MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
6th Legislative Day
Tuesday, February 10, 2026

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

Prayer by Reverend Alicia Vélez Stewart, United Methodist Church, Brunswick.

National Anthem by Marshwood Middle School Chorus, Eliot.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Medical Provider of the Day, Joanmarie Pellegrini, MD, Holden.

The Journal of Tuesday, February 3, 2026 was read and approved.

SENATE PAPERS

Bill "An Act to Protect Students by Ensuring Schools Have Complete Information About School Employees and Applicants for Employment"

(S.P. 893) (L.D. 2192)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** in concurrence.

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

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

PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING REFERENCE

Bill "An Act to Offset Federal Cuts to Health Insurance for Certain Maine Families and Seniors"

(H.P. 1487) (L.D. 2208)

Sponsored by Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford.

Cosponsored by President DAUGHTRY of Cumberland and Representatives: CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham, DODGE of Belfast, JULIA of Waterville, MATHIESON of Kittery, RAY of Lincolnville, Senators: GROHOSKI of Hancock, RENY of Lincoln, TIPPING of Penobscot.

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** suggested.

On motion of Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEATH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Refer to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Pursuant to Statute

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources** on Bill "An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State"

(S.P. 892) (L.D. 2187)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, section 464, subsection 3, paragraph B.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** in concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary
Pursuant to Public Law

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Extend the Requirement That the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services Compensate Certain Private Attorneys Appointed to Provide Indigent Legal Services" (EMERGENCY)

(S.P. 894) (L.D. 2193)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to Public Law 2025, chapter 40, section 5.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** in concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary
Pursuant to Statute

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Clarify Responsibility for Compensation of Court-appointed Attorneys in Certain Proceedings"

(S.P. 895) (L.D. 2194)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 4, section 1804, subsection 3, paragraph H.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** in concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary
Pursuant to Public Law

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit the Appointment or Assignment of a Private Attorney to Provide Indigent Legal Services Without That Attorney's Consent"

(S.P. 896) (L.D. 2195)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to Public Law 2025, chapter 40, section 4.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** in concurrence.

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

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit the Sale and Leaseback of a Health Care Entity's Main Campus to a Real Estate Investment Trust as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1476) (L.D. 2197)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 106, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act to Implement Certain Recommendations Related to the Ratio of Debt to Equity in Transactions Involving Health Care Entities from the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1477) (L.D. 2198)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 106, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit Interference with the Professional Judgment and Clinical Decisions of Licensed Health Care Professionals as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1478) (L.D. 2199)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 106, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit Noncompete Clauses for Health Care Professionals as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1479) (L.D. 2200)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 106, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act to Implement Certain Recommendations Related to the Regulatory Review and Approval of Certain Health Care Transactions Involving Private Equity Companies, Hedge Funds or Management Services Organizations from the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1480) (L.D. 2201)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 106, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act to Require Notice to the Attorney General Prior to the Merger of Certain Health Care Entities as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1481) (L.D. 2202)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 106, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
Pursuant to Public Law

Representative SACHS for the **Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology** on Bill "An Act to Limit Rates Charged to Low-income Electricity Consumers"

(H.P. 1482) (L.D. 2203)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** pursuant to Public Law 2025, chapter 123, section 3, subsection 2.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Bill "An Act Expanding Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry"

(H.P. 1483) (L.D. 2206)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 107, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary
Pursuant to Public Law

Representative KUHN for the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act Regarding the Statute of Limitations for Certain Sexual Offenses Committed Against Minors"

(H.P. 1484) (L.D. 2207)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to Public Law 2025, chapter 479, section 2.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative MATHIESON for the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services** on Resolve, to Direct the Department of Health and Human Services to Develop Innovative Models for the Delivery of Dental Services to Expand Access to Oral Health Care Throughout the State

(H.P. 1488) (L.D. 2209)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 107, section 8.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Resolve was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Pursuant to Statute

Representative DOUDERA for the **Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources** on Bill "An Act to Clarify Board of Environmental Protection Procedures Regarding Appeals of Licensing or Permitting Decisions of the Commissioner of Environmental Protection"

(H.P. 1489) (L.D. 2210)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 955, subsection 4.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**.

Sent for concurrence.

Change of Committee

Representative ROBERTS from the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** on Bill "An Act to Authorize the Penobscot Nation to Use Wild Game Harvested on the Penobscot Indian Territory at Food Venues Located Within the Penobscot Indian Territory"

(H.P. 683) (L.D. 1054)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**.

Sent for concurrence.

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

SPECIAL SENTIMENT CALENDAR

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

Recognizing:

Saco Main Street, which is celebrating its 25th Anniversary as an accredited Main Street program. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(SLS 1514)

On **OBJECTION** of Representative COPELAND of Saco, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Saco, Representative Copeland.

Representative **COPELAND**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saco Main Street brings community events drawing multiple thousands to our downtown for fun days including an arts festival, antique car shows, fall festival and, when I was a city councilor, I was proud to be pushed down Main Street by the city councilors in a big old bed. So, it's a lot of fun, people come out, enjoy community and if your town isn't a member of the Main Street Organization, I highly suggest you look into it. Thank you so much.

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

Recognizing:

Connor Ayoob, of Saco, a senior and a football player at Thornton Academy, who has been awarded the James J. Fitzpatrick Trophy. The Fitzpatrick Trophy is given to the top senior high school football player in the State based on voting by the State's coaches and the media. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(SLS 1524)

On **OBJECTION** of Representative COPELAND of Saco, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Saco, Representative Copeland.

Representative **COPELAND**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to reiterate, the City of Saco is so proud of this student and all of our students, but this student is exceptional and I'm proud to recognize him here today. Thank you.

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

Recognizing:

Josie Quimby, of Orrington, on the celebration of her 102nd Birthday. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(HLS 542)

Presented by Representative CAMPBELL of Orrington.

Cosponsored by Senator HAGGAN of Penobscot, Representative ROEDER of Bangor.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Josie Quimby. I was asked by the members of Redeemer Lutheran Church, her home congregation, to share our good wishes. And I received this from one of her friends who spoke with the pastor yesterday.

I talked with Josie this afternoon. She's decided she wants to learn about Isaiah, so, I've been reading a chapter a day to her over the phone. I'm trying to learn more about Isaiah myself, just to answer her questions. I guess that's what I really admire about her. She wants to learn, to know about everything around her, very inquisitive and then remembers everything she learns and experiences. She's a very smart woman, started working shortly after graduating from school at various jobs until Western Union opened up a school in Bangor and she applied for training. Her first position was in Hartford, Connecticut, then Providence. A position opened in Bangor, and she ended up working for Western Union for 30 years.

She traveled around the country; Chicago, Detroit, Florida, New Jersey; usually for three months at a time for Western Union. She's traveled to many countries around the world with friends over the years. After her father died, she lived at home with her mother, who lived to be over a hundred also, as did her sister, taking care of her and then caring for others in her home. She has nieces and nephews who live in Orrington also and who make sure she can stay independent in her home, comfortable and safe. She continues to participate in her church, albeit via Zoom, and the parishioner who specifically asked me to bring this forward and to ask the Good Representative from Orrington if I could Co-sponsor on this also has a fervent wish that Josie receives at least 102 birthday cards this year. So, I would like to invite my colleagues in the House to purchase a birthday card, write your name on it, drop it off in the Speaker's Office, I'd be happy to get them to Ms. Quimby. And from all of us here at the House, happy birthday, Josie.

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

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. We all have these families in our communities that go back generations and generations. And in case of Orrington, we have the Quimbys, the Perkins and the Bowdoins. And without these families, the history of Orrington goes back to 1778; actually, we were Bucksport, Orrington, Brewer, Eddington and Holden, called Orange Town. The Quimby family has been a pillar of this community for generations. So, I'm very happy to Sponsor this and wish the family well.

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

Recognizing:

Lucas Shirland, of Lisbon, an officer of the Topsham Police Department. Officer Shirland responded to an incident on the Merrymeeting Bridge, where a woman was in crisis and immediate danger. Through calm engagement, compassion and decisive action, Officer Shirland was able to guide her to safety and remain with her until crisis assistance arrived. Officer Shirland's professionalism and presence directly contributed to saving a life, reflecting great credit upon himself and the Topsham Police Department. We extend our appreciation and best wishes;

(HLS 543)

Presented by Representative MACIAS of Topsham.
Cosponsored by Senator TEPLER of Sagadahoc, Representative WEBB of Durham.

There being no objections, these items are considered **PASSED** or **ADOPTED** in concurrence or sent for concurrence.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative MACIAS of Topsham, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

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

Representative **MACIAS**: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, thank you for the opportunity to commend a courageous public servant from Topsham.

On this particular day, a woman in the midst of a mental health crisis left the hospital and climbed onto the railing above the river just above Cow Island. It's a beautiful place to be at sunrise, a view many of us cherish any time of the day. But on that day, the beauty of the scene was overshadowed by her pain.

In the most recent data, more than 49,000 Americans and roughly 270 Mainers each year lose their lives to suicide, which is why moments of compassion and intervention like this one matter. Officer Lucas Shirland answered the call. He arrived with calm presence, compassion and courage. He reached her, spoke with her and brought her safely away from danger.

Today, I want to thank him for his service and commend him for his bravery and humanity he showed in that moment. Acts like these often happen quietly, without recognition but they matter deeply to our communities. Thank you, Officer Shirland.

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

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

Representative **BRIDGEO**: Mr. Speaker, earlier in the 132nd Legislature, this Body formally acknowledged the passing of one of the most special people I've ever known. Gary Burns was a native of Augusta and throughout his 81 years, he was a passionate champion of his community.

I first met Gary in the spring of 1998, shortly after I had become Augusta City Manager. I remember very vividly this smiling, high-energy Irishman coming into my office with an outstretched hand, saying, 'Hello there, Mr. Manager, my name's Gary Burns. Congratulations on becoming the City Manager of the best community in Maine. If there's ever anything I can do to help you, you just let me know. I've served on the City Council, and you've signed onto a great organization.' Gary was rightfully proud of his community. It is a special place, in large measure due to the decades of civic contributions he and his wife, Carolyn, made to it.

After brave service in the Vietnam War, with the 101st Airborne Division, where he sustained serious combat injuries that were still being treated at the time of his death; and parenthetically, over the years that I knew Gary, I routinely chatted with him in the Y locker room after our workouts as he, after showering, redressed the leg wounds that had never really fully healed 60 years on. Gary became, for decades, a prominent voice for Maine's disabled veterans. In Augusta, a couple generations of Augusta kids knew him as Coach Burns, whether it was basketball, baseball or football. When she was only 19, Gary and Carolyn's beautiful daughter was killed in a tragic car accident. Thereafter, for many years, Gary and Carolyn spoke to area high schools' graduating classes, passionately cautioning them of the deadly risks of mixing alcohol with their celebratory activities.

We don't get to pick the time of our passing, but in Gary's case, it was at a weekend family gathering at camp on Cobbossee Stream, with his loved ones around him. I think he'd have said that was just fine.

I miss him, and I know many others do as well, but he led a good, full life of service to family, community and country. Our Legislative Sentiment expressed today to his family is our thank-you for that good, full life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **ROLLINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some prepared remarks, but they were very parallel to those of the fine Representative from the west side of Augusta, so, I'll talk off the cuff.

And it begins for me and as Bill mentioned, Gary joined the U.S. Army in 1967, and served his country with distinction, as a 23-year-old Sergeant, when he was nearly crippled by shrapnel while in Vietnam. Well, the rest of that story is he's out on patrol with a group and they got jumped and they were in a firefight and I can't tell you how many walked out of that, but he was one of a very few. And he didn't walk out, he damn near lost his leg and as Bill mentioned, the rest of his life, he was still nursing that leg. So, that's 1967.

I meet him in 1969, I'm an eighth-grade kid and I'm playing summer basketball at Williams Playground. And all of a sudden, this guy, who was not tall but pretty wide and capable, is on me like a bulldog on a pork chop. And I'm like, who is this guy? And it's Gary Burns, running on one leg. He's out there playing against high school basketball players and be damned if he's going to sit on the bench and be damned that he's not going to guard the biggest guy. And I think it prepared me for a great career in basketball, because I don't think they ever came up with anybody more gnarly or tougher than Gary Burns. And he was that way his whole life.

Bill mentioned the loss of Chrisanne Burns. The Burns family dedicated 25 years to speaking at Coach Paul Vachon's two mega-basketball clinics in the summer and the Chrisanne Burns Tournament at Christmastime. And the story was deep and it was emotional, and they estimate over the 25-year period it affected 50,000 student athletes. Now you include their parents and their siblings, it was an impactful message. I will give you a quote from my daughter, who was interviewed by the local newspaper when the Burns' announced, after 25 years, that they could no longer sustain the mental energy, the physical energy that it took. And they asked Katy, who was one of the leading members of the Cony basketball fraternity, the girls basketball, which the girls and all the parents that

were part of this, in a 25-year span, including the Honorable Raegan LaRochelle and many others, it's just the pinnacle of life experience. Katy said, "if you think about future Cony basketball players, hearing that twice a summer, every summer, from the third grade up to high school and then you have this tournament and they're telling you this message and it gets drilled into you, you can't put a price on how impactful that was." And it truly was. God bless Gary Burns.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matter, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment Tuesday, February 3, 2026, had preference in the Orders of the Day and continued with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

Expression of Legislative Sentiment Recognizing the Town of East Machias

(HLS 526)

TABLED - January 20, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative TUELL of East Machias.

PENDING - **PASSAGE**.

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-794)** on Bill "An Act to Require General Public Notification of Oil Terminal Facility Transfer Activities"

(H.P. 991) (L.D. 1507)

Signed:

Senator:

TEPLER of Sagadahoc

Representatives:

DOUDERA of Camden
ANKELES of Brunswick
BELL of Yarmouth
OSHER of Orono
RIELLY of Westbrook

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

Signed:

Senator:

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

CAMPBELL of Orrington
SCHMERSAL-BURGESS of Mexico
WOODSOME of Waterboro

READ.

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

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

Representative **DOUDERA**: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, for as long as I've been in this building, going almost eight years, Maine residents have been coming to our Committee with concerns about the petroleum storage tanks in South Portland. This bill is an attempt to solve some of their concerns by requiring that licensed petroleum storage facilities that have a storage capacity of greater than 39,000 gallons install warning signs at the facility.

This bill was originally requiring public notification of oil terminal facility transfer activities, but due to a concern with terrorism and that information getting out, it was amended, the whole bill was changed, so, it is now merely an attempt to just let people know that the material inside these tanks can be dangerous and an attempt to solve some of the concerns that these residents have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. This bill was initiated by the Representative from South Portland. South Portland tank farm, and many in the State, have been around for a hundred years. This is an electronic notification every 24 hours for any transfer of the product to vessels, vessels to tanks.

These tank farms have been around a long time. This not only affects this tank farm, but many others. Now, this 24-hour notice is absolutely going to alarm all the citizens to something that rarely, if ever, happens. This is just something by request, this has been around for as long as I remember, by request of the citizens of South Portland. The citizens of the rest of the tank farms around the State are fine with the safety. This is absolutely going to alarm those in the community, again, for something that rarely, if ever, happens. So, if we haven't, I'd like to request a Roll Call.

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

Representative **BECK**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. The Good Representative from Orrington is referencing a 24-hour notification piece that was in the original bill. The Amendment no longer has that.

This is just a common-sense bill to amend the laws governing the license of petroleum storage facilities to require such facilities to install and maintain warning signs at the facility. You may be surprised that these signs aren't already in place. I know I was when I drove around South Portland. There are certainly signs that say no trespassing, no smoking, no cell phone use but nothing indicating the potential and significant risk to those who may choose to breach the fence.

It was a very long time ago, Mr. Speaker, but I was teenager once. I would occasionally climb fences that said no trespassing to, you know, just kind of muck around on the other side. But I think I would've given it a second thought if I knew that there were, you know, potential hazardous air pollutants, volatile organic compounds and whatnot. So, you know, I'm fairly certain signs like these would not pose an alarm to the surrounding community.

I think that the bill has the support of people in my community as well as the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. In any event, this modest and reasonable bill will make clear that there's still every reason to be aware of the potential hazards around these facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I've been in communication with the Town Manager of South Portland; by the way, a good Brewer boy; and he said that they have been working with the terminal owner and they are 99% totally engaged and in solution communications. So, the Town Manager says we're there, no need.

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. 607

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Julia, Kessler, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Roberts, Rudnicki, Sachs, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, White J, White R, Wood S, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Warren, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 66; No, 72; Absent, 10; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

66 having voted in the affirmative and 72 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 10 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

Subsequently, on motion of Representative DOUDERA of Camden, the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** reporting **Ought to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Update the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Allowances"

(H.P. 1367) (L.D. 2037)

Signed:

Senators:

TEPLER of Sagadahoc

BRENNER of Cumberland

Representatives:

DOUDERA of Camden

ANKELES of Brunswick

BELL of Yarmouth

BRIDGEO of Augusta

OSHER of Orono

RIELLY of Westbrook

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

Signed:

Senator:

MARTIN of Oxford

Representatives:

CAMPBELL of Orrington

SCHMERSAL-BURGESS of Mexico

SOBOLESKI of Phillips

WOODSOME of Waterboro

READ.

Representative DOUDERA of Camden moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass** Report.

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

Representative **DOUDERA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill is updating the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, which is an eastern states regional cooperative that helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions within each participating state. There are 10 states involved in this. We were one of the original states involved and have been a leader in this program ever since its inception.

