

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
31st Legislative Day
Thursday, March 28, 2024

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

Prayer by Pastor Glenn Peterson, Hope Baptist Church, Manchester.

National Anthem by Rochelle Stewart, Norridgewock.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Medical Provider of the Day, Jacob Longfellow, DO, Farmingdale.

The Journal of yesterday was read and approved.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (S.C. 1052)

**MAINE SENATE
131ST LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

March 27, 2024

Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross

Speaker of the House

2 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0002

Dear Speaker Talbot Ross:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A. §158 and Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Maine Legislature, please be advised that the Senate today confirmed the following nominations:

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

- Catherine Robbins-Halsted of Searsmont for reappointment, to the Land for Maine's Future Board,
- Beth A. Schiller of Bowdoinham for appointment, to the Land for Maine's Future Board.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

**PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING
REFERENCE**

Bill "An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public"

(H.P. 1470) (L.D. 2283)

Sponsored by Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland.

Cosponsored by Senator VITELLI of Sagadahoc and Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, TERRY of Gorham, Senator: DAUGHTRY of Cumberland.

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Committee on **JUDICIARY** suggested.

Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor moved that the Bill and all accompanying papers be **INDEFINITELY POSTPONED**.

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

Representative **MOONEN**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was going to request a Roll Call because my Majority Leader was not in her seat, but now she is, so, I will not do so.

Representative TERRY of Gorham **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **INDEFINITELY POSTPONE** the Bill and all accompanying papers.

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 Auburn, Representative Libby.

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to pose a question through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I need some clarification; it's been a little bit since I checked my leg mail, but I know some notices came through with when Committees are expected to be done with their work. So, I would request to anyone who has read that notice more recently than I have would answer when Committees are due to be done with work and when we were notified that public hearings and work sessions were to be completed by.

The SPEAKER: The Member has posed a question through the Chair for anyone who would like to respond.

Seeing none, a roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is to Indefinitely Postpone the Bill and all accompanying papers. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 434

YEA - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Carmichael, Collamore, Copeland, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Millett H, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

NAY - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Hobbs, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, LaRochelle, Lee, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Moriarty, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Perry A, Perry J, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, White B, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Galletta, Landry, Lanigan, Riseman, Skold.

Yes, 67; No, 77; Absent, 7; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

67 having voted in the affirmative and 77 voted in the negative, with 7 being absent, and accordingly the motion to **INDEFINITELY POSTPONE** the Bill and all accompanying papers **FAILED**.

Subsequently, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

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

ORDERS

On motion of Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1469) (Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BRADSTREET of Vassalboro, GREENWOOD of Wales, GRIFFIN of Levant, HENDERSON of Rumford, NESS of Fryeburg, WALKER of Naples)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING CHRISTIAN HOLY WEEK IN MAINE

WHEREAS, the week preceding the Christian celebration of Easter contains observances relating to the Biblical description of last days of Jesus; and

WHEREAS, on Palm Sunday, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem; and

WHEREAS, on Holy Monday, Jesus freed the sacrificial animals and cleansed the temple; and

WHEREAS, on Holy Tuesday, Jesus taught at the temple; and

WHEREAS, on Holy Wednesday, a disciple named Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for pieces of silver; and

WHEREAS, on Maundy Thursday, the Last Supper with the disciples occurred, and Jesus washed their feet; and

WHEREAS, on Good Friday, Jesus was crucified on a cross, and darkness covered the whole earth; and

WHEREAS, on Holy Saturday, Jesus rested in the tomb; and

WHEREAS, on Resurrection Sunday, also known as Easter Sunday, Jesus rose from the dead, and his death, burial and resurrection paid for the sins of the people and gives all who believe in him eternal life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize Christian Holy Week in Maine; and be it further

RESOLVED: That We extend best wishes to all those of Christian faith in Maine, the United States and across the world for a joyous and meaningful observance of Holy Week and Easter.

READ.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know that this week and this weekend, Good Friday and Easter are labeled as a, you know, Christian holiday. But God is a good God, he's the God of all people, and I guess I just have a message to everybody that God is real and he loves you and he sent his Son to die for us and he got on that cross and died for our sins. And if you don't know God, I would encourage you to get to know God and build a relationship with Him and I hope everybody has a great weekend and a Happy Easter. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

On motion of Representative LAJOIE of Lewiston, the following House Order: (H.O. 47)

ORDERED, that Representative Jeffrey Sean Adams of Lebanon be excused Mar 20 and 21 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Richard H. Campbell of Orrington be excused Mar 20 for legislative business reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Meldon H. Carmichael of Greenbush be excused Mar 19, 20, 21 and 25 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Amanda N. Collamore of Pittsfield be excused Mar 25 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative W. Edward Crockett of Portland be excused Mar 20, 21 and 25 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative David G. Haggan of Hampden be excused Mar 12 and 19 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Randall C. Hall of Wilton be excused Mar 21 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Adam R. Lee of Auburn be excused Mar 20 and 21 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Marc G. Malon II of Biddeford be excused Mar 19 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Kevin J. M. O'Connell of Brewer be excused Mar 25 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Morgan J. Rielly of Westbrook be excused Mar 19 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Heidi H. Sampson of Alfred be excused Mar 12, 13, 14, 19, 20 and 21 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Michael Soboleski of Phillips be excused Mar 20 for legislative business reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Sophia B. Warren of Scarborough be excused Mar 19 for health reasons.

READ and PASSED.

SPECIAL SENTIMENT CALENDAR

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

Recognizing:

Caleb Antl, of Freeport, a member of Troop No. 45, who has attained the high rank and distinction of Eagle Scout. This is the highest award in Scouting and is given for excellence in skills development, leadership, personal growth and community service. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(HLS 903)

Presented by Representative SACHS of Freeport.

