private armies. The language of that was largely left to Statute and the current language, until this bill was proposed, is really a 19th century formulation of the imposition of military might. You know, marching, drilling in formation for instance, but training in a paramilitary manner as articulated in this bill is not currently prohibited in Maine Statute. The Attorney General also said that statutory details to date have thus been too vague and too weak to prevent a hate group from buying land to organize and to train in a paramilitary fashion. LD 2130 would thus update the Statute from the 19th Century to the 21st, to our times. The Attorney General also said that the knowledge requirement, that those who truly didn't understand an organization's intent, would be excused. So, if we're concerned about our constituents who are lawfully teaching others how to

exercise their right to keep and bear arms without knowing that that group actually has civil unrest in mind, that trainer would not be culpable. The Attorney General said that those with the culpable state of mind can be punished if this were to become Statute. This bill would be a careful balance to help us prohibit paramilitary training while also protecting rights. So, I urge this body to recognize that this is a step forward. It will help us from being too late in response to hate in a way that goes beyond mere rhetoric. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Oakland, Representative Nutting.

Representative **NUTTING**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I should know better. Men and Women of the House, just a couple of points.

First of all, I've been here a while and I've never known anyone who either publicly or privately expressed their appreciation for Nazis. Never, ever once. So, when we discover there's a group of Nazis in the woods of Maine marching and shooting and planning on some insurrection, I suppose, or something, allegedly, it should disturb all of us. And I think it has disturbed us enough to bring this bill forward. I think the problem with the bill is, and we looked at it in Committee, tried to discover a way to deal with those people who really have something bad in mind as opposed to those people who don't, and frankly, half of us or almost half of us, couldn't figure out a way to do it.

The last speaker talked about the state of mind and how, if somebody mistakenly gets into trouble and gets caught up in something that looks like it might be illegal, along comes the District Attorney and says well, you didn't really mean it or perhaps you didn't understand the law, we're not going to bother you. That's the problem with this bill. The interpretation of it, I think, will vary from county to county to county and if you have groups that you like or who support you, that you think are okay, I wouldn't be so sure. Just to read from the bill, from the original bill and included in the amendment, is the definition of civil disorder. "Civil disorder means any public disturbance involving an act of violence by a group of two or more persons that causes an immediate danger of injury to another person or damage to the property of another person or results in injury to another person or damage to the property of another person." So, it's a public disturbance as an act of violence by two or more people against anybody, somebody. I submit to you that there are groups who all of us either follow or have seen on the news, or perhaps think they're doing the right thing or the wrong thing, that will get caught up in this bill and with the various ways that it's seen by District Attorneys, I'm afraid that people that, maybe some of us think are okay to be demonstrating, are going to get caught up in it and get in trouble. I don't think we could find a way to only deal with those bad people and leave the good people alone. That's why I'm on the Ought Not to Pass. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question, if you would indulge me. Preceding the list of exceptions in Section 2, the heading reads, "Unauthorized Paramilitary Training Prohibited." How is it that one would become authorized and under what; where is the definition of how to be authorized? For instance, my colleague mentioning the group of veterans that are together, say, in a sandpit, shooting on a Saturday afternoon or one veteran with five friends that are untrained, giving them pointers on how to use a firearm. How would that be authorized or not authorized? The definition of how to become authorized would be appreciated. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Member has posed a question to anyone who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Paris, Representative Andrews.

Representative **ANDREWS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd just like to point out the amended bill is a thought crime wrapped in an authoritarian fever dream. Stop taking your constituents' rights away. Vote no.

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Biddeford, Representative Malon.

Representative **MALON**: Madam Speaker, the Member is questioning other Members' motives.

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative MALON of Biddeford objected to the comments of Representative ANDREWS of Paris because he was questioning the motives of other Members of the House.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would remind all Members not to question the motives of other Members or impugn their character.

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

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **ANDREWS**: I'm pointing out this is a willful action to take away law-abiding citizens' rights; I'm not questioning anyone's motives, I'm stating fact yet again. Thank you.

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

Representative **THORNE**: Madam Speaker, I apologize for rising a third time to speak on this bill and I would like my colleague who corrected me that the VFW and the American Legion are exempt from this bill; I've read the bill, I've read the amendments, and I fail to see where it says anything about the American Legion or the VFW is exempt from fitting into this category of unauthorized paramilitary and I question who does the authorizing and who does the unauthorized categorization under this bill. Thank you.

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

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, I'd like to read this sentence to you. "If the person knows or reasonably should know that the teaching, training or demonstrating is intended to be used in or in furtherance of civil disorder." So, if the VFW or the American Legion is training their members in the furtherance of or to be used in to create civil disorder, which I don't believe that they are, then they would have a problem with this bill.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bath, Representative Sinclair.

Representative **SINCLAIR**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak against the motion. I find myself joining in that with a number of folks that I don't normally align myself with. My professional life has been dedicated to serving many of the marginalized groups that the Good Representative from Orono mentioned, but my professional life also is dedicated toward protecting the rights, even the rights of those whose notions and expressions of those notions I find extremely distasteful. It's not always comfortable to do so, but I think it's always incumbent upon me, not just in my professional life but also in my work here, and I plan to vote against the motion.

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. 372**

YEA - Ankeles, Arford, Bell, Brennan, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Hobbs, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, LaRochelle, Lee, Lookner, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett R, Montell, Moonen, Moriarty, Murphy, Osher, Perry A, Perry J, Pringle, Rana, Roberts, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Stover, Supica, Terry, White B, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Dill, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Galletta, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Javner, Landry, Lemelin, Lyman, Mason, Millett H, Milliken, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Pluecker, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, Warren, White J, Williams, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Babin, Boyle, Carmichael, Collamore, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Gifford, Griffin, Jackson, Lajoie, Lanigan, Lavigne, Libby, Madigan, O'Connell, O'Neil, Perkins, Rielly, Riseman, Schmursal-Burgess, Skold, Theriault.  
Yes, 66; No, 60; Absent, 24; Vacant, 1; Excused, 0.

66 having voted in the affirmative and 60 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 24 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended Report was ACCEPTED.**

The Bill was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (H-757) 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-757)** and sent for concurrence.

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Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-756)** on Bill "An Act to Provide Funds to the Maine Indian Education School District" (H.P. 917) (L.D. 1421)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York  
LIBBY of Cumberland  
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

BRENNAN of Portland  
DODGE of Belfast  
LYMAN of Livermore Falls  
MILLETT of Cape Elizabeth  
MURPHY of Scarborough  
SAMPSON of Alfred  
SARGENT of York  
WORTH of Ellsworth

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

Signed:

Representatives:

BAGSHAW of Windham

POLEWARCZYK of Wiscasset

**READ.**

On motion of Representative BRENNAN of Portland, 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**.

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On motion of Representative DODGE of Belfast, the House adjourned at 12:52 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 22, 2024.

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Seven Members of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-758)** on Bill "An Act to Expand the State's Workforce by Supporting the Transition from Incarceration to Employment"

(H.P. 578) (L.D. 931)

Signed:

Senator:

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook

HASENFUS of Readfield

LAJOIE of Lewiston

LOOKNER of Portland

MATHIESON of Kittery

MILLIKEN of Blue Hill

Four Members of the same Committee report in Report "B" **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senators:

HARRINGTON of York

LaFOUNTAIN of Kennebec

Representatives:

ARDELL of Monticello

PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft

One Member of the same Committee reports in Report "C" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-759)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representative:

NUTTING of Oakland

**READ.**

On motion of Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook, **TABLED** pending **ACCEPTANCE** of any Report and later today assigned.