The RGGI program benefits both the environment and our economy. Polluting power plants are required to pay for the pollution they create, and that money is invested back into Maine communities. This helps protect our climate and our environment. Increased carbon emissions, as we know, can lead to poor public health, poor air quality, incidents of asthma, lung cancer and cardiovascular issues.

Money paid into this RGGI program by polluters is pretty significant. Between 2009 and 2024, Maine received more than $246 million in funding as a RGGI participant. This money was invested right back into our communities, with a significant portion going to working families who are struggling with rising energy costs. In fiscal year 2024, about $12.6 million went to Efficiency Maine's low-income initiatives, including heat pump and weatherization programs. I might add that they are in favor of this bill, as was the Department of Energy Protection and the new Office of Energy.

So, if we want to continue to benefit from this program as we have in the past, we need to pass this bill. Pulling out of the program means that we're not going to get any of the benefits and we're still going to be on the hook to pay some of the incremental price increases. So, this is a smart vote and I urge everybody here to vote in favor. Thank you.

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

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I serve on the Environmental and Natural Resource Committee, and we discuss emissions and greenhouse gas constantly. Recently, I asked the DEP Commissioner for some information to show me exactly, where do we stand? Are we making progress? Are we falling behind? What's going on? And I was sent a copy of the DEP's biennial greenhouse gas report, and I'd like to read a paragraph from it.

"A second version of the Maine carbon budget was compiled by Maine scientists in support of Maine's goals of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions and achieving carbon neutrality. The Maine carbon budget for a five-year window ended in 2021 shows that Maine is approximately 91% of the way to being carbon neutral. This means 91% of 2021 gross anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by sequestration in the environment based on the methodology used in the analysis."

Now, I've said on this floor many, many times over the last four years, as well as in committee, Mr. Speaker, Maine is a State of 22 million acres. We have 17 million acres of forestland. We're the most heavily forested State in the nation. We need carbon. We need emissions for our trees to be able to grow and to be able to, you know, produce the oxygen that we require. We started in 2023 looking at emissions, and if we've gotten to 91% of the way since 2003 to 2021, that's in 18 years, we've reduced that down. That's about five percent a year. So, I can only imagine that that 91% is even higher. And once again, Mr. Speaker, we need those carbon emissions for

our forests to thrive. I think this is an unnecessary step, we should just continue to keep doing what we're doing for the very little time left that we need to deal with this issue and then, hopefully, in the next Legislature, be able to pass some laws that will allow us to balance out and not be quite so aggressive, because we'll be at the goals that we set. Thank you.

Representative CAMPBELL of Orrington **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought 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 Orrington, Representative Campbell.

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Being old, like I am, I can remember almost walking across the Penobscot River. Our environment was so polluted. And they were polluted because of the mills. The situation that we're in now, as the Good Representative just mentioned, is we're as close to carbon neutral as any state in the nation. The reason that we've done so well is because we've lost those jobs, we've lost the mills. It's important that we continue doing what we're doing because what we're doing is working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **ANKELES**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Colleagues of the House. I'm surprised to learn about the great carbon shortage of 2026. I didn't realize that was happening. I also didn't realize that we had fixed the global problem of climate change, in which air moves around and it's everywhere.

I see this bill, Mr. Speaker, as a vote on whether to continue to be able to lower energy costs for people. If we do not get the revenue from this program, all this bill is is a question before the Body about whether to accept this RGGI revenue, and all that money goes to Efficiency Maine and all of that money weatherizes homes, pays for air pumps, makes it easier for people to afford to heat their homes. And so, I feel like we should continue to do that.

The question about whether the cost of the overall program is going up is not really what is before the Body. What is before the Body is, do we want to continue to take in the same money we've been taking in in previous years, and I think the answer should be yes, just from a fiscal perspective alone. Thank you.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank those on the other side of the aisle for taking the time to explain some of what this bill does, especially the amount of money that's generated. So, I won't have to go there.

For those who don't know, RGGI, Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, is basically a carbon tax. We tax, we require a fee of those who are using petroleum-based products to generate electricity to do so. Those monies are not free. They eventually end up being paid by consumers and/or ratepayers. To suggest otherwise is not being truthful. The fact is, yes, those monies come to us and are spent, or raised and spent, by Efficiency Maine and on other initiatives to save folks energy. But my concern is this: This morning, a couple hours ago, if you checked, and I hope everybody has the ISO New England app on their phones and they check regularly, but if you check this morning, you'll see that we are burning oil, we are burning coal, we are burning natural gas, which is always the case, natural gas even in the summertime is normally providing about 50% of the generating capacity in the New England ISO region. We have burnt more oil and coal during this cold spell that we're experiencing; which, by the way, for us Mainers that have been around for a while, seven or eight below zero is not cold in Maine; but during this cold spell, I have seen more oil and coal being used to generate electricity for ISO New England customers than I have seen for years. And I watch that app, I check it almost daily, if not more than once a day. This morning, as a matter of fact, we were burning enough coal and oil where that we were producing about 66.8 metric tons per minute of CO_2. Now, also this morning, we were receiving; because there was a slight breeze and because the sun was up a little bit, we were at about 0.8% of wind and solar, about 0.3%, 0.08% of wind, so that we were generating some renewable energy in that form. At the same time, we're fortunate to be receiving; and this is ISO New England; a little over 1,000 megawatts on the NECEC line. I can't imagine what we would've been doing without that on this cool morning.

If I look at this morning's numbers, which, by the way, again, this was a warm morning for us, when you look back more than a month now on average, using this morning's numbers, ISO New England and if we go back, let's say one month, 30 days, we produced 2.88 million metric tons of carbon dioxide; 2.88 million in one month. Now, this is the winter months, that'll go down a lot in the summertime. But when you think about what this bill does and for the State of Maine, it reduces; in 2027, we'll go down to an allowance of 2,065,595 tons and in 2037, it would be reduced to 221,314 tons. That's 221 thousand. And that's Maine. Now, you may wonder, okay, well, how much is Maine producing? I apologize, I didn't have time to come up with the exact numbers, but remember, Wyman Station burns No. 6 oil. They're running when we have this cold weather. We also have our natural gas plants, like the one up in Veazie, that are running. The rest of New England is realizing this morning a little less than one percent, 5 megawatts, from being generated from coal, which has approximately 0.1 ton per minute carbon dioxide emission.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that rather than go with this bill, that we vote it down and we stick with; and regionally, that would take us down to 9.6 million tons per year for the New England region. And again, I point out the New England region this last month, according to my numbers using this morning as the average, burn 2.88 million tons or produce that much. I would suggest that we vote this down and we stick with where we were at and using the 2017 model rule for RGGI. That's the most recent iteration of the rule if this one does not go forward. It established an ISO New England regional emissions cap to decrease available allowances by around 10 million tons of CO_2 between 2025 and 2030, starting at around 80 million tons and remaining at a total cap of around 70 million tons.

So, my suggestion is that we stick with that, the rule that's already in place and that allows us; because, Mr. Speaker, the people who are going to suffer as we continue to close plants, in my opinion, is part of the reason we're burning more oil and more coal this winter than we have in the past is because a year or so ago, one of the largest natural gas plants down in Massachusetts was closed. And at that time, even some of the ISO New England employees expressed a concern about that, where would we be if we have a real cold snap, if it's 10, 20, 30 below zero for an extended period of time without that production.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that folks follow my light and vote this bill down. Thank you.

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

Representative **KESSLER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. RGGI is a little complicated, but I just want to put things really simply for this Chamber. And that is on the one hand, RGGI has been a success. Since its founding, since we joined, we have reduced the amount of oil and coal that we burned in the region. It used to be about 40% of our mix. Now, on a day like today, it may be two or three percent. And that's the most expensive power. So, there has been wins from this program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also recognize that RGGI has its challenges and we should analyze how the program works moving forward, because we are still very much dependent on natural gas in the region and what role this plays in the cost of electricity. But the most important thing I would love this Chamber to understand is that even if we don't participate, even if we say no on this vote, all of the other New England states are going to participate. And because most of those power plants are in Massachusetts and Connecticut, we're all still going to pay the cost. But, by not being in compliance, we are going to lose out on all of the Efficiency Maine funding. And if you care about weatherization, if you care about lowering energy costs, unless you have another way that you're going to fund Efficiency Maine, it would be a bad policy decision to vote against this bill, because there will be a bazooka-sized hole in the budget.

So, I would say let's continue to debate the virtues of RGGI, but please vote in favor of this, so we can at least maintain the work that we are doing, that I think that most of us agree the work that they do is good work. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FREDETTE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, energy is a complex matter and it's complex even for the people in this building and for the people on the Energy Committee, I appreciate the hard work that they do in trying to sort through how do we make energy affordable in Maine.

And I would remind the Body that, I think it was 2016, I worked with then; or 2014, I worked with then-Senator Hobbins on an omnibus energy bill which would've brought natural gas to Massachusetts via the Marcellus Shale area, so that we could lower cost. And as part of that bill, there was a funding mechanism which greatly increased the amount of money which went to Efficiency Maine Trust. Now, that didn't happen, because basically, the people of Massachusetts said we're not going to do this, and so, that didn't happen.

But the reality is, is while we in this Body talk about these sorts of issues; greenhouse gas initiatives, RGGI and whatnot; the people back home don't see relief. And I know the other party is fond today of using the word affordability and I can tell you that, from people that live in rural Maine, where the housing stock is certainly much older, the conditions of homes are not as new. Many people live in mobile homes; this has been a cold winter, and oftentimes, that means you try to be creative about trying to keep the house warm. Oftentimes, that means plugging in electric heaters, maybe it's running the heat pump, if you're fortunate enough to have a heat pump. But I will tell you for a lot of Mainers, energy is a real problem. The cost of electricity is a real problem. When you're talking about senior citizens living on fixed incomes and they receive their bill in the mail for the cost of electricity, it's a shocker. My dad is nearly 87 years old and he lives alone in about a 1,500-square foot ranch and his bill was almost $300. That's a lot of money for a senior citizen living alone. And so, when you talk about, oh, well, you know, the price of food's expensive these days. Well, you have to pay your light bill. So, if you're going to pay your light bill, it means you maybe have less money for the supermarket.

My frustration, Mr. Speaker, is, is that while we sort of work down here on bills about greenhouse gas initiatives and whatnot, we are not providing the relief back home that people want to see. And maybe while we're a country divided now between left and right and green and red and blue, people back home don't see us making a real impact on their living and the cost of living for them.

And so, I rise merely to express the frustration, Mr. Speaker, that I think a lot of people back home, while we talk about bills like this, which is an important bill, I get it, are we really addressing the fundamental issue about affordability? Because as the Good Representative from Dexter said, you know, this has been a cold winter and I've lived here all my life and I've seen the 20 and 30 degree below zero days, so, this might be as bad as this, but this has been a long winter, this has been a cold winter for a lot of people in Maine. And I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people that when they get their electric bills in the mail, they're cringing because they know when they open that bill, because of the cost and the process that we use to generate electricity and you have to go up the ladder and it costs more expensive as you go up the ladder to get that generation cost, their bills are going up.

So, this bill, I get it but I'm frustrated and I at least want to say on behalf of my constituents, what are we doing to lower the cost? Because that, to me, is what's important. And if people talk about losing their trust and their faith in the parties in this building and nationally to do things, to help people back home, that's what they want to see. And I'm not sure I see this bill is helping those people back home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief.

The Good Representative from South Portland mentioned that natural gas and oil-produced electricity is expensive. But here's why; natural gas, as the Good Representative from Newport mentioned, on the other side of the New York State, natural gas is one-tenth the cost of what we pay for the State of Maine, because due to ideology, we have not been allowed to have a supply through a large enough pipeline to get gas from Pennsylvania and other areas. When we're paying $40 per million BTU for natural gas here, they're paying four dollars on the other side. And that includes, by the way, a pipeline that feeds New York City. They get that natural gas coming from those fields.

The other is oil, and this includes natural gas as well but even more so oil. For instance, I mentioned Wyman Station. I talked with a gentleman whose son, a graduate of Maine Maritime Academy, works there, and he's basically a night watchman for most of the time. He goes around the plant to make sure that it's ready to go if needed. And when we get weather as we've had the last month or so, it's running and those people are there operating it. But Mr. Speaker, we are paying for that standby time, the ratepayers of Maine and New England are paying for that standby time for those plants. Now, this bill will help shut those plants down, but guess what,

they've proven it in Europe, they've proven it in other states, if we think we're going to get by with solar and wind and batteries in the State of Maine, we are greatly disillusioned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be brief.

The Representative from Brunswick earlier mentioned that we are heading into a 2026 carbon crisis. I explained that, Mr. Speaker, based on the DEP report that I read. We started monitoring greenhouse gas in 2003. By 2021, we were 91% of the way to the reduction goals. That's five percent per year. From 2021 until now, we could very well be in a carbon crisis, because our trees, as I explained, Mr. Speaker, they need this carbon, not only from the emissions, from outgassing from a number of different ways, from natural carbon emitted as well. So, we need it, and we could very well be getting to a point where we are damaging one of the very precious resources in our State and that is our forests, where our logging comes from, where our recreation happens, things of that nature.

The Representative also mentioned that we need to continue to get the revenue. That's what this is all about. This is about money. Mr. Speaker, we have programs, every program you can imagine, whether it's initiatives, incentives or grants, to help anybody that reaches out and needs help with a heat pump or with fuel supplies or anything at all that they could possibly need. We don't need to dive back into the public's pocket and take more tax money for a program that we no longer need to fund. Thank you.

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

Representative **OSHER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bill. It's an excellent program that the State of Maine has been involved in since 2008.

We are one of the many states that are participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and that initiative is an encouragement for generators of energy that produce CO_2 to cap the amount of CO_2 that they generate and if they do not, they pay a fee. And that fee goes into the State's goals of reducing the energy produced or used by homes, so that the money goes into energy efficiency and in our State, it goes to the Efficiency Maine Trust that gives it to Efficiency Maine, and that is used to help people make their homes more energy efficient.

So, I support us continuing to participate in this because the money goes, as my Colleague said, into Efficiency Maine Trust and Efficiency Maine, and that is used to help people who live; for example, my Colleague's father who lives in a 1,500-square-foot home and pays for energy every month in electricity, that goes to help individuals to make their homes more energy efficient, to reduce their energy costs. Efficiency Maine has special programs for people who live in low-income housing, people who live in manufactured housing, mobile homes, and these are excellent programs.

If we do not vote in support of this bill, we will not be continuing to support these programs that help low-income Mainers across the State to lower their energy costs.

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

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as greenhouse gas goes, we need to have a statewide referendum on this stuff. It's all a bunch of B.S., and --

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair will remind the Member to not use that sort of language on the floor, even if it is using an acronym to refer to a curse word, especially since we have guests in our Gallery. The Member may proceed.

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Well, I'd like to say that we need to have a statewide referendum to find out what they think of green energy. Any time I go downtown in my hometown and back to my place, I have to go by one of these green; -- they got the solar panels, and it's all; well, it's all green to me and it hasn't been working at all since they built it. I'm sure they got paid for it by the Commission, but it produces nothing. And as far as solar energy goes, we need to have a good statewide referendum on green energy and to see whether the population of the State of Maine likes it or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be voting against this bill.

RGGI is complicated because, basically, it's a scam. We subsidize solar and wind, which has doubled our electric bills. Then we tax the carbon users, which is basically everyone, there's not a person in this room that doesn't use carbon, and give a portion of it to offset the increases and for programs which almost all Mainers don't use. So, our electric bill; for instance, I went to a heat pump in one of my buildings because I figured I'm going to save money. Well, at first, I did, it was $285 a month in January, my oil would've been $425. Then, we passed, over the last six years that I've been here, all these solar bills and wind bills. I just got my electric bill for January, and instead of $285, it's now $525. Why? Because we're subsidizing solar and wind.

So, we're making green energy people richer and we're making Mainers pay with higher cost. Now, keep in mind, at $525, I could've paid $425 and paid for my oil. It's not worth it anymore to use a heat pump in the winter, because your electric bills have doubled. These programs, most Mainers just don't use them. Why? Because 75% of Mainers just haven't drank the Kool-Aid. They know that, when I was in high school in 1975, I graduated, I was told flat-out that my children will not have a Maine and that the ocean was going to be right up to my home in Chelsea. Guaranteed, moneyback guarantee. Well, the ocean's gone up 0.01 degrees, and who cares, and it's right where it's always been.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why we would pass a bill like this when Mainers are already crying out. All of my constituents want to know how their electric bill's going to go down. I told them, we need to stop the green scam, we need to stop things like this, so that we can get back to getting these electric bills down by stopping subsidizing solar. If these solar companies want to come to Maine, let them come to Maine. But we shouldn't subsidize them and we should not subsidize wind power. And my friends on the right better start thinking about nuclear, because that will lower our electric bills.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not in favor of this because I'm not happy with a $525 a month electric bill. I can't afford that. And so, I'm going to; the more that these people keep passing these bills, me and my constituents, we're going to go to more oil. You're just forcing us right over to oil and you don't even know it. So, you're actually pushing us in the direction you don't want us to go. Thank you.

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

Representative **RUNTE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Body has a responsibility to be accurate in terms of how it expresses affordability and the impact of various measures with regard to electricity costs. And I would like to point out that, just a month ago, the Federal Department of Energy produced a study that looked at all the reasons why, across the country, electricity costs went up over the last five years. In that report, they had a couple of case studies where they looked specifically at some individual states. Two of them were California and Maine. And in the case of Maine, the Department of Energy concluded that more than 80% of the bill had to do with natural gas, transmission costs, distribution costs and storm recovery. Of that other 20%, only a small portion had anything to do with wind and solar. So, this continued narrative that all these solar things are raising your electric bill, you know, it's irresponsible for us to continue to do that.