Cosponsored by Senator DAUGHTRY of Cumberland.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative SACHS of Freeport, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

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

Representative **SACHS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to stand before you to recognize both Caleb Antl and his brother, Jared, who's listed on 5-14, who unfortunately could not be with us this afternoon; or this morning, it feels like afternoon.

It was my great pleasure to speak at their Eagle Scout Court of Honor this past Sunday in Freeport. As it was noted by their Uncle Charlie, who himself was an Eagle Scout in 1959, it takes dedication, hard work and commitment to become an Eagle Scout. It was especially poignant for me, Madam Speaker, because when I started Pack 45 back in the day, these two were my little Cub Scouts, and they are much taller at this moment than they were then.

I reflected on Sunday about the good you put in the world, Madam Speaker, where you may not always be able to see the results. Service is sometimes selfless. The kiosks that they built, the trails that they maintained, the benches that they placed there for people to enjoy health and wellness in our community; they will probably never meet those folks who they have helped, but they know that their service and their commitment to our community is there for all to see and enjoy. The impact that Caleb and Jared have had on our community, both on younger men coming up through the Cub Scout ranks and to all who know them, are incredibly important. And I thank them for being just two of the 2.96% of scouts who enter scouting who have attained the amazing rank of Eagle Scout. I'd like to urge you, Madam Speaker, to join me in wishing them well and we can't wait to see what they do. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Recognizing:

the Lisbon/St. Dominic Competition Cheer Team, which won the Class C State Championship. This is the team's third straight Class C title and its second straight as a co-op program. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(HLS 913)

Presented by Representative MASON of Lisbon. Cosponsored by Senator BRAKEY of Androscoggin, Senator TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin, Representative GALLETTA of Durham, Representative LEE of Auburn, Representative LIBBY of Auburn, Representative SHAW of Auburn.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative MASON of Lisbon, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

On motion of the same Representative, **TABLED** pending **PASSAGE** and later today assigned.

In Memory of:

Paul Francis Zibura, of Windsor. Mr. Zibura had a career serving as a firefighter and paramedic. He worked for the Gardiner Fire Department beginning in 1984 and then joined the Augusta Fire Department in 1987. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2009 and retired in 2014. Mr. Zibura will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family and friends and all those whose lives he touched;

(SLS 1706)

On **OBJECTION** of Representative BRIDGEO of Augusta, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

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

Representative **BRIDGEO**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Colleagues here in the House. I rise to acknowledge a dedicated, capable public servant who gave over 30 years of his life to the service of the fire and paramedic and ambulance corps. The last 16 years that Paul worked in that capacity was in Augusta, as a firefighter and a paramedic and, ultimately, a Command officer. During those 16 years, I was the City Manager and we worked together and I developed a strong sense of respect and admiration for him. He was devoted to his family, to his community, the Town of Windsor and to his profession. He succumbed to a fatal disease too young, 64 years old, but he left this world a much better place for having been here. I was proud to know and to have worked with him. Thank you.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** in concurrence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-613)** on Bill "An Act to Reduce Prescription Drug Costs by Requiring Reference-based Pricing"

(S.P. 745) (L.D. 1829)

Signed:

Senators:

BAILEY of York
RENY of Lincoln

Representatives:

PERRY of Calais
ARFORD of Brunswick
CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham
MASTRACCIO of Sanford
MATHIESON of Kittery

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

Signed:

Representatives:

CYRWAY of Albion
MORRIS of Turner
NUTTING of Oakland
SWALLOW of Houlton

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-613)**.

READ.

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

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

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

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

Representative **MORRIS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in opposition to the pending motion, as the amendment that we are discussing makes things very unclear as far as the makeup of this board. It could be problematic. There doesn't

seem to be any sort of idea about what type of experts we're going to be putting on this board, it seems to just be left up to the discretion of whoever is making the appointments.

The other issue is what this bill is seeking to do is constitutionally suspect. Whenever you have government attempting to set prices, it can be a real problem in terms of its constitutionality, particularly when we're trying to regulate things that are happening in other states. It's a reason why in other states, these laws have gone to court and been struck down, and it's a reason why a similar bill was vetoed in the past.

The other issue with this bill is that the enforcement of it is unclear. It seems to suggest that insurance companies, who are the ones that; obviously, their goal is to try and negotiate to get lower prices from the drug companies, yet we're going to put the enforcement on them if they can't do that. That seems to be a real problem. Most of those things are done through a contract and it just doesn't seem right that we would try to enforce it through this process by holding the insurance company accountable if the drug company doesn't; with no enforcement mechanisms behind the pharmaceutical companies as far as if they're not willing to sell their drugs for a lower cost.

The other problem with this bill is obviously; if this were to take effect and we start having these reference-based prices, or we do try to limit the prices, try to do price controls, typically what happens is those drugs will not be available to Maine citizens and that could itself be a problem. If we have a situation where a drug company decides that, rather than have to deal with our regulatory regime, because Maine is a relatively small market, they decide not to offer their products to Maine citizens that may need them for care. I'd rather leave that decision in the hands of Maine citizens, I'd rather leave it in the hands of the free market. This bill is really not ready for primetime. I would urge this Body to reject this motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Houlton, Representative Swallow.

Representative **SWALLOW**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in opposition to this legislation. Price controls rarely work and, in this case, in a State of our size, with a small percentage of us included under this plan, with the majority of our population under Medicare/Medicaid/MaineCare and self-insured programs, we have little leverage to enforce this.

The bill seeks to set upper payment limits on the amount that can be paid for certain prescription drugs, but not what the manufacturer can charge. This is a way of hopefully getting around the State regulatory issue that violates the Constitution; however, that's still suspect. Because of our minimal leverage, if insureds are hampered by the upper payment limits, manufacturers may not comply with those limits, as the Good Representative from Turner has mentioned, leading to a shortage of certain prescription drugs. This scenario is not uncommon when dealing with price controls and purchasers who have limited numbers.

One of the proposed strategies for review under this bill is the potential regulation and out-of-pocket cost for insureds. If that becomes the case, it will cause increased cost sharing for other services or possible increased deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums for other insureds; a case of cost shifting, nothing really saved. Furthermore, it also has a strategy of potential spending targets. That's another strategy for review. This limits the ability of health plans through utilization management. Health plans must have the wherewithal to manage their spending if they are to meet prescription drug spending targets under this bill. This is somewhat of a catch-22. This regulation has many proposed strategies and levers to

regulate carriers, yet there is no plan for representation on the board for carriers themselves. Thank you.

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

Representative **PERRY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This bill actually gives an assignment to the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to look into reference-based pricing, following what the federal government is doing right now with medications for Medicare. The other part of this bill, because we have a Prescription Drug Affordability Board that is already in place, is that we have a board that has no staff, so, cannot do the work its already been assigned. So, a part of this bill is to add staff; a director and another person; to work with this board to do the work that needs to happen that we're requesting of it to do with this bill. Let's look at this, let's see what we can do and what we can't do, and have the board report back to us with the work that they have done. I urge you to vote in favor.

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. 435

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Carmichael, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Millett H, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Schmursal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Galletta, Landry, Lanigan, Riseman, Skold.

Yes, 78; No, 66; Absent, 7; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

78 having voted in the affirmative and 66 voted in the negative, with 7 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-613)** 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-613)** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-391)** on Bill "An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient Care" (S.P. 656) (L.D. 1639)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
DAUGHTRY of Cumberland

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
GEIGER of Rockland
GERE of Kennebunkport
MALON of Biddeford
RUSSELL of Verona Island
SKOLD of Portland

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

Signed:

Representatives:

BRADSTREET of Vassalboro
DRINKWATER of Milford
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

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-391)**.

READ.

On motion of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, **TABLED** pending **ACCEPTANCE** of either Report and later today assigned.

Majority Report of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Develop a Continuum of Care for Youth Involved in the Justice System and to Develop Alternatives for Juveniles Incarcerated in Long Creek Youth Development Center" (H.P. 1142) (L.D. 1779)

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

SALISBURY of Westbrook
ARDELL of Monticello
LAJOIE of Lewiston
NEWMAN of Belgrade
NUTTING of Oakland

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-869)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox

Representatives:

HASENFUS of Readfield
LOOKNER of Portland
MATHIESON of Kittery
MILLIKEN of Blue Hill

READ.

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

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

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

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Lookner.

Representative **LOOKNER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, I rise with a sense of conviction and urgency to oppose this motion and advocate on the behalf of Maine youth for the passage of this legislation. To the maximum extent possible, we need to keep youth out of harmful punitive systems and incarceration ought to be one of the last resorts, not one of the first, when it comes to addressing youth in crisis. This amended bill, titled "An Act to Prevent Youth Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System by Establishing a Strength-based, Discretionary Juvenile Needs Assessment Program," will accomplish just that. It will provide the possibility of an off-ramp to youth to avoid the criminal justice system when they make mistakes, so that they can avoid a lifetime of harm and negative outcomes.

Maine finds itself at a critical juncture. We must confront the harsh reality of our past failures in addressing juvenile justice. For far too long, our approach has been defined by a punitive mindset, casting our youth into a system ill-equipped to address their complex needs underlying their actions. This approach has not only perpetuated cycles of delinquency and incarceration, but has also betrayed our moral obligation to protect and nurture our State's youngest residents. It is true that Maine has been overly reliant on incarceration and institutionalization for young people with unmet needs. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice found that Maine was violating the Americans with Disabilities Act by failing to provide behavioral health services to children, quote; in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs; unquote. The DOJ also found that, quote; Maine's community-based behavioral health system fails to provide sufficient services. As a result, hundreds of children are unnecessarily segregated in institutions each year while other children are at serious risk of entering institutions; unquote. This represents hundreds of lives derailed, potentials squandered, and futures compromised.

We can and must do better, and shame on us if the best we can do is send at-risk youth to prison for minor infractions of the law stemming from prolonged unmet needs. In many areas of law, we recognize that children are different than adults, especially when it comes to decision making. The latest neuroscience shows us that brain development is incomplete until long after adolescents age out of school and into adulthood. Traumatic experiences in the home and in the criminal justice system undermine this development. At-risk youth in our State need understanding, support and help, not condemnation, punishment and long stays in isolated lockdown environments. Young people with behavioral health problems simply get worse in detention, not better, and therefore, we need to do all in our power to avoid that outcome and that's what this bill will achieve.

This bill would create pivotal advancements in our juvenile justice system's reform, aiming to offer improved support and care for our youth. It establishes a voluntary process for youth who come into contact with law enforcement officers to undergo strength-based needs assessments, rather than immediate involvement in the juvenile justice system. If a law enforcement officer determines that the youth does not represent an immediate risk to public safety, and the child and the child's caregivers consent, then that youth may be diverted to trained behavioral health professionals for strength-based needs assessments, so that we can focus on public safety by working

to address the unmet needs of these youth, rather than relegating them to the criminal justice system. This process is already happening in some communities where law enforcement is familiar with an individual child's circumstances. This bill would simply outline how such a process could voluntarily be undertaken in communities where such parochial ties don't exist. Nothing in this bill would be mandatory, it only is undertaken with the consent of all the parties involved.

We are bound to hear today about dysfunction in other areas of the State that work with youth in crisis, and for that reason, this bill ought not to go into law. And to that, I ask; since when did this Legislature stop working to solve big problems? Since when did we throw up our hands and start saying, we give up when it comes to fixing institutional failures? Because, Madam Speaker, by voting for this motion, I fear that's what we are saying. We are saying we think the criminal justice system is the best option for struggling youth in our communities and that we cannot or will not work to provide better alternatives.