And I would also like to point out, you know, there was some discussion of, let's go look at the ISO New England charts that are up, that keep real-time information up. If you'd have followed them over the last month, there's one chart that's very apparent, it has a map of the states and it tells you what the zonal price of electricity is among the various states. Almost every day, Maine's zonal price was extraordinarily less than the remainder of the states. And there's a lot of reasons for that, but one of them is that Maine produces more electricity than is consumed. And that electricity is constrained on how it can move, it can't move; not all of it can move south. The input, though, on wind and solar, wind in particular, has almost consistently every day fundamentally produced enough electricity equivalent to a nuclear plant. And that comes in at a very low cost into this whole system.

So, the notion that; oh, and that price is suppressed, because you've got this excess cheap generation that gets then priced negatively and it reduces the overall price. So, you know, the idea that these pieces are not working, I think we need to look carefully and look at the numbers and be accurate about what it is that we're talking about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One quick note, and that is that in those studies just mentioned, there's one thing that they did not look into, and that is the cost of the subsidies. And that is what I'm bringing up, and those subsidies are extensive, but that was not covered in that study and that makes a huge difference. Thank you.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 608

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

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

ABSENT - Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 75; No, 64; Absent, 9; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 9 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**.

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

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

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

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

Representative **POIRIER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually rise today to recognize and congratulate Sappi on being named Large Business of the Year by the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce.

People from Sappi are here with us today. And it's an honor that is very well deserved. For generations, Sappi has been far more than a paper mill to the people of Skowhegan and to the State of Maine. It's been an anchor employer, a community partner and a symbol of Maine's proud manufacturing heritage. In Skowhegan, Sappi's impact is felt every day. It provides good paying jobs, supports hundreds of families and it strengthens our local economy, supports our schools and nonprofits and helps keep our downtown and surrounding communities vibrant. When Sappi invests in Skowhegan, it invests in the people who live here, and that commitment shows.

Sappi's importance extends well beyond Somerset County. It's a major contributor to Maine's economy and a leader in innovation, sustainability and advanced manufacturing. At a time when manufacturing faces real challenges nationwide, Sappi continues to demonstrate that Maine can compete, adapt and lead.

I also want to thank Sappi for its continued investment in our State, choosing to modernize facilities, embrace new technologies and to remain rooted in Maine; which is not a given, it's a choice. And it's a choice that sends a strong message of confidence in our workforce, our communities and our future.

So, today, on behalf of this Body, I extend our sincere congratulations to Sappi for this well-earned recognition and

our gratitude for all they do for Skowhegan and our entire State. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a nearly 20-year employee and retiree from the Sappi Fine Paper Company, I'd just like to follow up with some of the same information, I guess, I would have that the Good Representative from Skowhegan had.

I will say this, if you live in the State of Maine, that mill in Skowhegan, I guarantee you can find people around you that received a buck or more because of that mill. The number of suppliers and, for instance, role coverings, there are folks from Westbrook down through to Kittery that work for companies that supply parts and pieces to that mill. And there are truck drivers from all over the State and probably beyond that come into that mill. You can't imagine, unless you go there, how many trucks, how many train cars go in and out of that mill daily. It's a bustling economic engine not only for Skowhegan, not only for that region, not only for the woods industry but for the entire State of Maine. And I thank them very much.

I started there in 1997, only a short time after the former Scott Paper Company had sold their mill to Sappi Fine Papers, a South African company. There was a lot of consternation among employees there at the time that we were going to end up the same as some of the other mills in Maine, where that they just took whatever they could get out of the facility and then let it go. And that has not been the case. The folks that represent Sappi North America, many of them residents of Maine who work out of the Boston office and manage the entire Sappi North America company portion of Sappi South Africa, they have worked hard to keep investments, to justify investments in that facility and you're well aware of what's happened just in the last few years with the investments they've made in two machines to change grades.

It's a modern mill. In spite of what people think about paper mills, that's a modern facility. When I worked there, we had one of the fastest machines in the United States, which has, due to conversion to another product, greatly slowed down. But they are making many more tons of the new product that they produce and that product, from the fine printing papers that were made for magazines like *Elle* to the boxboard type materials that are now used and many of us receive at our doorstep from Amazon, those products go all over the world, not just in the United States.

So, I think it's an economic driver that hopefully will be sustained well into the future, so that maybe my grandkids one day will be able to say they retired from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **HENDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I did not work in a paper mill for 20 years, but I am a proud daughter of a paper maker who worked in a paper mill for over 20 years.

Just a couple weeks ago, Maine Development Foundation facilitated a tour to a few different businesses in Skowhegan. One of them was the Sappi paper mill. And while I'm from Rumford and we have Nine Dragons and my father worked at Mead, MeadWestvaco, Boise, Boise Cascade, being able to tour Sappi was pretty impressive and a pretty cool afternoon. When you get an opportunity to tour the largest pulp and paper mill in North America; in the world, potentially; and as someone that comes from a papermaker family, was really neat.

Sappi was; they were incredible hosts, they fed us well, they gave us nice little gift bags, greeting cards and such and just interesting to see their operations. And from what I understand, they've got a really impressive team over there that not only cares about making paper, they care about their employees, employing people, creating good jobs and about the economic infrastructure in the community themselves. And while I would like to believe that the paper world revolves around Rumford, I know in the State of Maine it doesn't and want to give a very hearty congratulations to Sappi and this recognition.

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

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Representative of Madison, Norridgewock and Cornville, we have a lot of constituents who work in that mill.

One of the things that I wanted to say, Representative Poirier has been very articulate in that, one of the things that a lot of people don't realize is that when Madison lost its paper mill in 2016, Sappi was there. And there were a lot of people who didn't have to move, didn't have to change jobs and all the rest of that, who live in my district and work for Sappi.

So, I'm very thankful for Sappi and I hope that we continue to do things that are going to be beneficial to keeping them here in the State of Maine. Thank you.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-795)** on Bill "An Act to Reinvest in the Pension Funds of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System"

(H.P. 1243) (L.D. 1872)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

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

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

Signed:

Senator:

BRADSTREET of Kennebec

Representatives:

COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

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

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

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

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

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we, this side of the aisle, agrees with the intent of this bill. This bill is intended to replenish the lost retirement funds to our teachers and retirees from the 2011 vote that was to correct the ship on our finances that we were having problems with.

The problem with this bill is that it is wishful thinking. We're giving false hope to the people. This is going to try to bind the hands of future legislators to have to replenish the funds that we're taking from the cascade, as one example, and when we make our last payment in 2028, that that money be dedicated. That is a worthy goal. The problem that we have is that we're giving false hope to people that we can replenish those. And, if I may just quickly say that the Appropriations Committee can change funding at any time, that is their purview and they can do that.

And also, Mr. Speaker, my wish is that they would stop funding Planned Parenthood to the tune of millions of dollars and put that towards our teachers' retirement. And I'd just like to remind this Body of one thing; the majority party, your party, Mr. Speaker, has been in control of that checkbook for eight years and we're still looking for a solution to make those people whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Belfast, Representative Dodge.

Representative **DODGE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the pending motion. We have been working on repairing the budget, balancing harm done to retirees in the Maine Public Employee Retirement System in 2011 for several Legislative Sessions, as has been mentioned. We've heard from constituents that are retirees, are missing the money that they lost and who continue to experience through compounded losses over these years. I hope we can come together to pass this, because our retirees deserve it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SKOLD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and Colleagues of the House, this is a bill that impacts every one of our districts, because every one of us knows a community member, a neighbor or even a friend or a relative who is a retired school teacher. In fact, I invite you, Mr. Speaker, to think now in our minds about a retired teacher, someone we know or maybe even someone who taught us, maybe our favorite teacher from when we were in school. Picturing that person, their name, perhaps the decoration in their classroom, the subject they taught and the impact they made on you, Mr. Speaker. Whoever that person is, I'm sure they are someone who dedicated their career to serving others, to educating the children of our communities, to improving our futures. This is a person who deserves after their years of service to retire with a well-earned pension; one that might be modest, but would be commensurate with their years of service and would be enough for them to get by in retirement.

Well, Mr. Speaker, so many of our retired teachers are not getting by. They are struggling to pay for their homes, for their groceries, for their heating. And it's no fault of their own. The reason they are struggling is because their pension benefits that they counted on have been cut. Fifteen years ago, a bad decision was made here in this very Chamber. A bad decision to slash retirement benefits for school teachers and State employees. That decision cut public employee pension benefits in multiple ways, and one of the most egregious was slashing the cost-of-living increases. Prior to 2011, a person who retired from teaching could expect to receive a cost-of-living increase every year on their pension. However, in 2011, this cost-of-living increase was capped at three percent, even if the rate of inflation is higher than that. And worst of all, the cost-of-living adjustment was curtailed so that it applied only to the first $20,000 of one's pension benefit, rather than being applied to the full thing.

The effect of this decision has been to pull the rug out from under our teachers and State employees and take away money that they were counting on for a carefully budgeted and well-earned retirement. For example, a teacher who retired in 2012 with a $30,000 annual pension has in the last 15 years lost about $30,000 in income. An entire year's pension just gone out of their pockets.

We heard a lot of testimony in Committee from struggling retired teachers, like one from West Bath, who stated the following: "For the first time since I retired, I am afraid of my financial future. How many more years can I keep going backwards while the cost-of-living rises? That is a scary thought. On my salary and my husband's, we were not able to save a lot of money until both of our children were out of college. At that time, I was not worried, as I knew my retirement would keep up with inflation. With the changes in 2011, that confidence flew out the window."

It's time, Mr. Speaker, for this Body to face the bad decision that our predecessors made and to finally make it right. LD 1872 is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make it right. It lays out a five-year spending plan to invest in our retirees with funds that are currently going to our pension system but that will be freed up after Fiscal Year 2028. This investment will be used to bring the cost-of-living adjustment back up bit-by-bit until the three percent can be applied to a full pension benefit of up to $40,000.

Mr. Speaker, I graduated from Freeport High School almost 19 years ago, and most of the teachers that so graciously and skillfully helped to educate me and my community are retired and they are struggling. They signed up for the job knowing their retirement would be secure, but we have taken that security away from them. Please join me in supporting this bill and supporting all the current and future retired teachers who gave so much and deserve every day of their long and happy retirement. Thank you.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is my third term with sitting with this particular issue. This is the sixth year that I have heard about this. And I know there are people who have been in the Body longer than I who remember it going back much further.

It's a simple bill. This bill is very simple. It requires us to commit to set aside the funding that we are already currently paying towards the debt to dedicate that funding to the problem created in 2011. The bill earmarks for four years $185 million and dedicates this funding to restoring the cost of living for retired teachers and State employees. It does not even set aside the entire amount of UAL payments, just a portion.

My first term, I was on a Zoom call with a lot of State retirees, and I'll never forget the one gentleman who was joining from his phone, and he said, "please, I know my picture's dark, I hope you can still see me, it's just that I couldn't pay the electricity bill this month." And I understand that this bill will not offer immediate relief. We have tried so

many times, in so many different ways, to do that. But it is offering a fix, a long-term fix. And I understand that a future Legislature might decide to overturn that, I understand we're not to bind the hands of future legislators, but I would like to express my own frustration of having my hands bound by 2011. Thank you.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 609

YEA - Abdi, Albert, Ankeles, Archer, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Carlow, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Foley, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Jackson, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, O'Halloran, Olsen, Osher, Pugh, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Sinclair, Skold, Stover, Strout, Supica, Terry, Thorne, Wadsworth, Warren, Webb, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Arata, Ardell, Bagshaw, Bishop, Boyer D, Campbell, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Flynn, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hymes, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Swallow, Tuell, Underwood, White J, White R.

ABSENT - Caruso, Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 91; No, 47; Absent, 10; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

91 having voted in the affirmative and 47 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 10 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "B" (H-795)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-795)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Regulating Transient Sales of Home Repair Services" (EMERGENCY) (H.P. 1399) (L.D. 2084)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot
BRADSTREET of Kennebec
RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor
ARCHER of Saco
BECK of South Portland
COLLINS of Sidney
DRINKWATER of Milford
GEIGER of Rockland
MACIAS of Topsham
SKOLD of Portland

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

Signed:

Representative:

SOBOLESKI of Phillips

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**.

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

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

CONSENT CALENDAR
First Day

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

(S.P. 575) (L.D. 1419) Bill "An Act to Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Housing Constructed Off-site Similar to That for On-site Construction" Committee on **TAXATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-491)**

(S.P. 822) (L.D. 2006) Resolve, Authorizing the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands to Make Certain Land Transactions in Aroostook and Somerset Counties Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-490)**

(H.P. 1349) (L.D. 2019) Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Licensure of Wholesalers and Manufacturers Under the Maine Pharmacy Act" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 1362) (L.D. 2032) Bill "An Act to Amend the Extreme Risk Protection Order Procedure" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-796)**

(H.P. 1377) (L.D. 2053) Bill "An Act to Improve Safety by Allowing the Use of Variable-message Signs on Public Service Vehicles" Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-797)**

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

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

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

ENACTORS

Resolves

Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in Woolwich the Woolwich Veterans Memorial Bridge

(H.P. 1357) (L.D. 2027)

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

Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in West Forks Plantation and The Forks Plantation the Gordon Clifton Berry, Sr. Bridge

(H.P. 1358) (L.D. 2028)

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

On motion of Representative CARUSO of Caratunk, was **SET ASIDE**.

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matters, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment Tuesday, February 3, 2026, had preference in the Orders of the Day and continued with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

An Act to Increase the Size and Balance of Jury Pools

(H.P. 238) (L.D. 338)

(C. "A" H-159)

- In House, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED** on May 27, 2025.
- In Senate, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**.

TABLED - January 13, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative MOONEN of Portland.

PENDING - **FURTHER ACTION**.

On motion of Representative LEE of Auburn, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby **Committee Amendment "A" (H-159)** was **ADOPTED**.

The same Representative **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-798)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-159)** which was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-159) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-798) thereto was **ADOPTED**.

The Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-159) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-798)** thereto in **NON-CONCURRENCE** and sent for concurrence.

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

An Act to Include Certain Mental Health Data in Firearm Fatalities and Hospitalizations Reports

(H.P. 792) (L.D. 1187)

(S. "A" S-470 to C. "A" H-632)

- In House, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED** on June 25, 2025.
- In Senate, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**.

TABLED - January 13, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative MOONEN of Portland.

PENDING - **FURTHER ACTION**.

On motion of Representative GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby **Committee Amendment "A" (H-632) as Amended by Senate Amendment "A" (S-470)** thereto was **ADOPTED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby **Senate Amendment "A" (S-470)** was **ADOPTED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, **Senate Amendment "A" (S-470)** was **INDEFINITELY POSTPONED**.

The same Representative **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-784)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-632)** which was **READ** by the Clerk.

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

Representative **GRAMLICH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, LD 1187 is a simple public health reporting measure. It updates an existing statutory reporting requirement on the Maine CDC. This Body and the Other Body have already approved this measure. However, it came to our attention that the bill requires a technical language change to more accurately reflect the data we intend to collect. This Amendment simply makes that modest technical change. I hope you will join me in supporting the Amendment and advancing this bill. Thank you.

Representative NUTTING of Oakland **REQUESTED** a roll call on **ADOPTION** of **House Amendment "A" (H-784)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-632)**.

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

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption of House Amendment "A" (H-784) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-632). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 610

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

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

ABSENT - Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 75; No, 64; Absent, 9; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 9 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly **House Amendment "A" (H-784)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-632)** was **ADOPTED**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-632) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-784) thereto was **ADOPTED**.

Representative NUTTING of Oakland **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-632) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-784)** thereto.

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 Oakland, Representative Nutting.

Representative **NUTTING**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. A technical amendment, although sometimes useful, will not make a bad bill good. This is a bill that's not necessary, it has a two-million-dollar Fiscal Note, it was a Divided Report out of Committee and so, should be, I hope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Engrossed as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-632) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-784) thereto. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 611

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

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

ABSENT - Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 75; No, 64; Absent, 9; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 9 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-632) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-784)** thereto in **NON-CONCURRENCE** and sent for concurrence.

Resolve, Directing the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women to Study the Extent of Workforce Gender Segregation in the State

(H.P. 341) (L.D. 522)
(C. "A" H-49)

- In House, **FINALLY PASSED** on April 22, 2025.
- In Senate, **FINALLY PASSED**.

TABLED - January 13, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative MOONEN of Portland.

PENDING - **FURTHER ACTION**.

On motion of Representative COPELAND of Saco, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby the Resolve was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House **RECONSIDERED** its action whereby **Committee Amendment "A" (H-49)** was **ADOPTED**.

The same Representative **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-786)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-49)** which was **READ** by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Saco, Representative Copeland.

Representative **COPELAND**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. LD 522, which is a bill that has since been recalled from the Chief Executive's desk; the Amendment that I am offering would move the report-back date to December 1, 2027, simply to better reflect the timing of when this proposal would become law. Otherwise, this is the same proposal we've already advanced and I hope you will join me in supporting it. Thank you.

Subsequently, **House Amendment "A" (H-786)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-49)** was **ADOPTED**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-49) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-786) thereto was **ADOPTED**.

The Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-49) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-786)** thereto in **NON-CONCURRENCE** and sent for concurrence.

HOUSE DIVIDED REPORT - Report "A" (8) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-716)** - Report "B" (4) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-717)** - Report "C" (1) **Ought Not to Pass** - Committee on **JUDICIARY** on Bill "An Act to Enact the Maine Online Data Privacy Act"

(H.P. 1220) (L.D. 1822)

- **CARRIED OVER** to any special or regular session, of the 132nd Legislature, pursuant to Joint Order S.P. 800 on June 25, 2025.

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

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF ANY REPORT**.

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

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

Representative **KUHN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Honorable Colleagues. I rise to offer two updates on this matter since we last discussed this policy.

First, as we expected, over the interim, we had the opportunity to observe a very similar law go into effect in Maryland. That bill is now law, it has been in use for several months and I'm pleased to report that businesses of all sizes are in fact conducting targeted advertising within the State of Maryland and beyond its borders.

Second, what we did not know would happen over the interim, is the rapid deployment of artificial intelligence systems in our daily lives. These systems are using our data in ways now that consumers did not ask for and did not want, and I'm going to give three quick examples.

First, retailers are using surveillance pricing to set different prices for different customers on the same items. Grocery retailers can tailor prices to individual consumers' purchasing power based on their geolocation and their browsing history. It's been reported that within a single grocery store, some customers are being charged up to 23% more for the same item. Consumers did not knowingly consent to that use. Second, law enforcement, including ICE, are using geolocation and biometric data to track individuals' movements within a certain area in real time and without a warrant. And it's been reported that this is not just being used with people wanted for immigration enforcement, it's being used to track people, U.S. citizens attending protests as well. This is contrary to the longstanding protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and I would submit that consumers did not knowingly consent to that. Finally, using kids' data in ways that they never suspect makes them vulnerable to exploitation online and is leading them to known adverse mental health outcomes. The kids did not consent to that.

When our constituents talk to us about the cost of living, about the rule of law and about protecting our kids' childhoods online, data privacy plays a critical role. The truth is, we don't know where AI is going. Even the people developing it don't know where it is going. But we do know that our data is the fuel. The single most important thing we can do to protect Mainers in this AI-enabled world is to pass strong data privacy protections and 1822 is that vehicle. I urge my colleagues to support the pending motion.

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

Representative **HENDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. If we were looking for a boring day in the House Chambers, we've already discussed energy at length, we're getting ready to discuss privacy at length, so, you're here for the show.

I do stand today in opposition to this bill once again. This has been kind of an ongoing conversation for about three years. The Representative from Falmouth and I, I believe, were introduced to the consumer data privacy idea at the same time, we were seatmates at the time in Judiciary and we came to two very different conclusions, right? So, the things that we can agree on is that right now, we need a consumer data privacy law in Maine. Right now, people's biometric data, people's purchasing data is at risk and it is being used by a handful of unscrupulous businesses who are using the information and selling it for their own profit. So, there needs to be protections in place. We can agree across the board of that.

Where we differ is what approach to take. The proposal in front of you, which is not the only option that we can vote on today, but the proposal in front of you is a measure that really takes that protection too far. And just last weekend, a handful of us, yourself included, Mr. Speaker, were at the Maine Chamber of Commerce Leadership Summit. And to kind of paint the picture of who opposes this measure, the Maine Chamber does, the Retail Association of Maine, Hospitality Maine. The businesses that our State is founded on. Any type of economic stability that we have are the businesses that are coming out and saying, woah, woah, woah, we don't mind for there to be data protections in place; in fact, we want it, some of them are even asking for it, we want guidance on what to do with this consumer data, so that we're protected as well; but this measure just takes it way too far. Our smaller businesses need the ability to compete at a marketing wise with larger corporations such as L.L. Bean. When you have small businesses like Hyperlite Mountain Gear right in Biddeford who are competing for purchasing or selling power online with organizations such as L.L. Bean, they need to be able to market to their consumer based on what their consumer wants and needs. What this proposal does is it really ties the hands, hamstrings and I guess any other quote that you could think of, to paint the picture on how our smaller businesses won't be able to operate.

Yes, the Maryland bill has passed. A few months ago, right? And to say that it hasn't negatively impacted Maryland, that people are still doing advertising, we won't really know the full scope of the impact of that bill for years to come. When it comes to marketing trends and profit margins, we'll have no idea what the actual impact is. So, to say a bill that's been enacted for just a few months is perfectly fine for us to put in, it just doesn't make sense.

The final piece that I'll mention is, this model in front of us completely removes the consent piece. And I've used the analogy before, but if I were to go to Hyperlite Mountain Gear in Biddeford and I were to buy a tent from them, I would want them to offer me 25% off of a backpack. If this goes into place, these smaller businesses, businesses in general, won't be able to market to people based on what their purchases have been. There's another option that will allow consumers to consent, right? Which is the Minority Report of this, allow consumers to consent to targeted advertising.

And further, I'm a little bothered that we're conflating immigration enforcement with a Consumer Data Privacy Act. That was not a concern that was brought up last year when we had this bill, on how law enforcement or immigration enforcement, it just seems to be that's the flavor of the month when it comes to political divide, and therefore, we're going to conflate the two issues. This is its own independent issue, one that we've talked about for years and it's time to enact a privacy law, this one takes it way too far.

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

Representative **ROBERTS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to the pending motion as well and to drill down more on the business owner side, but that being said, I've said many times in this Chamber that I support strong consumer privacy protections. We've all been there together.

The question before us is not whether to protect people's data, but how we do it and whether we do it in a way that actually works for Maine. The Majority Report is well intentioned, but it would put Maine out of step with how our economy functions, particularly for small businesses operating in border communities. Maine does not have the market share to dictate national standards; not in technology, digital advertising nor data regulation. I say that with more than 20 years of marketing and digital marketing experience, all of that in a border district, Mr. Speaker. Our businesses operate in a regional and national marketplace whether we acknowledge it or not.

There has been a suggestion that Maryland's privacy law, particularly its data minimization provision, represents a trend of the next wave, but that's simply not true. Maryland's law has only been in effect for three months. Last year, every state that considered this standard rejected it outright, including Colorado, Oregon, Connecticut, New Mexico, Washington and even now the Vermont State Senate, which unanimously rejected the Maryland model in favor of the consensus New England framework. The reason is simple: No one knows what this standard actually means. Even Maryland's own Attorney General has issued guidance moving away from the literal statutory language and instead relying on California's "reasonable consumer expectations" standard. That raises a basic question; how is a Maine business supposed to determine what is reasonably necessary and proportionate to provide or maintain a product or service when the standard itself is unclear?

And the stakes are real. Businesses are left guessing, and guessing wrong carries risk. By contrast, 19 states have enacted consumer privacy laws based on a shared consensus framework, the same model reflected in the Committee Report "B." That framework gives consumers clear rights to access, correct, delete and opt out, requires affirmative consent for sensitive data and still allows businesses to function.

Regional alignment matters. Digital commerce and digital advertising do not stop at state lines. Maine businesses compete every day with businesses just across the border. Geotargeted advertising crosses borders instantly. This bill would require Maine businesses to operate under a single restrictive, untested standard while nearby competitors operate under a different rung. In my case, that's less than a half a mile away. This is not consumer protection, it's economic isolation. There is a better path that protects consumers, aligns Maine with our neighbors and builds on what is already working across the country. It avoids making Maine a regulatory outlier.

We are not choosing between privacy and progress; we are choosing between an untested experiment and a proven consensus-based approach. For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, my Colleagues, I urge you to reject the pending motion and support Committee Report "B." Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Brewer, Representative O'Halloran.

Representative **O'HALLORAN**: Thank you. LD 1822 is about protecting people who are too often targeted and taken advantage of; our elderly residents, our children and other vulnerable individuals. This bill strengthens common-sense protections against neglect, abuse and deceptive practices. It makes sure that services and care are provided with honesty, dignity and respect. No one should be harmed or exploited because of their age, disability or circumstance.

At the same time, LD 1822 is fair to businesses. It does not stop legitimate marketing and competition. Businesses that operate ethically will still be able to advertise, compete and succeed. What this bill does is draw a clear line against predatory behavior that takes advantage of vulnerability. This is about accountability, fairness and basic human decency. Protecting people and supporting responsible businesses are not opposing goals. These go hand-in-hand. I urge my colleagues to support LD 1822. Thank you.

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

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

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Skowhegan, Representative Poirier.

Representative **POIRIER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well was going to request a Roll Call, but I still wanted to speak, so, thank you for recognizing me.

With this bill, I just want to say that sometimes when you're trying to protect somebody, you harm somebody else. That's actually what this bill would do. Businesses came out in full force stating how hard it would be for them to operate. And, you know, we can't afford to lose businesses in this State.

At some point, we have to hold ourselves accountable. If I don't want L.L. Bean to share my information or to target me in marketing, I can choose not to shop at L.L. Bean. Those are the types of things we have to look at instead of passing a bill that's going to discourage businesses to come here or stay here. So, I hope we all take that into consideration. Thank you.

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

Representative **LEE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So much of the testimony and debate about this bill in our Committee was based on its potential effect on targeted advertising. Implicit in much of that testimony and debate was the notion that somehow targeted advertising is an unalloyed good to small businesses, despite the fact that it's controlled by massive Big Tech companies.

I've pushed this claim repeatedly, seeking data or information justifying the notion that small businesses are dependent on the targeted advertising provided to them by these Big Tech firms. I pushed and I pushed and I pushed until I received the shocking but earnest answer; we don't know, but we have no other choice but to trust Google.

I found compelling the data that was provided to us in the testimony of a group called Check My Ads, which I'll now quote; "The only winners in the current state of the digital advertising industry are Big Tech companies like Google and the data brokers and advertising technology middlemen that dwell in their shadows. One out of every dollar spent on programmatic advertising, only 36 cents make it to the publisher, 29 cents of the ad dollar goes to ad tech intermediaries and 35 cents is wasted on fraud, invalid bots, low-quality made-for-advertising websites. The average programmatic ad campaign serves on 44,000 websites. All the while, even the biggest advertisers with the most leverage have limited ability to confirm exactly where their ads appeared. These figures produced by leading advertising trade association, the Association of National Advertisers, represent a conservative estimate. The estimate does not, for example, account for ad agency fees. It does not include the money wasted on ineffective ad verification tools that advertisers use in an attempt to make sure their ads go where they want them to go and are seen by real people. Nor does it include wasted spending on advertising that, while not technically meeting industry definitions of ad fraud, does not adhere to the criteria outlined by advertisers. Thus, while research suggests that ad fraud accounts for a whopping $84 billion in global spend, placing it second only to the drug trade as a source of revenue for organized crime, that this is just the tip of the iceberg as it comes to advertiser waste. For small businesses, this is not only detrimental to their growth, but at times to their survival.

"Recently, Check My Ads launched an advertising campaign with the intention of emanating the experience of an average small business user. We set up a Google Ads account, as millions of other small businesses do, we were nudged into Google's AI-driven opaque product Performance Max, which is notorious for restricting advertiser transparency and control and has a history of placing ads on potentially illegal content while ignoring advertising targeting criteria. Unsurprisingly, our ads were exclusively on AI-generated spam websites and other low-quality websites more likely to attract bot clicks than real humans. The same phenomenon occurs outside of Google's products. The consumer data peddled by data brokers for ad targeting, while being invasively collected, is also astoundingly ineffective for marketing. Research has shown that leading ad data brokers were only right about people's gender 42% of the time. Worse than guessing at random. This is what advertisers are paying for."

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill because, I'm sorry to say, I don't trust Google. I support this bill because I understand that the reason Google, Meta and others want to vacuum up our data is not to provide a better product. In fact, ANA's research proves the opposite; more data does not lead to better advertising. The reason these companies want our data and are voraciously vacuuming it up is they want to win the AI race. No reason more than that.

You know, to the consternation of some people on my side of the aisle, I'm a capitalist. The way tech markets that are regulated by this bill operate are nowhere close to operating in a healthy state of capitalism. These markets are uncompetitive, monopolistic and depend on federal governmental intervention and financial support to maintain those monopolies. Google and Meta control the ad markets that are subject of this debate. Google and Apple control the mobile phone market. And as Cory Doctorow observed, Google pays $20 billion a year to Apple to not develop a competing search engine. As a consequence, Google has a 90% market share of the search engine market and therefore, controls the ad markets that are the targeted advertising affected by this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I don't support this bill out of some animus or lack of trust for small business. I support this bill because I don't trust Google, I don't trust Facebook, Meta, I don't trust Apple. They are exploiting our data for profit for themselves. They are defrauding small businesses to convince them that they need our data and thereby profiting themselves at the expense of those small businesses who are misplacing their trust in them. Big Tech has had too much power for far too long, and it's time that we started treating them accordingly. I support this bill.

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

Representative **HENDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Just to put a finer point on it, and really to agree with my Colleague from Auburn, is that is I, too, don't trust Google. I, too, don't trust Meta. I, too, don't trust Apple. That's why I have engaged heavily in this conversation. I don't trust them, but I do trust our businesses. Our businesses who are telling us this is a bad bill for them.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 612

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

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

ABSENT - Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 71; No, 68; Absent, 9; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 68 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 9 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended** was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-716)** was **READ** by the Clerk.

Representative KUHN of Falmouth **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-788)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-716)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

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

Representative **KUHN**: Thank you, Colleagues. This Amendment simply moves the implementation date from September 1, 2026, to September 1, 2027, to accommodate Enactment happening one year later.

Representative HENDERSON of Rumford **REQUESTED** a roll call on **ADOPTION** of **House Amendment "A" (H-788)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-716)**.

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

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption of House Amendment "A" (H-788) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-716). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 613

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

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

ABSENT - Hymes, Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 73; No, 65; Absent, 10; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

73 having voted in the affirmative and 65 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 10 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly **House Amendment "A" (H-788)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-716)** was **ADOPTED**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-716) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-788) thereto was **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-716) as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-788)** thereto and sent for concurrence.

ORDERS

On motion of Representative MATHIESON of Kittery, the following Joint Order: (H.P. 1486)

ORDERED, the Senate concurring, that the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services shall report out, to the House, a bill combining the Board of Licensure in Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Licensure into a single board.

READ and **PASSED**.

Sent for concurrence.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matters, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment Tuesday, February 3, 2026, had preference in the Orders of the Day and continued with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

An Act to Exempt Nonprofit Agricultural Membership Organizations from Insurance Requirements

(S.P. 381) (L.D. 893)
(C. "A" S-59)

- In House, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED** on June 18, 2025.
- In Senate, **FAILED OF PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED** in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.
- **CARRIED OVER** to any special or regular session, of the 132nd Legislature, pursuant to Joint Order S.P. 800 on June 25, 2025.

TABLED - June 25, 2025 (Till Later Today) by Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor.

PENDING - **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**.

Representative MOONEN of Portland moved that the House **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

Representative **FOLEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill that came before this Body last session. This bill simply allows the agricultural community in our State to form its own alliance to buy health coverage through a Farm Bureau to help control the cost. And we all have heard about the expanding costs of health care and many of our constituents are unable to afford health care because of the costs have gone up this year. This is a bill that would allow our agricultural farmers and other members of the agriculture community to purchase the coverage through the Farm Bureau.

You know, this is a bill that has had an opportunity in the past to help save our farms and our farmers and we're losing too many of them these days. The high cost of farming across this country is driving many farmers out. This is a simple bill to help allow our farmers to afford to purchase coverage for themselves and their families. We supported the bill in the past and I would encourage us to do so again and I request a Roll Call.

Representative FOLEY of Wells **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

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

ROLL CALL NO. 614

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

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

ABSENT - Hymes, Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 71; No, 67; Absent, 10; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 67 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 10 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the House voted to **RECEDE AND CONCUR**.

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

An Act to Expand the Supervised Community Confinement Program

(H.P. 416) (L.D. 648)
(C. "A" H-652)

- **CARRIED OVER** to any special or regular session, of the 132nd Legislature, pursuant to Joint Order S.P. 800 on June 25, 2025.

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

PENDING - **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook **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 Westbrook, Representative Salisbury..

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to point out something about this bill that people might not be aware of.

I do appreciate the work that went into the bill and the Amendment that was made and the work that went into changing some of the concerns regarding the eligibility being that the prisoner would have to be considered minimum within five years, and so, I do appreciate the work that went into there. But I just want to point out that the Amendment that is before us today says that the prisoner would be eligible to be transferred into the program if they have served either two-thirds or 20 years of their term of imprisonment, whichever occurs first, the crimes where the prisoner is serving the term of imprisonment were committed before the prisoner attained 26 years of age. So, what that means is that if a person, a prisoner, is serving a sentence of life but they have served 20 years of that sentence, they could potentially apply for secured community confinement. This bill goes together, I consider it to be a companion bill to the parole bill that is being heard currently in Judiciary --

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Point of Order.

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

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we can only refer to the item that's in front of us and not other legislation pending in this Body.

On **POINT OF ORDER,** Representative MILLIKEN of Blue Hill asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would remind the Member that the pending question before us is Enactment of LD 648.

The Chair advised that the remarks of Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **SALISBURY**: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, again, this bill, to be clear, would allow somebody that was sentenced to life in prison before they were 26 years of age, if they have served two-thirds or 20 years of their sentence, to be transferred into the secured community confinement program if they had been considered at a minimum custody prisoner within the last five years. So, they could've been considered maximum before that time, but if they are considered minimum within the last five years.

I'm not comfortable with this bill. I will be voting Ought Not to Pass, and I know this is coming up quickly, we have talked about this bill before, but I would encourage people to read quickly this Amendment and what this potentially is opening up to do.

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

Representative **McINTYRE**: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This morning's prayer started with the Reverend including the language, "the importance of deep listening." And for those who have known me, I've shared that I follow the golden ratio; two ears, one mouth, listening. So, shortly after the Reverend gave that prayer, an Esteemed Colleague on the other side used the phrase "for as long as I've been in this building." I've been here a heartbeat, but I've followed that golden ratio.