Additionally, this bill creates an implementation stakeholder group of experts to ensure that this program is rolled out effectively, as it has been in many other states. In neighboring New Hampshire, such a process has been in place since 2021, and surveys of law enforcement found that intervening officers agreed with the recommendations of the juvenile needs assessments 94% of the time. The recommendations could be as simple as engagement in after-school programming, or as complex as involvement in high-fidelity wraparound services; services that could be provided much more efficiently and inexpensively in the community rather than in institutional environments.

Growing up in Maine, Madam Speaker, I struggled as an adolescent. I learned the hard lesson that there were few options in my community of places I could turn to for safety. Later in life, in my time working as a behavioral health professional with youth experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder, I learned the hard lesson that our State does not adequately fund community-based services for at-risk youth. Presently, in my time in the Legislature, I've learned the hard lesson that our State is not easily swayed to enact alternatives to failed approaches for at-risk youth. It has been a never-ending saga in my time in the Legislature about how our State fails to provide for youth in the community, instead opting for traumatizing involvement in the criminal justice system, where youth are exposed to ongoing harm, refusing to invest in better options.

Today, Madam Speaker, we have the option, we have the opportunity to rewrite this narrative. By establishing a discretionary juvenile needs assessment program, we acknowledge that behind every desperate act lies a story of unmet need, of trauma and of systemic neglect, and that it is incumbent upon us, as stewards of justice and as guardians of our State's youth, to address these underlying issues with empathy and resolve. By passing this legislation, we send a powerful message that we refuse to stand idly by as our youth are ensnared in a damaged and damaging system, and we chart a new course towards a future where every young Mainer has the opportunity to thrive, to flourish and to fulfill their potential.

Madam Speaker, the entire country is watching what we do today. Ongoing coverage in the *New York Times* is laying bare our State's continuing failure and inability to pass compassionate reforms in the juvenile justice realm. Let us not be remembered as the legislators who turned a blind eye to the suffering of our youth, but as the champions who dared to defy the status quo, who dared to envision a more just and humane society. The time for action is now, so, please join me in

opposing this motion and supporting the amendment. Thank you.

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

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in strong opposition to the pending motion. We have here before us an opportunity to help some of Maine's most vulnerable children. These children come from across the State and they are calling out for help.

When I was a young teenager, I committed an assault that easily could have landed me in jail. I've spoken many times on this floor about my challenges with drugs and alcohol, both of which could've also easily landed me in jail. I am forever grateful that I did not end up incarcerated, because I am confident that my life would look very different now if I had gone to jail. I don't know that I would be standing right here where I am today if I had. We often talk about the iron gates and doors of jails and prison cells as being revolving doors. Sending children to prison sets them on a failing path, one that often leads them right back to prison in adulthood. We can talk about the choices that lead these children, these young people to our juvenile prison here in Maine, but I want to make sure that we know that most of the youth we're talking about, those choices were made for them.

Several young folks, recently incarcerated at Long Creek, came to the State House to share some of their stories with our Committee and with Members of the House and the Senate. One young man, who was recently released, spoke very passionately about his time being locked up in the facility and the sad set of circumstances that led to his arrival at the prison. I won't refer to him by name, but I will share with you that this young man had no meaningful relationships with his parents, suffered from substance use disorders, like myself, and was left to fend for himself for all of his basic needs, including housing, food, transportation and everything else. In his mid-teen years, he got his girlfriend pregnant while they were using drugs together and she ended up having a miscarriage. When she suffered the miscarriage, he stole a car to go see her and he was arrested. He ended up in Long Creek and spent the next few years in and out of the prison. Another young man shared with us that when he was 13 years old, he was under the custody of the State of Maine and he was placed in a homeless shelter by himself. I don't know what his offenses were that led to his incarceration, but I do think that it's a choice that was made for him to put him in that homeless shelter.

I acknowledge that the offenses committed by these young folks are criminal, but these children are industrious, smart, creative, kind people and they have been failed at every step along the way. The offenses that they were charged with were born of necessity or born of a life of struggle. Their offenses all arose from unmet needs. The bill before us would allow them the opportunity to have those needs met. If we took better care to feed, house, clothe, parent, treat and appreciate these children, they would almost certainly not continue to reoffend criminally, and that's been found with this bill passing in New Hampshire. If fulfilling all of the child's basic needs does little or nothing to persuade them against committing future acts of harm, Long Creek would still be available to them.

Just this morning, Callie Ferguson, an award-winning *Bangor Daily News* journalist, published an article in the *New York Times* describing how our most rural and one of our poorest counties, Aroostook County, sends far more children per capita to Long Creek than York or Cumberland Counties do. She writes that Aroostook County, quote; once had at least three group homes for teenagers who needed supervision, but now it has none. During the pandemic, the County's last residential

treatment facility for children closed and reopened as a youth homeless shelter and transitional living program, addressing a growing need but not filling the gap for those who require more care. She also found that, quote; it's difficult to find therapists in Aroostook County, which is one of only two without an intensive in-home behavioral health program aiming at keeping youth out of the justice system. Most young offenders have drug problems, but the State's only residential program is far away, close to Portland, with few slots.

LD 1779 would help expand the options that poverty, the pandemic and the workforce crisis have shrunk. Rural kids deserve just as much care and as many resources as urban kids do. This bill would help make this principle a reality. And we know that offering kids resources helps.

I want to speak about Long Creek itself. As a colleague on this House floor said to me recently, Long Creek amputates the future of a child. I have been to Long Creek and I will say, with no uncertainty, that the men and women who work in this prison care deeply for the children that are in their charge. Every member of the staff that I met in the prison spoke at great length about their care for these kids. I suspect that, because of this love for the kids, they recently wrote to the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections to describe the deeply unfortunate conditions of the facility. *Portland Press Herald* reports that the staff said in their letter, quote; we are in crisis at Long Creek. The Maine Department of Correction's mission statement reads, making our community safer by reducing harm through supportive intervention, empowering change and restoring lives. Achieving this mission is difficult under the current conditions at Long Creek Youth Development Center. Attorneys are reporting that they are not able to access their clients at Long Creek because of extended lockdown times where children are being forced to spend 23 hours a day in their cells for several days at a time, without any electronic devices or meaningful material to pass that time. It was reported that the last six months of 2023 had 156 incidents of violence in the prison, including 58 uses of force against the children there.