And so, not speaking to legislation that is pending, I can reflect upon legislation that came up in the First Session related to this topic and I can read from testimony that really struck me. And I quote: 'The man who murdered Virginia Cookson terrorized and tried to kill his ex-wife and was supposed to be in prison until 2027, he was released in 2024 to terrorize another woman and this time, he succeeded in taking her life. It is time for us to admit that the community confinement monitoring program in our jails and prisons are failing us. They are seriously flawed. These programs do not confine and they do not monitor. Instead, they release dangerous criminals into the community with no thought about the safety of their victim in the general population."

I think the Representative that shared those words with us will acknowledge, and I agree with that Colleague from your

side of the aisle, the program's a failure. And it's because we're not having the right conversations. As I, as a new guy, jump back and forth like the little hamster between CJ and EUT, I'm doing my best, but I do listen. And what I have heard is a conspicuous absence of critical tenets of our conversations upstairs on the fourth floor. Oftentimes as justification for bad behavior, an argument will be presented that it's economic influence or educational influence. I don't dismiss those. Absolutely part of the holistic solution. Often, what we don't include in those conversations are the importance of faith, family and community, also key contributors to solving a lot of our criminal justice challenges.

The final element that is completely ignored in most of our conversations up there is personal accountability. I messed up a few times as a kid. I own it all day long. And I learned from those because the most painful lessons are often the most rewarding. I'm not going to stand here with a callous and cold heart and say, you know, the popular line on television, if you can't do the time, don't do the crime. That's shortsighted, it's myopic, it's weak and ignorant. I believe in pathways to redemption and second chances. This program is not that. Thanks for listening.

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

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to rise and correct the record, I guess, on a few things.

First is that the Representative from Lowell cited that the Supervised Community Confinement Program, SCCP, is a failure, and I think that does an enormous disservice to the hard work of our Department of Corrections, who by their statistic, they have like a 90% success rate on that program. I don't think it's fair to call that an abject failure.

Also, in talking about accountability and redemption and second chances, this bill, what it deals with, is children, basically. I understand that it goes up until the age of 26, but that is when scientists, neuroscientists tell us that your brain is fully developed. I've talked many times on this floor about the very stupid choices that I made as a young person. I actually made them well into the age of 30. Often, some people don't have good choices to make. They're not handed the opportunity to make good choices. And the people we're talking about who are serving life sentences or are serving a very long time in our Department of Corrections custody, most of them, many of them, were not handed an opportunity or chance to make good choices. These are kids who come in with enormous trauma, they're kids who come in with substance use disorder, they are young people who come in with being victims themselves of some of the harm that they then go on to commit.

If we're talking about accountability, the SCCP program as it currently sits requires accountability. The Department of Corrections is very good at their job. The reason this program is so successful is because the DOC has a chance to look at the record of incarceration of everyone that applies for supervised community confinement and make nuanced decisions about who should be accepted into that program and who shouldn't be.

I want to also correct something that the Representative from Westbrook said. I think that she has a general misunderstanding of the five years minimum security. In current Statute, you cannot qualify for the Supervised Community Confinement Program unless you are considered a minimum-security prisoner. Because the bill would apply to people serving long sentences, in order to be a minimum-security prisoner, you can't have more than five years left to serve. And so, we made an amendment to accommodate people who had more than 10 years, or five years left on their term but who otherwise meet the standards for minimum security. So, we're talking about young people who are sentenced, maybe to life in prison, who meet all the requirements for minimum security; they comply with the rules, they do education, they engage in programming, they're doing the work, but the only thing barring them from being considered minimum custody is that they have more time than the five-year allotment left on their term.

This is a conservative bill. And I know that I got a good chuckle when I said that in Committee from the Representative from Oakland, who scoffed at the idea that anything Representative Milliken put in could be considered conservative, but here we are. This is a conservative bill in comparison to states like Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana; some of the reddest states in this country give broader consideration for redemption and rehabilitation to all of their inmates. This is for young people, this is for kids.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the bill. I will, of course, be supporting this conservative measure and I would hope that folks would follow my light. Thank you.

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

Representative **ARDELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to briefly correct the Representative from Blue Hill, this bill is not for kids. It is absolutely not for children. It's designed for 18- to 26-year-olds who were sentenced not as children, but as adults. If you've achieved your 18th birthday in the United States, under U.S. law, you are considered an adult. That's what our law has determined.

Sentencing judges, as part of a pre-sentence report, take into account a defendant's age, the details of the crime, the circumstances of the situation. Pre-sentence reports are very detailed and these elements are already considered as part of a judicial sentence.

To get into the elements of the bill more technically, the 14th Amendment contains the Equal Protection Clause that states no state may deny a person the equal protection of the laws. To treat 18- to 26-year-olds differently than other adults who were sentenced for serious crimes is a violation of that Equal Protection Clause. Eighteen- to 26-year-olds are not part of a protected class recognized by our government. This Equal Protection Clause, to understand what it did, it was utilized to end racial segregation and was used to legalize interracial marriage in states where that was illegal.

This bill engages a civil rights issue and if this bill were to become public policy, would certainly be a civil rights violation and would absolutely be litigated and is absolutely sure to lose. I ask this Body to honor their oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution and join me in opposing this bill. Thank you.

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

Representative **HASENFUS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the Good Representative from Monticello, I'm not sure that this would be a winner or a loser, but I do think there is a rational basis for the State to argue if such a case came forward, and I don't think we should let that be the reason to implement this law or not.

I also want to point out that those individuals who are eligible for SCCP are the ones who have done every single thing that the Department of Corrections has asked and they are the exemplary members, the exemplary residents. I also think it's important to say that the individuals are going to serve

at least two-thirds. You would not be eligible for this unless you've served two-thirds or 20 years of that sentence. And I know it was a long time ago since we did this bill, but I think the American Bar Association suggests that any sentence over 20 years should be reviewed and reassessed and like the Good Representative from Blue Hill said, a number of other states do reassess sentences, they don't just set it at one time when you're 18 years old to be forgotten for the rest of time.

So, I just wanted to make that point clear that not everybody will qualify, that they have to be the most exemplary of the residents in DOC and serve at least two-thirds or 20 years of that sentence under the Amendment.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dover-Foxcroft, Representative Perkins.

Representative **PERKINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to this program, I'm going to say unapologetically that I, too, believe it's a failure. The whole program. And I'm going to tell you why I think that is because I get phone calls from police chiefs, because my prior employment as a law enforcement officer and because of my position on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, and they're concerned because the people that are being released under this program are being released and part of this program, in order to be released, they have to have a plan set up, someplace stable they can go, they have to have, you know, some kind of opportunity, employment or something, and they're being released, for example, to the home of the very victim that they terrorized or abused that got them into the predicament where they were imprisoned in the first place. They're being released to the drug house where they were arrested for trafficking. They're being released to a place; they have to have a nexus domain. And sometimes, the person might be an out-of-stater that was arrested because they were trafficking drugs into our State, they're being released to the place where they were caught delivering drugs to. They weren't even Maine citizens.

I had a police chief call me just two weeks ago because the person that killed someone else, killed him, who got a 10-year sentence, all but four suspended, was being released after one year of incarceration, but was approved for this secure community confinement. And they met all the Department's criteria, but they were being released into the community, back into the community where the family of this victim lived. That's not justice, Mr. Speaker. That's not a successful program. The people in that community, who had lost that member of the community, who's dead now because of this person, now gets to watch this person walk out after one year. That's not justice, that's not a victim-based justice system we have.

This is a failed program through and through. And yes, we now know because we now have new scanning techniques and it's all brand new, we now know that our brains do change slightly up until the age of 26. But this isn't new. This isn't something that just started happening. This has been happening ever since human beings have been on this planet. We now know that the myelin sheath around our neurons in our brain, it continues to thin up until we're about the age of 26. But that doesn't mean that we are incapable of making decisions up until the age of 26, because we've been able to make decisions for as long as human beings have been on this planet. In fact, if you go to the NIH website, the National Institute of Health, there are papers written about this that specifically warn us as policymakers not to make policy decisions based on this, because it's not new and because we don't know enough about it. And here we are making policy decisions about it, destroying a victim-based justice system, all so that we can advance some kind of ideology where we're advancing the rights of a criminal over the rights of victims, and it's disgusting to me, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak again.

I just want to make it very, very clear my concerns are not about the secured community confinement program, which I do believe is a success of the Department of Corrections. They have done an amazing amount of work in this program, they do have a great success rate and I think it is a wonderful program. My concerns around this bill are around some eligibility changes that will be made as part of this bill. But I just want to make it clear that my overall concerns are not related to the secured community confinement program.

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

Representative **McINTYRE**: Thank you for allowing me to rise one more time, briefly. The Department of Corrections opposes this. They gave testimony to that effect. Thank you.

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

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little confused. I'm reading "An Act to Expand the Supervised Community Confinement Program," and I keep hearing the word secure and it's coming out in some of the other speeches that are given that there's a difference between the two. So, I just wanted to point back to the fact that this is supervised, not necessarily secure.

The other point that I wanted to make was this bill affects people who committed these crimes between the ages of 18 through 26. Some of their victims were between the ages of 18 through 26. The victims of these crimes do not get a do-over or an undoing of the crime against them. Actions do have consequences. Some of those consequences are severe because the actions were severe. If we really want to lessen people being put in prison for these crimes for such extended periods, then we need to make sure that we are preventing that from happening and holding people accountable at the lesser crimes, so that we don't get to this situation.

Once again, the victims receive no do-over and many of these are very heinous crimes. When I looked up the crimes, murder is between 25 and a life sentence. When I look up the Class A crimes, we're talking about kidnapping, gross sexual assault to children under the age of 12, or 14; I'm sorry, I don't remember right off the top of my head; but when you look at these crimes that are being committed, to release someone to a Supervised Community Confinement Program, that is not prison and that is not what they were actually sentenced to for their crimes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me rise a second time.

I just wanted to correct the record again on a couple of things. It's hard to have so much misinformation, and I understand it's been a while since we heard this bill in Committee, but to refer back to the Representative from Dover-Foxcroft's example, in order to qualify for the Supervised Community Confinement Program, you have to serve two-thirds of your sentence and be sentenced to a minimum of five years. So, the argument that someone was released at one year on the Supervised Community Confinement Program and

then went on to commit harm is just patently false. That didn't happen.

Lastly, I'm just going to end with a quick quote: "In addition to making sense and serving the needs of justice, rehabilitating prisoners and releasing them when they are ready can save taxpayers money. Prisons are called correctional facilities because the goal is to correct the behavior and then send people out of there." Those are from Charlie Kirk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 615

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Graham, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Jackson, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, McIntyre, Mingo, Mitchell, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Rollins, Rudnicki, Salisbury, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, White J, White R, Wood S.

ABSENT - Hymes, Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Webb, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 64; No, 73; Absent, 11; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

64 having voted in the affirmative and 73 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 11 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Bill **FAILED PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED** and was sent to the Senate.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Divided Report

Majority Report of the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Include in the Ranked-choice Election Method for General and Special Elections the Offices of Governor, State Senator and State Representative and to Make Other Related Changes"

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

Signed:

Senators:

HICKMAN of Kennebec
TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin

Representatives:

BOYER of Poland
CHAPMAN of Auburn
FREDERICKS of Sanford
FROST of Belgrade
HYMES of Waldo

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-499)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

DUSON of Cumberland

Representatives:

SUPICA of Bangor
FAIRCLOTH of Bangor
GRAHAM of North Yarmouth
MALON of Biddeford
TERRY of Gorham

Came from the Senate with the Minority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (S-499)**.

READ.

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

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

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Constitution must be amended before such fundamental changes in Maine's electoral process can occur. This was the quote from our Chief Executive when she was an Attorney General for our State in 2017.

This bill is a runaround. It's a constitutional runaround. It's clear as day that in our Maine Constitution, it says we must elect the Chief Executive by plurality. Proponents of this change talk about Alaska. They talk about Alaska having a court case with ranked-choice voting and it being affirmed and expanding ranked-choice voting to all offices. Well, the difference between the Maine Constitution and the Alaska Constitution, Mr. Speaker, is that they don't mention the word plurality in Alaska's Constitution. It's clearly in our Maine Constitution.

Joshua Chamberlain stopped a revolution here at the State House after a tense election. He was brought in to keep the peace, go through the elections, make sure it was good. And ultimately, what became of that is an Amendment to our Maine Constitution to allow for plurality to choose who wins our elections.

We had a solemn occasion in 2017, the Maine Court weighed in on it, and what we have now is a hybrid based on that decision; a nonbinding decision, I'll say, but a decision from the court. And that's why we have ranked-choice voting for some State offices and primaries, but not for the general, not for Chief Executive.

And so, the Ought Not to Pass Report, one of the rare tri-partisan Reports with Democrat and Independent voting with Republicans saying this is too much right now, in an election year, to implement these changes. We're changing the rules of elections that are in place right now. This is not good public policy, it's not good for the voters, it's not good for overall. It's clearly unconstitutional.

We can change the words we want in Statute, but it doesn't change the facts. We know what's going to happen to this, after this passes, it's going to go right to court, it's going to be litigated. It should've been litigated last session, last year. I tried to draft a solemn occasion with the Revisor's Office, but I was heavily discouraged to do so, and so, I didn't and I regret it and now we're here eight months, seven months before an election, with the Secretary of State administering her own election. There's a lot of issues going on in Maine, going on

with our elections and the idea that we're fine with putting our Maine Constitution aside because of brazen politics is very sad.

So, I hope we vote down the current motion and defeat this, and if the other side of the aisle believes so strongly in ranked-choice voting, do it right; change the Constitution, let's have a vote. But this isn't the way, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. And I'd like to ask for a Roll Call, while I'm at it.

Representative BOYER of Poland **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: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Auburn, Representative Lee.

Representative **LEE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry you're hearing from me so much today.

I rise today to speak in favor of LD 1666, and I do so to directly address the legal question that has lingered over ranked-choice voting in Maine. At its heart, this debate turns on a single, deceptively simple question: When is a vote complete?

Opponents of ranked-choice voting have argued that our Constitution requires an election to be decided after a single round of counting and that anything more somehow violates the requirement that the winner receives a plurality. But that assumption, that the count must end after the first look at the ballots, appears nowhere in the text of the Maine Constitution. Ranked-choice voting does not involve multiple elections, it does not involve voters returning to the polls. It involves one election, one ballot and one tabulation process. A process that is not complete until all lawful expressions of voter intent have been counted. That understanding is not novel, it is not well established in court decisions, it has nothing to do with the word plurality.

In 2022, the Alaska Supreme Court squarely addressed this issue. The court explained that under ranked-choice voting, the initial count does not determine the winner, because the vote count is not final after the first tabulation. Instead, early tallies merely show who is leading before the counting is complete. The court rejected the idea that constitutional language requiring the candidate with the greatest number of votes mandates stopping the count after the first pass through the ballots. Under ranked-choice voting, the court held, the election result is not known until the final round of tabulation, when all valid voter preferences have been given effect. Treating earlier rounds as decisive would be like stopping the count before all ballots are tabulated.

Federal courts have reached the same conclusion. The Ninth Circuit reviewing San Francisco's ranked-choice voting system explained that ranked-choice voting is not a series of elections or rounds of voting; rather, it is a single election with a single tabulation process in which voters are given one equal opportunity to express their preferences. Once the polls close, no new votes are cast. What follows is an algorithmic counting process, steps within a single tabulation to determine which candidate has majority support. The court was explicit. These steps are not separate votes and are not separate elections, but parts of one continuous count.

That principle that ranked-choice voting is one vote, one election, one tabulation, is exactly what LD 1666 clarifies in Statute. The bill defines the early rankings for what they are; preferences. And it defines the vote for what it is; the complete and undivided expression of all of those preferences, counted together to determine the outcome. A plurality winner cannot be identified until the counting is finished because the vote itself is not finished until then. That clarification matters because Statutes enacted by this Legislature carry a heavy presumption of constitutionality. Any challenger bears the burden of proving that there is no possible constitutional application to the law. LD 1666 is drafted precisely to ensure that at least one, in our view, the most natural reading of ranked-choice voting, fully complies with the Constitution's text and purpose.

But this debate is not only legal, it is profoundly Maine. To understand that, we must go back to Joshua Chamberlain. In 1879, Maine faced a constitutional crisis. No candidate for Chief Executive received the majority. Under the law at that time, the Legislature, not the people, would choose the Chief Executive. Armed militias gathered, tensions rose and Chamberlain famously rode to Augusta to prevent violence and preserve democratic order. What followed was not just a quelling of an uprising, but a constitutional reckoning. The lesson was clear, the legitimacy of executive power must come from the people, not from legislative maneuvering. The Constitution was amended so that gubernatorial elections would be decided by the voters themselves, not this Body. That was Chamberlain's goal, to ensure that the people's voice, not the Legislature, decides who governs.

Ranked-choice voting honors that goal. In crowded elections, plurality voting can hand decisive power back to this Body indirectly by producing outcomes rejected by most voters and undermining public legitimacy. Ranked-choice voting does the opposite. It ensures the Chief Executive and every legislator elected under it can say truthfully that they earned the support of a majority of voters who participated. This bill does not take power from the people, it returns it to them. It does not invent a new theory of elections, it completes the counting of votes already cast. It does not weaken our Constitution, it fulfills its democratic purpose. Please support LD 1666.

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

Representative **SMITH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, it seems I've stood up many times on this floor, it seems like, and spoken about ranked-choice voting. And I can't be the only one who on election day hears from many, many people saying, "how the heck do I vote?" Online, months and months before the election, people say, "what do I do? How do I make sure that my vote, who I want to win, is seen, is counted?" And that will not happen with this vote.

People hate ranked-choice voting. We are the laughingstock of the country regarding ranked-choice voting. I can, again, not be the only one who sees the headlines saying that this system is used here and how it's disenfranchising the people. It's just definitely not the panacea its advocates claim it to be. Empirical evidence shows that ranked-choice voting leads to higher rates of ballot exhaustion, disenfranchising voters whose ballots are discarded before the final tally. Studies show that voters are often less likely to complete their ballots fully, disproportionately harming vulnerable populations. In 2018, during Maine's first ranked-choice voting congressional election, nearly 10,000 ballots were discarded before the final round of tabulation. No public service announcement is going to educate all the voters of Maine on how to get the outcome that they want with ranked-choice voting. It's just not going to happen. I've tried for years to tell people how to do it, and honestly, no one ever seems to know the real answer.

This bill is going to further divide Mainers at a time when confidence in our elections is incredibly fragile, incredibly low, incredibly low. People do not believe that our elections are fair or that they can trust them, and this will make it worse. I ask you to vote against this bill. Thank you.

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

Representative **SUPICA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had not intended to stand on this subject, but I felt compelled to, because I was actually working in the Secretary of State's office when we implemented ranked-choice voting and I heard from a lot of people about their frustrations on the rollout and on the confusion. And it was heartbreaking, because I heard consistently from people on the phone, I would hear, 'I'm smart, you don't understand, I have friends that went to college,' which was weird, because I would hear that, 'I have friends that went to college, and even they don't understand it.' And what I heard in that was like this kind of like, 'believe me, I'm not an idiot,' and like, as if people had been talking down to them. And I didn't want to talk down to them, you know, I didn't go to college, either. And so, I would just read them the ballot question for ranked-choice voting and I just read it to them but just slower and word for word, and every single one of them said to me, 'thank you, nobody has explained it to me this way.' And what that told me was that when you cut out all the noise, all the pundits, all the social media misinformation and you just talk to somebody with respect and you don't talk down to them and you don't fearmonger, they're going to get it.

Mainers aren't idiots, you know? I'm not an idiot and I got it. It took me a second because everybody was freaking out. And I understand, change is hard. And I think there's also some confusion about the word exhausted ballot. It's a technical term. It's not the ballot is exhausted, it collapsed on the floor, oh, dear me, call 9-1-1. It's a technical term for what happens when somebody stopped using ranked-choice voting. And honestly, if you choose to not use ranked-choice voting, that is your choice and that's also a statement. That's a statement of, I don't like the other people. I've chosen to not rank the other people as well, because I don't like my options, I'm sticking with this person. And that's your choice, and if you want to do that, you're absolutely okay to do that and that's fine.

So, I think it's really important that we stand up and we make very clear that in Maine, we are not a laughingstock, because we are not being laughed at by other states, all of the states right now are working in conjunction with each other, in conjunctions with the Secretary of States, to make sure that their elections are safe. They're sharing ideas, they're working together, they have conferences, they talk about what works, what doesn't work and they all want the same thing. They want free, safe elections. And this fearmongering is getting us nowhere.

I take pride in being the Chair of the Veteran and Legal Affairs Committee and I take pride in the work that I've done for the State. And, you know, we'll vote today on this bill and it'll pass or not, but what is clear is that the people of Maine want ranked-choice voting and have said so over and over and over again. And when we get bogged down in big technical terms or a lot of back and forth and making people feel like you're not smart enough to understand this because you didn't go to college or you don't have a law degree, I think sometimes it can be a little insulting, and I just wanted to give my two cents on that.

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

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise in strong opposition of LD 1666.

At its core, this bill proposes to change the meaning and the use of the word plurality in Maine law. It may sound technical or harmless, but it's neither. The words in Statute matter and definitions matter. And when we start redefining longstanding democratic terms to fit a desired outcome, we step on dangerous ground.

A plurality is simple, and it's meant exactly what everyday Mainers understand it to mean. It's the highest number of votes received, whether or not that number reaches a majority. That definition is not confusing, it's not broken. It means that every vote counts and is not tossed aside in the pursuit of an arbitrary objective. It's served our State and our Country well for generations. And more importantly, it's in our Constitution.

This bill does not clarify law, it changes it and does so in a way that alters the rules of the game after the game has already been played many times for many voters over the years. This Legislature should not be in the business of moving goal posts, especially when it comes to elections. We also shouldn't be in the business of trying to undermine our Constitution. If we believe Maine should require a majority vote in certain circumstances, then we should debate that openly and honestly and say exactly that; pass a Constitutional Amendment. But this bill doesn't do that. Instead, it attempts an end-around by redefining plurality. And so, it functions like something else entirely. That is legislative sleight of hand and the people of Maine deserve better than that. Elections work because voters trust the rules. They trust that the meaning of words won't change based on who wins or who loses or who holds power at a given time.

This bill also sets a troubling precedent. It can redefine plurality today, but what prevents a future Legislature from redefining other core democratic terms tomorrow? Majority, quorum, consent; these are pillars of our representative government. We should be strengthening confidence in our electoral system, not weakening it by creating ambiguity where none previously existed.

To be clear, opposition to this bill is not opposition to democracy, it is in the defense of it. Democracy depends on clear rules, stable definitions and the humility to accept outcomes even when we don't like them. For these reasons, I urge this Body to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you.

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

Representative **GRAHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I just wanted to share with you that on November 8, 2016, Maine voters approved question five to enact ranked-choice voting for statewide elections for Chief Executive, State Legislatures and Congress. When I voted for that, I believed that it was for statewide elections for Chief Executive, State Legislature and Congress. That's what the people voted for then and I think that's what they want now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents have asked why I have not put in a bill to repeal ranked-choice voting, and I tell them I don't need to because so many of my colleagues each session put in bills to repeal it. And now that it has been implemented, I've received many phone calls from people not understanding. I

understand when we have Representatives from other areas that call it fearmongering, it's not fearmongering when people are calling me on the phone saying they are confused. That's not fearmongering. That's not them being uneducated. They genuinely look at that and they only want to vote for one person, but then they're told well, if you only vote for one person, you do the one checkmark and leave the rest blank, then all of the other people that are voting their second and third choices, they have more input into who actually wins. And that is, in fact, true. It is confusing, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have friends who have gone to college, and I find it confusing to even try to explain this to my constituents.

And so, I'm really confused though, because the Majority Report is a tri-partisan Report, as was pointed out. So unusual in this Body. Like, I don't know that that's ever even happened before that I've heard of in a bill. And yet, here we are, running the Minority Report, comprised of Members from only one party, your party, and I find that to be unacceptable as well. So, thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Hampden, Representative Haggan.

Representative **HAGGAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to stand in opposition.

I recall being a new legislator that I swore an oath to uphold the Constitution of Maine, which I'm assuming everyone in this Body did the same. And this clearly, as was stated earlier, was determined in 2017 to be not this very; ranked-choice voting issue is not going along with our Constitution, so, I'm surprised that anyone feels comfortable voting in that manner. It also makes us look like there's something wrong with our elections as we're already under the microscope. I just really want to urge that people vote no and to live up to the oath that they swore. Thank you.

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

Representative **FAIRCLOTH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. First, I want to assert that I agree with the legal conclusions of Madam Chair, I agree with the legal conclusions of Representative Lee, but I respect, I sincerely respect --

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair would remind the Member to direct his comments to the Chair.

The Chair reminded Representative FAIRCLOTH of Bangor to address his comments toward the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **FAIRCLOTH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respect that people can have another point of view and I want to have deference and understand that they may want to challenge it, they have the ability to challenge it in court and I grant that, that there can be a disagreement of how this is interpreted. I think strongly that the law as seen in other jurisdictions favors the interpretation that I share.

However, I want to bring us back to, at the beginning of today's session, Reverend Alicia Stewart called upon us all to have, quote, 'have our debate shaped by respect.' Debate that, quote, 'strengthens community.' Twice, Maine voters specifically chose to foster debate shaped by respect when Maine people chose ranked-choice voting and it's been implemented and been used in the State of Maine. AARP, the American Association of Retired People, and Maine Youth and Power support ranked-choice voting. That's strengthening community. And the people have been using ranked-choice voting already and things have been fine. Contrastingly, a minority vote election winner is a recipe for resentment. That's what happens without ranked-choice voting.

Ranked-choice voting provides fertile ground to find common ground. Why? When candidates seek office under ranked-choice voting, candidates and their supporters have a specific motive to seek common ground with fellow candidates and their supporters. Like the Reverend said, debate shaped by respect, strengthening community, that's the best direction for Maine. People are welcome, they have the opportunity to challenge anything they like in court and let the court decide. But I'd suggest that this is, on the policy merits, the right idea in addition to being on the legal merits, the right idea. Thank you.

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you spend millions of dollars passing around disinformation, even though Mainers are not idiots, they can be fooled.

When ranked-choice voting first went out for a vote, my dad, a hardcore Democrat, voted for it. I didn't know that. I said, 'Dad, did you vote for ranked-choice voting?' And he said, 'of course I did, what, are you foolish? This is the greatest thing around. It's the only fair thing.' he said. And I said, 'okay, did you hear that on TV?' He said, 'yeah.' I said, 'would you watch a video?' He said, 'sure.' And I said to him, 'do you see who's presenting this video? It's not a Democrat, not a Republican, no political party, it's a college professor just explaining how ranked-choice voting operates.' He goes, 'okay.' So, he watched it. Two minutes into it, he looks at me and he goes, 'what the hell is that?' I said, 'that's ranked-choice voting.' 'No, it's not.' I said, 'yes, it is, you can see the professor's explaining it to you, Dad.' 'No, that's not what they said on TV, that's not what I was told.' I said, 'I don't care what you were told, that's ranked-choice voting.'

Now, if every Mainer right now watched that video, we wouldn't have ranked-choice voting. But that's not how it works. Whoever has the most money and wants to spend that money to pass crap like this gets the win. And that's what happened here. Seventy-one percent of Democrats want voter ID. Why? Because we have failed voting integrity. That's what this is part of.

Like was said earlier, nobody on this floor can explain exactly; they can give what was said on TV, but they cannot explain the intricate details of ranked-choice voting. The Secretary of State does this with her crew behind closed doors. There's nobody in there watching. Me, as a candidate, I'm not in there watching how they do this. All we know is, here's the results. Really? That's a little skeptical.

All I'm asking my colleagues to do is think about this. Research it a little bit. Stop believing everything you hear. Look at the facts. My Dad was fooled. He didn't know it, and my Dad's a pretty smart guy, real smart. He still got fooled. But when he saw the truth, he wished he could change his mind, but he couldn't, the vote's over. A lot of Mainers, if they watch that video, would change their mind. We as a legislative Body are supposed to do what's right, and the only way you can do what's right is to find out what ranked-choice voting is all about. It's not about what my second choice, third choice, fourth choice or fifth choice is. It's not what it's about. And once again, that is why it's done behind closed doors and that's why nobody's been handed the details, intricate details, of exactly how ranked-choice voting is done. Because it's secretive.

Take a look at the number on the bill, Mr. Speaker. That should tell you everything. Thank you.

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

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For so many years, we've voted one person and one vote in our voting elections. The instructions were, fill in the oval completely for one candidate. That was it. When you're giving instructions, you have to give instructions to the person that's not the smartest person in the room. You have to give them to the person that is the lowest.

On the Secretary of State's website for the State of Maine, there's Frequently Asked Questions section for ranked-choice voting. Frequently Asked Questions. Number one, frequently asked question: What is ranked-choice voting? That tells you right there that people don't understand. Number two: Why are we using ranked-choice voting? This is on the Secretary of State's most frequently asked questions about ranked-choice voting. Number three says: How does ranked-choice voting work? Most frequently asked question. The fourth most frequently asked question: How are you making sure that my vote is secure and will be accurately counted? That's a concern if that's the fourth most frequently asked question. Mr. Speaker, the fifth one is: How can I learn more about the candidates and issues on ballots? Probably one of the best questions on here. It doesn't really have to do with ranked-choice voting. Number six: Why don't we use ranked-choice voting in the Governor's race or legislative races in the general election? So, what they're saying is if it's so good, why aren't we using it everywhere? Why are we only using it on these ones and not on these ones if it's so good and so fair, why aren't we using it on everyone? Number seven: What if I want to rank my choices among the write-in candidates? I don't have an answer for that one. Number eight: How much does ranked-choice voting cost? People are worried, because they're asking that question, thinking that it costs money. Something this complicated that takes days and days to figure out, sometimes weeks to figure out, must cost a lot of money and I'm worried about my money. That's what that question says. And the last question, number nine: I only want to choose one candidate. In a ranked-choice race, how should I mark my ballot?

If people are asking these questions, Mr. Speaker, that's not integrity, that's not a smart system, that's a confusing system. And those of us that are opposed to ranked-choice voting call it out for what it is; the wrong way to go about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SUPICA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question 10, when is lunch? No, sorry.

So, I just wanted to make it also very clear that our elections do not happen behind closed doors. In fact, the rollout of ranked-choice voting was public, our elections are public, but we also stream them, it was an event, everybody was there, I think it was on social media, it was celebrated as a success, I think, you know, it was a thing. But our elections are not done behind closed doors and they never will be and, nor should they. If anybody was to propose we should start doing elections behind closed doors, I would try to stop that immediately.

Lastly, I would say questions are good. We often say, you know, there's no dumb questions. Keep asking questions. Keep asking questions about it. Go on. Don't be afraid to ask a question and ask your government all kinds of questions. And just, you know, to help some folks understand, you know, ranked-choice voting is a system that lets you rank candidates in the order that you like them. So, you can choose your first choice, as we do, and then you can add a second or a third if you want, but you don't have to and your vote always counts for your top pick. And if that choice stays in the race, your vote stays with them, and if they're eliminated and you didn't rank anyone else, then your vote stops there, but that doesn't mean that it didn't count, it just means you chose to not pick a backup, and that's ranked-choice voting. There's more that we can go on about, but time, you know, we can move on and there's, I think, maybe five more people in the queue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **LOOKNER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as somebody who worked probably on both referendum campaigns to first enact and then protect ranked-choice voting. And I think what we have here or why we are still in this situation six or eight years later is because the Legislature has continually asserted that they know better than what Maine people voted on. Voted on twice. And what I've heard from many people speaking today is that they don't think Maine people are smart enough to understand this very simple voting technique.

I demonstrated to people in; let me tell you a story, Mr. Speaker. When I was teaching people how ranked-choice voting worked, we went around the State to microbreweries to demonstrate to people how ranked-choice voting worked by ranking their favorite beers. And I was in Skowhegan or Madison, one of those breweries up there, and not the most, you know, liberal area, it's before I got elected. And busy night, Friday night, everybody's hanging out. As I was distributing the ballots for the ranked-choice voting, I got up on stage and I said to people, 'hey, we're going to do this ranked-choice voting beer election, anybody who wants to participate, order a flight of beer, it'll be great.' And, you know, this being Skowhegan, I got a lot of mumbles and a lot of, 'you can go back to Portland, Bub,' you know, that kind of thing. And, but thankfully, the owner of the bar was right there next to me, the owner of the brewery, and she got up on stage and said, 'hey, anybody who participates in this ranked-choice voting election gets a free flight of beer.' And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere in that place changed, everybody all of a sudden had a smile on their face and like, all right, let's bring on the ranked-choice voting, let's bring on the flight of beer. And you know what? I demonstrated to those people who drank beer how ranked-choice voting works by the very simple explanation of you rank your order of preferences. If your first-choice preference comes in last, that person is eliminated, but then, hey, guess what, your vote gets distributed to your next choice and so on and so forth, until somebody gets a majority of votes, meaning more than 50%.

If anybody wants to get into the history of how we ended up in our current system of voting, you can go back and look up Josh Chamberlain, when this Chamber back then asserted that we knew better than Maine voters and the party in power back then appointed their own candidate; I think it was actually the Democrats in power who had received the fewest number of votes, and Josh Chamberlain had to raise a militia to get our current Constitutional Amendment, our plurality system of voting. And all this does here, Mr. Speaker, is to say that this is to rectify the referendum and the election, you know, what we voted on and what we have enacted since with Maine's plurality system and to make sure that there's no friction in Statute between these two systems of voting.

And I'll end with this, Mr. Speaker. I think Maine people, above all, you know, we have a lot of strife, we have a lot of partisanship, they're sick of the two-party system. Let's give people an option. Let's give people a spectrum on which to vote, so we can join the rest of the developed world in having more than a Tweedledee/Tweedledum system of voting. Most people, the plurality of Maine voters are Unenrolled/Independents and they deserve a voice in our elections and that's why I'll be supporting the motion.

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

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to answer one of my questions that I asked earlier. Number six: "Why don't we use ranked-choice voting in the Governor's race or legislative races in the general election?" This is on the State of Maine Secretary of State's page. So, the answer of why don't we use ranked-choice voting in the Chief Executive's race or legislative race is: The Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court issued a unanimous advisory opinion at the request of legislators in May of 2017, concluding that the parts of the ranked-choice voting law that apply to general elections for State Representative, State Senator and Chief Executive, were unconstitutional; I'll say that word again, unconstitutional; under the Maine Constitution, because the Maine Constitution requires the winners of these offices in a general election to be decided by a plurality. And let's not convolute the word plurality, plurality means the most votes.

Mr. Speaker, they further go on to say that primary elections in Maine and elections for federal offices are governed by Statute and not by the Maine Constitution. That is why we don't do Chief Executive and legislative by ranked-choice voting, because it's unconstitutional. Thank you.