Lastly, Maine is one of just eight states that continues to keep our juvenile criminal system under the purview of our adult corrections system. Forty-two states have made the wise decision to move their juvenile corrections system into a more holistic and less punitive settings. This bill, if passed, would be a big step in that wise direction. When we put children who are delinquent in cages, the outcomes for those children are horrendous and for their families and communities are devastating. It isn't sustainable, it isn't safe and it doesn't yield good results in the long term. We are harming these children, we are amputating their futures. Please follow my light. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I just want to remind the Body that what we are indeed getting ready to vote on is a bill entitled "An Act to Develop a Continuum of Care for Youth Involved in the Justice System and to Develop Alternatives for Juveniles Incarcerated in Long Creek Youth Development Center". We are not voting on the Minority Report, this is the Majority Report. And that Report requires: One, the Department of Corrections establish a process to conduct individualized needs assessments and a transition plan for every juvenile in the Department's custody; two, for the Department of Corrections and the Children's Cabinet to develop recommendations for reinvestment of correction funds currently designated for youth incarceration into community-based alternatives; three, the Joint

Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety to study the selection of an entity to manage and distribute corrections funds designated for youth incarceration; four, Department of Corrections to create and implement a workforce development plan for the Long Creek Youth Development Center staff and working with the Department of Labor; and five, the Department of Corrections to develop a plan to repurpose Long Creek Youth Development Center and submit its plan. That's currently what we're voting on, which is the Majority Report. I think that what we've heard about just recently is the Minority Report. Thank you.

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

Representative **MATHIESON**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise in opposition to this motion.

For 20 years, I've been an integrated medical practice owner and a dietician. We work on prevention and healthy services for our patients and, as a trained dietician, it's become very clear to me that dietary changes don't happen just because I tell them to eat their broccoli. Food is more complicated, as is life. Food is comfort, food is love, food is culture, social interactions, convenience, economics and, at times, people have very complicated relationships with food. On the surface, it seems simple, right? Eat your vegetables. If it was that simple, I would be unemployed.

We use a metaphor in our clinic as an iceberg. Without information about the underlying root causes of behaviors, we have very little ability to change these behaviors. We like to take a preventative approach, and this is what I'm hoping for for the State of Maine, to move to a closer step of identifying these underlying causes for youth delinquency. We need to see what's happening first before we can address how to help these youths so they don't often cause delinquent behaviors. Maine has emphasized, in a really positive way, rehabilitation in its approach to juvenile justice, sending fewer teenagers to prison. This change is in keeping with a national movement to consign fewer youth to the criminal justice system, especially the correctional system. The growing body of research shows how harmful this can be to the youth. Adding an additional assessment that emphasizes mental health support, that the State has implicitly indicated we would like to focus on, is a better way to help our children. What better place to put our services than to support children and families? If we mirror something that is happening in New Hampshire, this helps law enforcement, it doesn't mandate law enforcement. This process of assisting our first responders is something that I hear about every day. I hope that you will follow my light and vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you.

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

Representative **GEIGER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, too, rise in opposition to the pending motion. As many of you know, Rockland is one of the communities in Maine that experienced a large rise in crime by juveniles. The Senate Chair, Senator Anne Beebe-Center, and I met with our Police Chief once a week for almost a year, struggling to understand what had happened, how the system works, how it's supposed to work and how it could work. I stand in opposition to this motion because the bill, the Minority Report, is exactly what our Police Chief has been asking for. He wants to see a comprehensive assessment of each of these children and he wants the services put in place, instead of a revolving door of going up to Long Creek where they spend the weekend and are released by a judge. We must fund this, or it is just words on a

page; but I can tell you from spending time with our Police Chief that these children were born of trauma, have had traumatized lives, and that it is treatment that they need. And, as always, Long Creek remains if it fails, but this Minority Report, the comprehensive assessment and then a referral to services, is exactly what our Police Chief is looking for. Please defeat this pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Waterville, Representative Madigan.

Representative **MADIGAN**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Friends and Colleagues in the House. Many years ago, more than I actually care to admit, the Good Representative from Albion and I worked in a youth diversion program. Kids who had nonviolent offenses or minor offenses were sent to a program run by the Good Representative of Albion, and I was the mental health clinician tasked with doing assessments to figure out what to do with these kids that were there for a weekend program. I had many conversations about how we could make that program better, one of which was we needed a reliable and valid assessment that had evidence behind it that would allow me and the other folks who worked in the program, including my friend from Albion, to refer them to a place that would be helpful for them and their family. I'm voting against this motion because I believe in the bill because it does just that; a reliable, scientifically valid across raters; you know, which means they've studied how different people would use this measure and it looks good.

We have been talking for as long as I've been here in these halls about what to do about youth mental health and juvenile justice. And the folks who have worked on this bill actually have done some of their homework. Things like high-fidelity wrap-around to come online through the Department of Health and Human Services as of July 1st. Some of the things we've set aside funding for, some of the things that the Department is working on like high-fidelity wrap-around, multi-systemic family therapy, functional family therapy, are recognized and being funded but we do need more. We have bills that we've all voted on, some of them sitting on the table, I might add, that would actually be places where youth could be referred.

So, I'm asking everyone in this Chamber to recognize the work we've done and the work we still need to do, because the kids and families this impacts are our constituents and many of them have benefited from services like this in the past, services that I've provided; and providers, when we do things like this, they actually can tailor-make other evidence-based practices. I used to do one just for shoplifters, for kids who had shoplifting charges. Absolutely scientifically valid, recognized by the federal government. So, I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from York, Representative Sargent.

Representative **SARGENT**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in opposition to the motion and I express my support for the Minority option. I believe that it is absolutely incumbent upon us, as legislators, to do everything that we can to keep our youth out of a life of incarceration. I speak from two issues of what I think would now be called lived experience. The first, very recent, and the second far into the past.

The first is two weeks ago; I met a young man who is 25 years old, he had just been released after seven years in the Maine State Prison. One of the things I discussed with him was his nearly five years in solitary confinement, or the equivalent of it that we actually have at Maine State Prison. He had entered Long Creek when he was 15 years old. He had substance use disorder and was basically involved in a lot of delinquent

behavior. His mother was the one who basically called law enforcement and then supported his going to Long Creek because, in his words, she was afraid that was the only way to keep me safe. There were no other programs that could help me and she was afraid I would die. Well, Long Creek was a very bad choice for this young man, and actually, his imprisonment led, after he was released there, to being incarcerated in the State prison and now is a felon. His entire future was wrapped up in the fact that his mother was trying to save him. Some of the programs that we're talking about in terms of being introduced that would be an alternative; a safety net, a sieve, as it were; that could sort the people who must be incarcerated from those who really could benefit from an alternative. That is what we have before us.

My second lived experience is a little different. It's my own experience. Some of you know that I grew up on the grounds of what was then called the Maine Correctional Center. My father was the Deputy Superintendent and I lived on the grounds from the time I was three until I was 17. And I knew many, many of the residents because they mowed my lawn, they sometimes took care of our pets; it was a different time, undoubtedly, but one of the things that I learned from my father, who spent his entire career in law enforcement, was that sometimes, good people do bad things. And our system is organized to provide justice, it also is organized to provide a way to be rehabilitated. He told me so often that the fact that a person's first encounter with law enforcement, if that goes bad, they can end up with a lifelong series of challenges.

Basically, what this does is allows us to do better on that first engagement and divert people away from this life. We need to try harder. What we're doing is not sufficient, and that's what this allows. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 436

YEA - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Carmichael, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Fay, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lajoie, Lavigne, Lemelin, Lyman, Mason, Mastraccio, Meyer, Millett H, Moriarty, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Roberts, Rudnicki, Salisbury, Sampson, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White B, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

NAY - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Hobbs, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, LaRochelle, Lee, Libby, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mathieson, Matlack, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Perry A, Perry J, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Rielly, Riseman, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Galletta, Landry, Lanigan, Skold.

Yes, 72; No, 73; Absent, 6; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

72 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, with 6 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

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

Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Minority **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: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Minority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 437

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Hobbs, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, LaRochelle, Lee, Libby, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Perry A, Perry J, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Rielly, Riseman, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Carmichael, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lajoie, Lavigne, Lemelin, Lyman, Mason, Mastraccio, Millett H, Moriarty, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Roberts, Rudnicki, Salisbury, Sampson, Schmearsal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White B, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Galletta, Landry, Lanigan, Skold.

Yes, 75; No, 70; Absent, 6; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 70 voted in the negative, with 6 being absent, and accordingly the Minority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-869)** 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-869)** and sent for concurrence.

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

Representative **WOODSOME**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to present to you the Class A High School Wrestling Championship Team from Massabesic High School. And what I've learned about this Body is that half of us don't know where the other half is, or where they're from. Massabesic High School is located in Central York County, made up of six towns; Waterboro, Alfred, Limerick, Parsonsfield; not Parsonsfield; Shapleigh, Newfield and, who am I forgetting? Lyman, thank you.

Massabesic is a very unique school. They have a great history of wrestling. They weren't formulated until 1969, and they have won several State Championships since then. I applaud these young women and men and they have a fantastic coaching staff. And so, I present to you Massabesic High School, Class A Wrestling Championships.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-872)** on Bill "An Act to Make Necessary Changes to State Law"

(H.P. 288) (L.D. 471)

Signed:

Senators:

NANGLE of Cumberland
BALDACCI of Penobscot
LYFORD of Penobscot

Representatives:

STOVER of Boothbay
COPELAND of Saco
DHALAC of South Portland
GREENWOOD of Wales
POMERLEAU of Standish
RISEMAN of Harrison
UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

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

Signed:

Representatives:

ABDI of Lewiston
ADAMS of Lebanon
SINCLAIR of Bath

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-872)** 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-872)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-875)** on Bill "An Act Regarding Recommendations for Changing Place Names in the State" (H.P. 1065) (L.D. 1667)

Signed:

Senators:

NANGLE of Cumberland
BALDACCI of Penobscot

Representatives:

STOVER of Boothbay
ABDI of Lewiston
COPELAND of Saco
DHALAC of South Portland
RISEMAN of Harrison
SINCLAIR of Bath

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

Signed:

Senator:

LYFORD of Penobscot

Representatives:

ADAMS of Lebanon
GREENWOOD of Wales
POMERLEAU of Standish
UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

READ.

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

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

Representative **STOVER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. LD 1667 is about respecting laws that have been on the books for decades that still haven't been honored; namely, LD 1661, passed in 1977.

This bill achieves three goals. It creates a diverse board to elevate the cultural and historical significance of place names and advise on name change petitions, most crucial of which is the requirement that adequate public input has been solicited in order to recommend a name change. Second; through the duties of the board, it proactively develops clear name-changing guidance where there is none. Third; to reiterate, this bill insists upon community input in naming and renaming, so that local history is honored and names are chosen that respect the culture of the people who have lived on the land. This oversight not only makes sure we are living out the laws of the land, but also that public opinion is respected and has a central place in decision making, rather than relegating oversight of place-name changes to a single volunteer position at Maine GIS.