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

Representative **BRENNAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. In 2011, I was elected Mayor of Portland and we used ranked-choice voting. I was the first person in the history of the State of Maine to be elected to public office using ranked-choice voting. I understood how ranked-choice voting worked and 10s of thousands of voters in the City of Portland understood how ranked-choice voting worked.

Representative **BOYER**: Point of Order.

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

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand it's difficult being in the front row and talking to everyone, but try to focus on you, Mr. Speaker.

On **POINT OF ORDER,** Representative BOYER of Poland asked the Chair to remind Representative BRENNAN of Portland to address the Speaker and not turn to the rest of the House.

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

The Chair reminded Representative BRENNAN of Portland to address his comments toward the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **BRENNAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that under consideration.

Now, I know there will be some people in this Chamber that after hearing that I was elected Mayor of Portland using ranked-choice voting, it will only reinforce their skepticism of ranked-choice voting. But I do want to point out two things about ranked-choice voting that haven't been mentioned today.

One, under ranked-choice voting system, every voter becomes important to a candidate because every voter can vote for multiple candidates. And that makes a huge difference in the way that you campaign, that means that you need to engage a vaster number of people who are voting. And secondly and probably most importantly, what ranked-choice voting does is reduce negative campaigning. You do not make disparaging remarks about other candidates because a voter that votes number one for somebody else might vote number two for you. And I would say one of the overriding concerns that people in the State of Maine have about elections and about candidates is negative campaigning.

So, I would suggest to those people that have doubts about ranked-choice voting, they may consider the fact that it is a process that engages more voters and has a campaign cycle that is far less negative than what we have now. Thank you very much.

Representative SOBOLESKI of Phillips **MOVED THE PREVIOUS QUESTION**.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Phillips, Representative Soboleski, has called the Question. The Chair would inform the Member there are two Members left in queue. Typically, we have very rarely called the Question. I think it's fair to give folks the opportunity to finish these few remarks. Well, now there's a third Member in queue, so.

Subsequently, Representative SOBOLESKI of Phillips **WITHDREW** his motion to **MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION**.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member has withdrawn his motion. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Poland, Representative Boyer.

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Body should be ashamed of its adherence and fidelity to the Maine Constitution. Multiple times this session, we've completely disregarded the Constitution of our State. This is not about whether ranked-choice voting is good or bad or Democrat or Republican; it's unconstitutional. Just like with the Second Amendment shall not be questioned, with our budget and with our ranked-choice voting, we need to read and understand and adhere to what we swear to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **CARLOW**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the first time in my legislative career, I'm forced to say the words, I did not intend to speak on this bill today. And I regret that much of our debate thus far has focused on the merits or lack of merit to ranked-choice voting. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to wade too far into those waters.

There is, however, insufficient attention to the constitutional considerations challenged by this legislation. The Constitution of Maine clearly states, on seven occasions, that candidates for Chief Executive, the House of Representatives and the Senate should be elected by a plurality of votes. The most votes out of any candidate, even if a candidate does not receive an absolute majority. If there is so much support for ranked-choice voting, as has been purported here in the Chamber today, then surely supporters of ranked-choice voting can avail themselves of the appropriate constitutional process to alter how candidates for State Office are elected.

Now, we as legislators have the power to change the law. We have the power to initiate constitutional reform. But we do not have power to change the English language. And the English language says very clearly what a plurality means.

And by tweaking the bill, by tweaking the law in such a way to work around the very clear provisions and our body politic is dangerous and it undermines trust in our institutions and I think it's a very flawed idea. And it's appropriate that this should be my first speech of the legislative session this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **RUDNICKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I bet you can tell what I'm going to stand up and say, because I did it all last year and I'm going to do it again this year.

Integrity tells us that if we're going to spend hours in Committee debating bills, talking to the public and everything else, the least we can do, the very least we can do is put forth the Majority Report, not the Minority Report. If you are that convinced that your side is correct with ranked-choice voting or whatever bill it is, because it doesn't matter at this point, if you're that convinced that you're right, then at least stand up and have the integrity to put forward the work that was done by the Committees first and then we vote up or down, or vote up your bill, if that's what it is. But until we keep our integrity of this Body and actually put forth the Majority that the work has been done for, then, I mean, it's just pointless at this point to even bother going to Committee. I know I'm supposed to be in Committee, you know, an hour ago, an hour and a half ago, supposed to be in Committee. Why bother to sit there if you're going to run whatever report you want to run, anyway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be voting against this pending motion, as I did on November 8, 2016, along with 9,101 of my Washington County neighbors. It also bears noting on that particular date that only 7,688 supported ranked-choice voting at that time. So, large parts of this State did not and still do not support ranked-choice voting and I will be standing with my constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: I'll be very brief, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, it's very easy for my friends on the right, especially my friend from Portland who did that amazing ranked-choice voting with beers, it's very easy to practice this and to talk about it when you don't really know how ranked-choice voting works. What they're talking about is how ranked-choice voting works according to the TV, like I said before, the ranked-choice voting that my Dad thought he understood. So, yes, I mean, it makes perfect sense, who's not for it? But that's not how ranked-choice voting works and if my colleagues knew how it works, they'd find out that they couldn't do it with beer, they would have to do it a different way.

So, Mr. Speaker, it just has to be made clear here for my friends and the people of Maine that ranked-choice voting does not work in any way, shape or form the way you were told by the news media and by the people who had the money to push this forward from other states. Thank you.

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

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ranked-choice voting is just another way of possibly cheating and that's it. Because you throw it out of the ballot or you rank your ballot one, two, three, four, whatever it is and if you only put one person on that ballot, color that box and it goes into the second round, the third round, you throw that ballot out that doesn't rank it second or third. That's called cheating. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. 616

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

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

ABSENT - Hymes, Lanigan, Libby, Lyman, Pluecker, Rana, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 74; No, 65; Absent, 9; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

74 having voted in the affirmative and 65 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 9 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Minority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "B" (S-499)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Representative GREENWOOD of Wales **OBJECTED** to suspending the rules in order to give the Bill its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

The Bill was assigned for **SECOND READING** later today.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 350)

STATE OF MAINE
132ND MAINE LEGISLATURE

January 30, 2026
Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill
Capital Judicial Center
1 Court Street, Suite 401
Augusta, Maine 04330
Dear Chief Justice Stanfill,
We are pleased to invite you to address a Joint Session of the 132nd Maine Legislature on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. concerning the State of the Judiciary and any other matters that you may care to bring to our attention.
We look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,
S/Matthea Elisabeth Larsen Daughtry
President of the Senate
S/Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 355)

SENATE OF MAINE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 4, 2026
Honorable Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Dear Clerk Hunt,
Pursuant to my authority under Title 23, MRSA, Chapter 304, §3036, I am pleased to appoint Jeff Romano of Hallowell to the *Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission*, effective immediately.
On this Commission, he will serve as member from a statewide organization representing land trust organizations.
If you have any questions regarding this appointment, please do not hesitate to contact my office.
Sincerely,
S/Matthea Elisabeth Larsen Daughtry
President of the Senate

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 356)

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

February 5, 2026
The Honorable Matthea E. L. Daughtry
President of the Senate
The Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House of Representatives
132nd Legislature
State House
Augusta, ME 04333
Dear President Daughtry and Speaker Fecteau:
Please accept this letter as the report of the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation from its review and evaluation of the Department of Transportation 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 of Transportation by letter of its intent to review the agency on April 22, 2025. The Department of Transportation submitted their report and were invited to present before the committee on January 15, 2026.
The committee finds that the Department of Transportation is operating within its statutory authority.
Sincerely,
S/Timothy Nangle
Senate Chair
S/Lydia V. Crafts
House Chair

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 357)

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

February 5, 2026
The Honorable Matthea E. L. Daughtry
President of the Senate
The Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House of Representatives
132nd Legislature
State House
Augusta, ME 04333
Dear President Daughtry and Speaker Fecteau:
Please accept this letter as the report of the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation from its review and evaluation of the Maine Pilotage Commission under the State Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35.
Pursuant to the requirements of the Act, the committee notified the Maine Pilotage Commission by letter of its intent to review the agency on April 22, 2025. The Maine Pilotage Commission submitted their report and were invited to present before the committee on January 15, 2026.
The committee finds that the Maine Pilotage Commission is operating within its statutory authority.
The committee is concerned that all members' terms on the Maine Pilotage Commission have expired, and the Governor has not yet made appointments or reappointments. During its presentation to the commission, the Maine Pilotage Commission informed us that all potential or current commission members desiring to serve or continue service on the Commission have sent appointment or reappointment materials to the Governor. The committee understands that current commission members may continue to serve as they await reappointment, but there is a certain level of ambiguity, that make it is challenging for the Commission to fulfill its statutory duties.
The committee requested for the Governor make appointments or reappointments to the Maine Pilotage Commission in a timely fashion to ensure all members are serving on the Commission within an unexpired term. The committee has communicated this request to the Governor's Office of Board and Commissions on February 5, 2026.
Sincerely,
S/Timothy Nangle
Senate Chair
S/Lydia V. Crafts
House Chair

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 351)

MIDCOAST REGIONAL REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
15 TERMINAL ROAD
BRUNSWICK, ME 04011

January 29, 2026
Honorable Matthea Daughtry
President of the Senate
3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Honorable Ryan Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear President Daughtry and Speaker Fecteau:
Pursuant to 5 M.R.S.A., Section 12023, please consider this the letter of transmittal for the required report from the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority due by February l, 2026.
Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.
Thank you.
Sincerely,
S/Daniel B. Stevenson
Executive Director

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 352)

MAINE'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM

January 29, 2026
Honorable Ryan Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear Speaker Fecteau:
Pursuant to 5 M.R.S.A., Section 12023, please consider this the letter of transmittal for the required report from the University of Maine System (UMS) due by Feb. 1, 2026, documenting our qualifying sole-source procurements and contributions in Fiscal Year 2025.
UMS is the state's most powerful engine of educational attainment and economic development. Beyond producing Maine's skilled workforce and research-driven innovation, our System positively impacts the state's economy as one of Maine's largest employers and by purchasing goods and services from Maine vendors or those that employ Mainers. In FY25, UMS invested $108 million directly in the state's economy by purchasing goods and services from Maine-based suppliers.
As it conducts business, our System is committed to ensuring the greatest value for tuition and taxpayers, and transparency and fairness for our vendors. While competitive procurement is our standard, there are legitimate reasons, permitted by State law and corresponding UMS policy, to waive the competitive process for the purchases detailed in this report.
If you need any additional information, please contact UMS Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer Samantha Warren at samantha.warren@maine.edu.
Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support of Maine's public universities.
S/Ryan Low
Vice Chancellor for Finance and Strategic AI Integration
University Of Maine System

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 353)

MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
323 STATE STREET
AUGUSTA, ME 04330-7131

January 30, 2026
Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Dear Speaker Fecteau:
On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System (MCCS), I respectfully submit the attached report on certain procurements, contributions, and policy changes for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 (SFY25), as required by 5 M.R.S.A. § 12023.
MCCS used customized reporting features built into its business management systems to compile this report. The validity of the reports was tested, and several transactions were reviewed with college personnel. Collectively, the seven colleges and the MCCS System Office make thousands of purchases each year.
While reporting is complex, the review indicates that compliance with existing policies is extremely high, and expenditures are consistently mission related. In the limited areas where improvements were identified, refinements have been made or are under way.
MCCS will continue to rely on internal controls and its annual external audit to adapt its systems to changing needs. The Board of Trustees will continue to monitor compliance through regular reporting and ongoing dialogue with auditors.
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.
Sincerely yours,
S/David Daigler
President

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 354)

MAINE RETIREMENT INVESTMENT TRUST

Rep. Ryan Fecteau, Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
February 2, 2026
Dear Representative Fecteau,
I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Maine Retirement Savings Board in accordance with 5 MRS §179. The Report includes our audited financial statements for 2024 and updates on the success of the Maine Retirement Savings Program through December 31, 2025.
We are pleased to have helped more than 18,000 Mainers save over $25 million toward their retirement by participating in an easy to use workplace retirement program.
We appreciate your support of the Program since its inception and look forward to providing ongoing updates.

Sincerely yours,
S/Elizabeth Bordowitz
Executive Director

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 358)

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0148

February 4, 2026
The Honorable Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0002
Dear Clerk Hunt:

Governor Mills has set Tuesday, June 9, 2026 as the date for the Special Election to be held in District 29.

Please find enclosed a certified copy of the Governor's Proclamation. Please contact the Division of Elections at 624-7650 if you have any questions regarding this election.

Sincerely,
S/Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 359)

STATE OF MAINE
CLERK'S OFFICE
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

February 10, 2026
Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear Speaker Fecteau:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the following Joint Standing Committees have voted unanimously to report the following bills out "Ought Not to Pass:"

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

L.D. 1671 An Act to Establish Disclosure Requirements Regarding Law Enforcement Officer Credibility Information

Education and Cultural Affairs

L.D. 2034 An Act to Support Funding for Educational Programs and Opportunities

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

L.D. 1915 An Act to Regulate Earned Wage Access Services Providers

Sincerely,
S/Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 360)

STATE OF MAINE
CLERK'S OFFICE
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

February 10, 2026
Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear Speaker Fecteau:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the Committee on Judiciary has approved the request by the sponsor, President Daughtry of Cumberland, to report the following "Leave to Withdraw:"

L.D. 1136 An Act to Defend the Rights of LGBTQ+ Persons in the State

Sincerely,
S/Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House

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

The Following Communication: (S.C. 784)

MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 3, 2026
Honorable Ryan Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0002
Dear Speaker Fecteau:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A. §158 and Joint Rule 506 of the 132nd Maine Legislature, please be advised that the Senate today confirmed the following nominations:

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

- Eric Ward of Harfords Point Township for reappointment to the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Advisory Council.

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Marine Resources:

- Lewis M. Pinkham of Millbridge for appointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council,
- Travis Fifield of Stonington for appointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council,
- Timothy J. LaRochelle of Woolwich for appointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council,
- Jeffrey Auger of Phippsburg for appointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council,
- James B. Arsenault, Sr. of Dresden for reappointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council,
- John Bigelow Marsh, III of Bremen for reappointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council.

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Transportation:

- Dale F. Doughty of Pittston for appointment as the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation.

Best Regards,
S/Darek M. Grant
Secretary of the Senate

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

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

ORDERS

On motion of Representative STOVER of Boothbay, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1473)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2026 AS HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a public health issue and a crime that harms the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities, often across generations; and

WHEREAS, twenty-five years after passage of the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, an estimated 27,600,000 people are subjected to human trafficking globally, with cases reported in every United States state and territory; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking can happen to anyone, but certain populations are at greater risk, including people affected by abuse, violence, poverty, unstable living situations or social disconnection; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking is connected to many other forms of violence and exploitation and often shares common risk factors such as lack of resources and unsafe environments; and

WHEREAS, services provided to those affected by human trafficking must be trauma-informed and responsive to individual needs; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to understand how human trafficking relates to other forms of violence and how we can prevent it by strengthening protective factors at the individual, relational, community and societal levels; and

WHEREAS, strengthening communities requires collective action to reduce the conditions that contribute to exploitation, build resilience and create environments where people are protected from human trafficking and other forms of violence; and

WHEREAS, successful response to human trafficking requires a coordinated, community-wide effort that includes collaboration across sectors and with those who have experienced human trafficking firsthand to ensure that services and programs are effective and meet the needs of all survivors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize January 2026 as Human Trafficking Prevention Month and to express our support for increasing awareness of and improving education on human trafficking, making resources available for individuals and communities affected by human trafficking and building diverse public-private partnerships to support a more coordinated, comprehensive response to prevent and combat human trafficking.

READ.

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

Representative **STOVER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation are now in the headlines in Maine and across the nation nearly every day. Public awareness is higher than it's ever been. And yet, awareness alone does not stop these crimes nor does it erase the lasting harm experienced by survivors.

Many survivors continue to face enormous barriers simply to be heard, believed and supported, long after the exploitation itself has ended. These crimes are not abstract, they are not distant, they involve real people, often children and vulnerable adults who are coerced, manipulated and exploited for another person's profit or power. Trafficking thrives in silence, stigma and systemic gaps, and it cuts across geography, income levels and communities. The impact on survivors is profound and long-lasting. Survivors often carry physical injuries, deep psychological trauma and significant financial hardships. Many struggle with housing instability, lost wages, medical needs and access to therapy and long-term supports. Recovery is not linear and healing takes time, resources and consistent survivor-centered care.

As policymakers, we have a responsibility to understand the realities of commercial sex trafficking and exploitation and to respond in ways that centers survivors, holds perpetrators accountable and strengthens the systems meant to provide protection and healing. That means listening and believing survivors, investing in prevention and services and ensuring that our laws and institutions reflect the seriousness of these crimes and the depth of the harm they cause.

Like many of you, I was fortunate to know and serve alongside the late Honorable Lois Reckitt, who worked tirelessly to end exploitation and trafficking of Maine people right up until her death. Her work was rooted in the belief that survivors deserve dignity, safety and justice, and that our State must do better to meet their needs. Her legacy continues to guide and inspire this conversation. I hope we can continue to work together not only in policy but in purpose, with a shared commitment to ending human trafficking and sexual exploitation and to stand with survivors in their pursuit of safety, healing and justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen. January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Month. It began as a Presidential Proclamation. President Barack Obama issued Presidential Proclamation 8471 on January 4, 2010, designating January 2010 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Since 2010, every President has renewed the observance annually. Each Administration has issued a Presidential Proclamation or Presidential Message designating January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month or National Human Trafficking Prevention, depending up on the Administration's preferred terminology.

This year, the message from the White House, January 6, 2026, Presidential Message on National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. "This National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, my Administration renews our commitment to end the evil of human trafficking, restore law and order across our country, protect the most innocent among us and ensure that every trafficker faces the full force of American justice. Under the previous Administration, hundreds of thousands of unaccompanied children who entered our country were lost, with many being placed in the hands of smugglers and sex traffickers. This was not only a failure of policy, it was a moral catastrophe that allowed perpetrators of modern-day slavery to exploit our country and our borders. Since returning to office, I have taken unprecedented action to shut down these human trafficking pipelines, rescue the children put in harm's way and end the reckless policies that enabled this crisis. On my first day in office, I immediately declared a national emergency at our

Southern border to stop the invasion of illegal immigration and cut off the human trafficking routes that have devastated countless families. I designated the criminal cartels, the primary traffickers' networks, as foreign terrorist organizations and initiated the largest mass deportation operation in American history. Last summer, I signed the One Big Beautiful Bill into law, a landmark piece of legislation that dramatically expanded the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which secured historic funding for the Border Patrol and authorizes the construction of hundreds of miles of new border wall. My Administration launched a fund for sex trafficking survivors exploited through online advertisements to seek compensation from forfeited assets. We have sanctioned more than 100 online scam operators, many of which used forced labor to seize billions of dollars from defrauded Americans and others worldwide. We increased funding for the National Human Trafficking hotline. I signed the Take it Down Act and Trafficking Survivors Relief Act to modernize our tools to fight human trafficking and enable survivors to rebuild their lives. With these enhanced resources, our great law enforcement officers are now equipped with the tools needed to remove dangerous illegal aliens from our streets and dismantle human trafficking networks.

"As a result of these decisive actions, our border has been secured and the flood of illegal aliens in our country has stopped. For the seventh consecutive month, Border Patrol has released zero illegal aliens into our country. ICE has also launched the Unaccompanied Children's Safety Verification Initiative, partnering with local law enforcement to ensure that the unaccompanied minors abandoned by the previous administration are safe, cared for and not being exploited by traffickers. And lastly, this month, we continue our resolve to secure a future for American families so they can live safely, freely and without the threat of criminal aliens who have no right to be in our country. We are shutting down human trafficking rings, securing our borders and deporting dangerous criminals to protect our people, communities and great nation."

So, as you see, Mr. Speaker, this is actually the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Month, and I thank President Trump for all he's doing to secure our nation. Thank you.

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

On motion of Representative STOVER of Boothbay, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1474)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2026 AS STALKING AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, approximately one in 3 women and one in 6 men in the United States, at some point during their lifetimes, have experienced stalking victimization, causing them to feel very fearful, threatened or concerned for their own safety or the safety of others; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that each year over 13,400,000 individuals in the United States report that they have been victims of stalking; and

WHEREAS, stalking affects victims of every race, age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability and economic status; and

WHEREAS, individuals between 18 and 24 years old experience the highest rates of stalking victimization, and a majority of stalking victims report their victimization first occurred before the age of 25; and

WHEREAS, more than 80% of victims of stalking report that they have been stalked by a current or former intimate partner or an acquaintance; and

WHEREAS, some 80% of stalking victims report being stalked with technology, such as phone calls, text messages, social media platforms, internet posts, emails and electronic tracking, and victims of technology-facilitated stalking often report higher fear than victims who experience in-person stalking and are equally concerned for their safety; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression is much higher among victims of stalking than among the general population; and

WHEREAS, nearly 70% of female stalking victims and 80% of male stalking victims are threatened with physical harm by stalkers; and

WHEREAS, stalking is a risk factor for intimate partner homicide, and 3 in 4 female victims of intimate partner homicide were stalked by their killers during the year preceding the homicide; and

WHEREAS, over 10% of victims of stalking report having been stalked for 5 or more years, and 2 in 3 stalkers pursue their victims at least once a week; and

WHEREAS, many victims of stalking are forced to take drastic measures to protect themselves, including relocating, changing jobs or obtaining protection orders; and

WHEREAS, many victims of stalking do not report stalking to the police or contact a victim service provider, shelter or hotline; and

WHEREAS, stalking is a crime under federal law, the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories of the United States and the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and

WHEREAS, national organizations, local victim service organizations, college and university campuses, prosecutors' offices and police departments stand ready to assist victims of stalking and are working diligently to develop effective and innovative responses to stalking, including online stalking; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to improve the response of the criminal justice system to stalking through more aggressive investigation and prosecution and a need to increase the availability of victim services across the United States, including programs tailored to meet the needs of victims of stalking; and

WHEREAS, January 2026 marks the 22nd anniversary of the first National Stalking Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity to educate the people of the United States about stalking; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize January 2026 as Stalking Awareness Month and applaud the efforts of service providers, police departments, prosecutors' offices, national and community organizations, colleges and universities and private sector entities that combat stalking, support victims and bring awareness to this crime, and we encourage policymakers, criminal justice officials, victim service and human service agencies, institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations to increase awareness of stalking and continue to support the availability of services for victims of stalking.

READ and **ADOPTED**.

Sent for concurrence.

On motion of Representative GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1490) (Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, MILLIKEN of Blue Hill, WEBB of Durham, Senator: MOORE of Washington)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2026 AS 211 MAINE MONTH

WHEREAS, 211 Maine is a Maine-based health and human services and emergency preparedness and response helpline that provides Maine people free and confidential referrals to needed resources; and

WHEREAS, 211 Maine provides around-the-clock service statewide, offering efficient and effective responses from people employed in Maine to questions arising from the growing complexities in health, financial and human services and the needs of Maine people, and offers interpreter services to those whose first language is not English; and

WHEREAS, since 2006, 211 Maine has been a trusted lifeline for people across the State, helping individuals and families to find local services such as utility assistance, housing or shelter and transportation by answering over 62,000 calls, texts and emails amounting to over 187,000 minutes in 2025; and

WHEREAS, 211 Maine provides emergency operations support during times of natural and other disasters, including assisting the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Emergency Management Agency, fielding calls from those impacted by windstorms and floods, collecting critical data and helping people find winter warming shelters or cooling centers; and

WHEREAS, this past year, 211 Maine directly distributed over $236,000 in emergency heating assistance, helping residents to avoid spending winter nights in the cold or their utilities from being shut off; and

WHEREAS, 211 Maine handles a number of specialized services and partnerships, including the opiate helpline and the gambling helpline and serving as the centralized access point for the Help Me Grow Maine program and is also a resource for finding information about needs such as tax preparation and browntail moth caterpillar prevention, mitigation and treatment; and

WHEREAS, 211 Maine provides a powerful example of how the government and nonprofit and private sectors can work together to improve the quality of life of the people of Maine; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize February 2026 as 211 Maine Month.

READ and **ADOPTED**.

Sent for concurrence.

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

SENATE PAPERS

Bill "An Act to Allow Schools to Expel Students for Committing Sexual Assault"

(S.P. 897) (L.D. 2204)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Automotive Right to Repair Working Group"

(S.P. 899) (L.D. 2211)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** in concurrence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Divided Report

Majority Report of the Committee on **TAXATION** reporting **Refer to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology** on Bill "An Act to Reduce Household Energy Costs in Response to Federal Cuts"

(S.P. 858) (L.D. 2140)

Signed:

Senators:

GROHOSKI of Hancock
BICKFORD of Androscoggin
TIPPING of Penobscot

Representatives:

SAYRE of Kennebunk
CROCKETT of Portland
FRIEDMANN of Bar Harbor
GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach
LAVIGNE of Berwick
MATLACK of St. George
QUINT of Hodgdon
SWALLOW of Houlton
WHITE of Ellsworth

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

Signed:

Representative:

RUDNICKI of Fairfield

Came from the Senate with the Majority **REFER TO COMMITTEE** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY**.

READ.

On motion of Representative SAYRE of Kennebunk, the Majority **Refer to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

Subsequently, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** in concurrence.

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

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

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I will let the Good Representative from Portland off the hook by asking the question; Thank you, Mr. Speaker, request permission to speak on the record.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Carmel, Representative Thorne, requests unanimous consent to address the House on the record. Hearing no objection, it is so ordered. The Representative may proceed.

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those Members that either weren't present, weren't paying attention or don't remember last February, last week was Four Chaplains Day, a very significant event that happened commemorating humanity amongst all religions, all men.

On Wednesday, February 3, 1943, at approximately 55 minutes after midnight, the United States Army transport *Dorchester* was torpedoed in the North Atlantic. Sinking rapidly amongst chaos, four Army chaplains; Chaplain Fox, Chaplain Goode, Chaplain Poling and Chaplain Washington; calmed soldiers, distributed life vests and even gave up their own when none remained. The sacrifice of the four chaplains; Methodist Chaplain George Fox, Jewish Chaplain Alexander Goode, Dutch Reform Chaplain Clark Poling and Roman Catholic Chaplain John Washington; were aboard the troop ship transferring to Europe. When the U-boat struck, they brought order to the panic-stricken soldiers, helping men to lifeboats. When the supply of life jackets ran out, each of the four chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to younger soldiers. As the ship went down, witnesses recall seeing the four chaplains linked arm in arm, praying together on the deck of the ship. Their final actions exemplified selfless service and unity, cementing their legacy as a testament to faith and humanity.

February 3rd is recognized as Four Chaplains Day. Of the 902 men on board, only 230 survived, all of whom were awarded the Purple Heart, those who perished awarded posthumously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Representative **BLIER**: Thank you, everyone. I know we've been here very long, most of you want to go, but giving me the opportunity to speak is very appreciated.

Sunday morning, I got a call from my mother at 5:00 in the morning that my stepfather had been hospitalized, in a coma. And so, I put my gear in my truck and I drove five and a half hours to Fort Kent to spend the day with him and into the night, until about 10:00 Sunday evening. I went home, got some sleep. At six in the morning, my mother gave me a call again saying that he was doing better, his pneumonia numbers are coming down. And I think what's important to understand is that he also was in a coma the first week of December for five days, in hospice care and came out of it and was able to come back to the house for two months. So, I stayed at the hospital until about 3:00 yesterday afternoon, where I got in my truck and drove five and a half hours to come back, so I could be here today. This morning, I got a phone call from my mother that he did not make the night.

And I just want to take this opportunity to thank him, to recognize him. He honored my mother, he treated her very well and there's nothing more that a son could ask for a Stepdad. I want to give condolences to my stepbrother, Kurt Harvey, and my stepsister, Shannon Hathaway, and all the other families. And I just pray that he Rest In Peace and my mother has courage during this tough time. So, thank you, everyone, for listening to me.

BILLS IN THE SECOND READING
Senate as Amended

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

(S.P. 660) (L.D. 1666)
(C. "B" S-499)

Was reported by the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Read the second time.

Representative MOONEN of Portland **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-499)**.

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

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Engrossed as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-499). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 617

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

NAY - Adams, Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Dill, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Lance, Lemelin, Mason, McIntyre, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, White J, White R, Wood S.

ABSENT - Bridgeo, Collamore, Cray, Doudera, Drinkwater, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Libby, Lyman, Mingo, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Rana, Simmons, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome, Yusuf.

Yes, 71; No, 56; Absent, 21; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 56 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 21 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Senate Paper was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-499)** in concurrence.

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

ENACTORS

Act

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

(S.P. 660) (L.D. 1666)
(C. "B" S-499)

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

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

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

The SPEAKER: 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. 618

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

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Daigle, Dill, Ducharme, Eder, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Gifford, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Henderson, Lance, Lemelin, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, White J, White R, Wood S.

ABSENT - Adams, Bridgeo, Campbell, Collamore, Cooper, Cray, Crockett, Doudera, Drinkwater, Fredericks, Hall, Hymes, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Libby, Lyman, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Rana, Simmons, Underwood, Walker, Wood P, Woodsome.

Yes, 71; No, 52; Absent, 25; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 52 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 25 being absent and 1 excused and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Order: (S.P. 900)

WHEREAS, it appears to the 132nd Legislature that the following is an important question of law and that this is a solemn occasion; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Maine, Article VI, Section 3 provides for the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court to render their opinion on such a question; and

WHEREAS, separate provisions of the Constitution of Maine, adopted at different times, provide that persons elected to the House of Representatives must be elected "by a plurality of all votes returned," Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part First, Section 5; those elected to the Senate must be "by a plurality of the votes in each senatorial district" and the Senate determines "who is elected by a plurality of votes to be Senator in each district," Article IV, Part Second, Section 4 and Section 5; and those elected as Governor must be "by plurality of all of the votes returned," Article V, Part First, Section 3; and

WHEREAS, on November 8, 2016, the voters of Maine approved the use of ranked-choice voting in state elections, Initiated Bill 2015, chapter 3; and

WHEREAS, on May 23, 2017, the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court answered questions in an advisory opinion regarding the constitutionality of ranked-choice voting in light of the plurality provisions of the Constitution of Maine, Article IV and Article V; and

WHEREAS, as a result of a people's veto of portions of Public Law 2017, chapter 316, the general and special elections for the offices of Governor, State Senator and State Representative were removed from the list of those offices to which ranked-choice voting applied; and

WHEREAS, starting with the June 12, 2018 primary elections, Maine has conducted numerous successful elections using ranked-choice voting, including primary and general elections in races for the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate and primary elections for the Maine House of Representatives, Maine Senate and Governor; and

WHEREAS, Maine has not used ranked-choice voting in general elections for state office, resulting in general election ballots containing both ranked-choice voting and conventional "first past the post" voting; and

WHEREAS, having 2 different election systems on a single ballot is potentially confusing and disruptive to the voting process; and

WHEREAS, in *Kohlhaas et al. v. State of Alaska, Office of Lieutenant Governor, Division of Elections*, 518 P.3d 1095 (Alaska 2022), in considering whether ranked-choice voting violates a provision of the Alaska Constitution requiring the person "receiving the greatest number of votes" to be the governor, Alaska Constitution, Article III, §3, a requirement that is substantially similar to the requirements of the Constitution of Maine, the Alaska Supreme Court held that, because a candidate wins a plurality of the votes only after the final round of tabulation, Alaska's ranked-choice voting statute conformed with the Alaska Constitution's plurality provision; and

WHEREAS, in Advisory Opinion 2024-12, the Federal Election Commission concluded unequivocally "that the entire ranked-choice voting process, including all necessary rounds of vote tallying, … constitutes a single election" and recognized that, unlike traditional run-off elections, ranked-choice voting does not allow for any additional periods of campaigning and voting; and

WHEREAS, Legislative Document 1666, Senate Paper 660, An Act to Include in the Ranked-choice Election Method for General and Special Elections the Offices of Governor, State Senator and State Representative and to Make Other Related Changes, referred to in this order as "L.D. 1666," amends Maine's ranked-choice voting law to conform with the plurality election provisions of the Constitution of Maine and restores the use of ranked-choice voting for general elections for Governor, State Senator and State Representative; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2025, having been passed to be enacted by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, L.D. 1666 was presented to the Governor for her signature; and

WHEREAS, upon presentment of L.D. 1666 to the Governor, questions were raised regarding the application of the Constitution of Maine's plurality provisions to this legislation in light of recent legal precedent; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2025, the Senate recalled L.D. 1666 from the Governor's desk and then carried it over, in the same posture, to the next special or regular session of the 132nd Legislature, so that an answer to the constitutionality of L.D. 1666 could be obtained; and

WHEREAS, several candidates for Governor in the 2026 election have already registered their campaigns and begun their efforts while others are likely to enter the race before the end of the qualification period, all of whom would be affected by the manner in which the general election is conducted; and

WHEREAS, an answer to the constitutionality of L.D. 1666 is required before candidates, their supporters and the voting public begin engaging in earnest in the 2026 campaign; and

WHEREAS, if the ranked-choice method of voting, as amended by L.D. 1666, was applied to elections in 2026 without resolution of the constitutional question presented here, a candidate for Governor, State Senator or State Representative who achieved an apparent plurality of the votes counted by city and town officials but failed to prevail in the subsequent round or rounds conducted under the supervision of the Secretary of State pursuant to ranked-choice voting could challenge that candidate's declared loss as a violation of the plurality vote requirement in the Constitution of Maine for the position sought by that candidate and thereby place the validity of the election into question and delay the seating of a Governor, State Senator or State Representative; and

WHEREAS, failing to address important and unresolved questions about the constitutionality of ranked-choice voting before the end of the current legislative session would potentially cause chaos and uncertainty in the races now beginning; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature requests guidance from the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court as to the constitutionality of L.D. 1666 so that it may determine, during the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature, whether it is necessary to propose constitutional amendments for submission to the voters for approval in order to implement ranked-choice voting for elections held thereafter; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the Legislature be informed at the earliest possible date as to the opinions of the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court on the question propounded in this order; now, therefore, be it ORDERED, that, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of Maine, the Legislature respectfully requests the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court to provide to the Legislature the Justices' opinion on the following question of law:

Question: Does the method of arriving at a plurality of votes cast through the use of ranked-choice voting, as amended by L.D. 1666, in which a person's vote is not determined until the final round of tabulation and in which the candidate with the highest continuing ranking on the most ballots after the final round of tabulation is determined to have received a plurality of votes cast, conform with the provisions of the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part First, Section 5; Article IV, Part Second, Section 4 and Section 5; and Article V, Part First, Section 3?

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

By unanimous consent, House Rule 513 was **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of considering this item without it being **TABLED** for one legislative day.

Subsequently, the Joint Order was **READ** and **PASSED** in concurrence.

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

On motion of Representative KESSLER of South Portland, the House adjourned at 4:31 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 12, 2026, in honor and lasting tribute to Deborrah Anne Jabar of South Portland.