The proposed Maine Board of Place Names includes a range of individuals with expertise in history of our State, including members of the Wabanaki Tribes and individuals who specialize in the history and culture of Maine's diverse populations. It puts into place policies and procedures we do not currently have in place. In establishing a Maine Board of Place Names, Maine would join 18 other states that use a board or advisory council in guiding their naming and renaming process. A biennial report would be filed each December 15th of odd number years to report out which municipality filed petitions to change names, the outcome and any suggested legislation that would be needed as a result.

What this amendment does. This amendment replaces the bill and does the following: It amends the definition of 'place' in the provision of law that prohibits offensive names for places in the State; it establishes the Maine Board on Place Names as an advisory board and it requires the board to establish policies and procedures for the naming and renaming of places; it requires that the Maine Board on Place Names to serve as a consultant to the State employee who serves as an unofficial liaison to the United States Department of Interior, United States Geographical Survey, United States Board on Geographic Names and the Domestic Names Committee for the purpose of naming and renaming those places in the State under the jurisdiction of the United States Board on Geographic Names; it requires that municipal officers and County Commissioners notify and work with the Maine Board of Place Names if a place name in a municipality or an unorganized territory is found by the Human Rights Commission to be offensive; it requires that the Maine Board on Place Names to submit a report, again, and make those recommendations for legislative changes as needed.

I ask that you follow my light and vote for the Majority Report. Thank you.

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

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in strong opposition to the pending motion and I request a Roll Call.

The same Representative **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: 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. 438

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer, Bridgeo, Carlow, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Hobbs, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, LaRochelle, Lee, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Moriarty, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Perry A, Perry J, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Rielly, Riseman, Roberts, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, White B, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carmichael, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Millett H, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Galletta, Landry, Lanigan, Skold.

Yes, 81; No, 64; Absent, 6; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

81 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, with 6 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-875)** 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-875)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **TAXATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-868)** on Bill "An Act to Require a Corporation That Files a Tax Return in the State to File a Tax Disclosure Statement" (H.P. 851) (L.D. 1337)

Signed:

Senators:

GROHOSKI of Hancock
CHIPMAN of Cumberland

Representatives:

PERRY of Bangor
CARMICHAEL of Greenbush
CROCKETT of Portland
HASENFUS of Readfield
MATLACK of St. George
RANA of Bangor

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

Signed:

Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

LAVIGNE of Berwick
LIBBY of Auburn
QUINT of Hodgdon
RUDNICKI of Fairfield

READ.

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

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on his 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**: 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. 439

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Beck, Bell, Bridgeo, Carmichael, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Hepler, Hobbs, Jauch, Javner, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, LaRochelle, Lee, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett H, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Moriarty, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Perry A, Perry J, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Rielly, Riseman, Roberts, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Sinclair, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, White B, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Galletta, Landry, Lanigan, Skold.

Yes, 82; No, 63; Absent, 6; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

82 having voted in the affirmative and 63 voted in the negative, with 6 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-868)** 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-868)** and sent for concurrence.

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

CONSENT CALENDAR

First Day

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

(S.P. 898) (L.D. 2105) Resolve, to Protect and Enhance Access to Behavioral Health Services in Androscoggin County and Surrounding Communities (EMERGENCY) Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-614)**

(H.P. 492) (L.D. 803) Bill "An Act Regarding Taxation" Committee on **TAXATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-873)**

(H.P. 1344) (L.D. 2120) Bill "An Act to Fund the Delivery of Educational Services to Children with Special Needs as Required by State and Federal Law in Special Purpose Private Preschools" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-863)**

(H.P. 1386) (L.D. 2166) Bill "An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-874)**

(H.P. 1399) (L.D. 2185) Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 2: Medical Use of Cannabis Program Rule, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Office of Cannabis Policy (EMERGENCY) Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-870)**

(H.P. 1419) (L.D. 2212) Bill "An Act to Strengthen Maine's Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment" Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-876)**

(H.P. 1441) (L.D. 2248) Bill "An Act to Reduce the Reporting Requirements for Special Utility Districts and to Require the Maine Public Utility Financing Bank to File a Report with the Legislature" Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-871)**

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

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

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

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Order: (S.P. 997)

ORDERED, the House concurring, that when the Senate and House adjourn, they do so until Monday, April 1, 2024 at 10:00 in the morning, or until the call of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, respectively.

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

ENACTORS

Emergency Measure

An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Adjustments for Sudden and Severe Disruption of Municipal Valuation

(S.P. 828) (L.D. 2006)
(C. "A" S-606)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 107 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act Regarding the Property Tax Exemption, Business Equipment Tax Exemption and Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement for Facilities Storing Spent Nuclear Fuel and Radioactive Waste

(S.P. 855) (L.D. 2027)
(C. "A" S-602)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 109 voted in favor of the same and 8 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Set a Debt Limit for the Anson and Madison Water District

(S.P. 964) (L.D. 2242)
(C. "A" S-598)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 117 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Clarify Permissible Election and Lobbying Expenditures by Consumer-owned Utilities and the Casco Bay Island Transit District

(S.P. 972) (L.D. 2254)
(C. "A" S-610)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 111 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Reconvene a Driver Education Working Group to Evaluate Hardships to Underserved Populations and Low-income Families

(H.P. 1467) (L.D. 2281)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 106 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Alleviate the Staffing Crisis in the Child Protective Services System

(S.P. 890) (L.D. 2097)
(C. "A" S-609)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 111 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 101: Maine Unified Special Education Regulation Birth to Age Twenty-Two, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education

(H.P. 1395) (L.D. 2180)
(C. "A" H-858)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 107 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 132: Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education

(H.P. 1397) (L.D. 2182)
(C. "A" H-857)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 107 voted in favor of the same and 2 against, and accordingly the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Acts

An Act to Limit Retroactive Application of Land Use Ordinances to Pending Permit Applications That Propose Housing

(S.P. 331) (L.D. 772)
(C. "A" S-600)

An Act to Amend the Pupil Counts Used for Determination of School Administrative Unit Operating Costs

(H.P. 497) (L.D. 808)
(C. "A" H-860)

An Act to Strengthen Freedom of Speech Protections by Enacting the Uniform Public Expression Protection Act

(S.P. 367) (L.D. 870)
(C. "A" S-604)

An Act Regarding Unobligated Balances from Amounts Appropriated for General Purpose Aid for Local Schools and to Require Annual Reports on School Demographics

(H.P. 897) (L.D. 1402)
(C. "A" H-859)

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

(H.P. 1304) (L.D. 2042)
(C. "A" H-861)

An Act Regarding the Placement of Certain Defendants Found Incompetent to Stand Trial

(H.P. 1308) (L.D. 2046)
(S. "A" S-597 to C. "A" H-817)

An Act Regarding Drug Awareness Instruction in Secondary Schools

(S.P. 882) (L.D. 2089)
(C. "A" S-607)

An Act to Modernize and Consolidate Certain Court Facilities

(S.P. 883) (L.D. 2090)
(C. "A" S-605)

An Act to Strengthen Shoreland Zoning Enforcement
(S.P. 894) (L.D. 2101)
(C. "A" S-611)

An Act to Support Municipalities by Repealing the Law Limiting the Municipal Property Tax Levy
(S.P. 895) (L.D. 2102)
(C. "A" S-560)

An Act to Amend the Charter of the Wiscasset Water District
(S.P. 897) (L.D. 2104)
(C. "A" S-599)

An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics
(S.P. 914) (L.D. 2118)
(C. "A" S-608)

An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals and Establish a Stakeholder Group to Develop a 10-year Plan to Address the Root Causes of Homelessness
(H.P. 1360) (L.D. 2136)
(C. "A" H-862)

An Act Establishing Concurrent Jurisdiction with the Federal Courts in Certain Juvenile Matters
(S.P. 923) (L.D. 2171)
(S. "A" S-603 to C. "A" S-549)

An Act to Require Public Safety Answering Point and Dispatch Center Cost Reporting and to Direct the Formation of a Staffing and Recruiting Stakeholder Group
(S.P. 993) (L.D. 2278)

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

Resolves

Resolve, Directing the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future to Recommend Proposals to Support the Development of Attainable Housing
(S.P. 920) (L.D. 2169)
(C. "A" S-601)

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

An Act to Establish a Minimum Value Threshold for the Class C Crime of Theft by a Repeat Offender
(H.P. 1442) (L.D. 2246)
(C. "A" H-846)

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

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

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

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

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think, as sometimes do, even with proper public notice and the whole process, that sometimes, things down here do fly under the radar. This would be one of those. The business community has become aware of this bill and is, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, they are scared to death of this bill.

When you look at places where this has passed, the crime that has gone on; it's just gotten absolutely out of hand and I think that we should put a hold on this and stop this bill in its tracks today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 440

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Carlow, Carmichael, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Millett H, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, O'Connell, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Boyle, Brennan, Campbell, Collamore, Galletta, Jauch, Landry, Lanigan, Skold.

Yes, 77; No, 65; Absent, 9; Vacant, 0; Excused, 0.

77 having voted in the affirmative and 65 voted in the negative, with 9 being absent, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

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

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm usually a bull in a china closet, so, it baffles me how I hit that too lightly. I wanted to recognize, with your permission, to speak on the record.

The SPEAKER: The Representative has requested unanimous consent to address the House on the record. Hearing no objection, the Representative may proceed on the record.

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This week commemorated two significant days of remembrance.

On Monday was Medal of Honor Day in the United States, and it is a federal observance that is celebrated each year on March 25th. It was created to honor the heroism and sacrifice of the Medal of Honor recipients of the United States. The holiday has been celebrated since 1991, when then-President George H.W. Bush signed Public Law 101-564 on November 15, 1990, which was passed by the 101st United States Congress in November 1990 and created it. The holiday was chosen to be celebrated on March 25th to honor the 23 men who

participated in the Great Locomotive Chase and received Medals of Honor for it. Now, the Great Locomotive Chase occurred on April 12, 1862, in Northern Georgia, and I will let everyone search for that to tease the moment.

Also, tomorrow is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. On March 28, 2017, then-President Donald Trump signed the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017. This Act officially recognizes March 29th as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. The Act also includes the day among those days on which the U.S. flag should be especially displayed. March 29th was chosen as National Vietnam War Veterans Day because on March 29, 1973, Military Assistance Command Vietnam, MACV, was disbanded and the last U.S. combat troops departed the Republic of Vietnam. The last unit of the elements of MACV's infantry security force, special guard, actually, special couriers. On March 29, 2012, then-President Barack Obama proclaimed March 29, 2012, as Vietnam Veterans Day. The proclamation called upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities that commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the Vietnam War.

And lastly, Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I wanted to let you know that the Gold Stars Tribute Wall will be on display here in Augusta behind the Elks Club in Augusta, if you go past the Augusta Civic Center and Ninety-Nine and out that way, the Elks Club is out there and the Augusta Elks Lodge Number 964 is honored to be hosting the Gold Star Tribute Wall over Memorial Weekend. It's free to the public, it's available all weekend and sponsorships are available if you're so inclined. Ten a.m. on May 25th is the opening ceremony for that, and I will provide everybody with a flyer next week. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Good Representative from Carmel is the reason that I rise today. My father was a plank owner on the USS *Kawishiwi* and he died of a service-related illness. As we think of our veterans and thank our veterans, I also want to remind people that the Veteran Service Offices are available to help our veterans and to help families like mine as they did when my father was ill. Thank you.

On motion of Representative BRIDGEO of Augusta, the House adjourned at 12:56 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Monday, April 1, 2024, or until the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, respectively, pursuant to the Joint Order (S.P. 997) and in honor and lasting tribute to Paul Francis Zibura of Windsor.