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ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
8th Legislative Day
Tuesday, February 24, 2026

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

Prayer by Honorable Paul R. Flynn, Albion.

National Anthem by Honorable John "Jack" E. Ducharme III, Madison.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Medical Provider of the Day, Mary Tedesco-Schneck, PhD, APRN, CPNP, Orono.

The Journal of Thursday, February 12, 2026 was read and approved.

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

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

PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING REFERENCE

Bill "An Act to Confirm and Finalize the Boundary Between the Town of Kittery and the Town of York"

(H.P. 1493) (L.D. 2214)

Sponsored by Representative MATHIESON of Kittery.

Cosponsored by Senator LAWRENCE of York and Representatives: MEYER of Eliot, RUNTE of York, SARGENT of York.

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

Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Refer to the Committee on Judiciary
Pursuant to Resolve

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Implement a Recommendation of the Commission to Recommend Methods for Preventing Deed Fraud in the State"

(S.P. 886) (L.D. 2182)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 104, section 7.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **REJECTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**.

The Report was **READ** and **REJECTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** in concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Labor
Pursuant to Statute

Representative ROEDER for the **Joint Standing Committee on Labor** on Bill "An Act to Increase the Per Diem Rate for Members of the Maine Labor Relations Board"

(H.P. 1495) (L.D. 2218)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **LABOR** 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 **LABOR**.

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary
Pursuant to Statute

Representative KUHN for the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right To Know Advisory Committee Concerning Certain Existing Public Records Exceptions"

(H.P. 1496) (L.D. 2219)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 1, section 411, subsection 6, paragraph G.

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

Sent for concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
Pursuant to Resolve

Representative SACHS for the **Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology** on Bill "An Act to Establish the Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Resource Hub"

(H.P. 1497) (L.D. 2220)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 86, section 2.

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

Sent for concurrence.

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

At this point, the Chair recognized the Representative from Naples, Representative WALKER, and he was added to the roll call of the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING REFERENCE

Pursuant to Statute

Administrator of the unorganized territory

Representative SAYRE for the **Administrator of the unorganized territory** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 36, section 1604 asks leave to report that the accompanying Bill "An Act to Establish Municipal Cost Components for Unorganized Territory Services to Be Rendered in Fiscal Year 2026-27" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 1499) (L.D. 2222)

Be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION** and printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION** and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

Sent for concurrence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Refer to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Pursuant to Resolve

Representative HASENFUS for the **Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety** on Bill "An Act to Increase Funding for Construction Plan Reviews and Clarify Rule-making Authority for Municipal Reviews of Development"

(H.P. 1498) (L.D. 2223)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 103, section 4.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**.

Sent for concurrence.

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

SPECIAL SENTIMENT CALENDAR

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

In Memory of:

the Honorable Jeffrey Evangelos, of Friendship. Mr. Evangelos began his public service career in Vanceboro and, in 1976 at the age of 23, became the youngest town manager in the State, serving the town of Warren. Under his leadership, the town advanced significant projects. Later, as Business Manager of School Administrative District 40 for 15 years, he oversaw the construction of five schools, shaping the educational future of countless Maine students. He founded Central Asian Artifacts, an import company, and traveled to Pakistan nearly 20 times, forming lasting friendships. He served in the Maine House of Representatives from 2012 to 2016, representing Cushing, Union, Warren and Friendship, and again from 2018 to 2022, representing Friendship, Waldoboro and Washington, as an Independent. In the Legislature, he championed criminal justice reform, Wabanaki sovereignty and the protection of Maine's fishing communities. Among his most meaningful efforts was leading a proposal to restore parole in Maine following its abolition in 1976. Even after leaving elected office, he continued to visit the Maine State Prison weekly, assisting with innocence petitions and offering mentorship and friendship to incarcerated men. Mr. Evangelos will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family, friends and community;

(HLS 564)

Presented by Representative PLUECKER of Warren.

Cosponsored by Senator BEEBE-CENTER of Knox, Representative SIMMONS of Waldoboro.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative PLUECKER of Warren, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

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

Representative **PLUECKER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jeff would've liked to be here today to know that he's still so very significant to us and his work is so very relevant to our lives that his passing was mentioned on TV, in all the newspapers. He was always so good at having the perfect quote to be included in the papers.

We all know what it's like to sit here and wonder whether our work will be significant after we no longer have our seats or we pass on, but the fact is that Jeff's work was always significant and relevant, even if he didn't always know it himself. Despite being on the outside in so many ways, his work was always some of the most relevant. He was fiercely independent; his politics represented his district and people in need of justice before himself. And he did it in a way that very clearly made him an iconoclast. He disregarded unjust authority if you felt it didn't serve democracy and justice. He stepped outside what was expected of him, filing for an impeachment against a former Chief Executive when both parties argued with him to not go forward with it. Openly arguing with our current Chief Executive against her stances on justice for incarcerated men and women and tribal sovereignty. Repeatedly filing petitions to reduce the sentences of men at Maine State Prison despite repeated denials.

He believed with a whole heart in justice and the deep humanity of mercy. He couldn't allow a system of injustice to punish men he knew as friends when he knew it to be wrong. And so, he didn't slow down. Even when he was going through some of his toughest days, the chemo treatments before coming to session, sitting beside me in this Chamber, sweating and uncomfortable, dealing with the effects of the treatments. Fitting in visits to the prison between trips to Boston for treatments. Not only was he resilient and hardy in a way I can only dream of, he had a depth of belief in his cause to which we can all aspire.

I'm not saying Jeff was perfect, but I want to give space to Jeff's imperfections to shine through today. As they say, the cracks are how the light shines in. It is in his struggles that we can see ourselves in his work, and I doubt anyone in here who spent significant time with Jeff didn't end up in an argument with him. A political fight, a principled fight or just disagreed on tactics, but that's how you knew you were close to him. And the next morning or day or week, you'd be back on his side or he'd be on yours. And that was also part of Jeff; he forgave, he forgot, he moved on in a way that enabled him to not burn bridges and to build lifetime friendships.

In the press, you might've heard that he was once the youngest town manager in Warren, or manager in Maine, hired at the age of 23 to run my town of Warren. He was the town manager before I was born, but when he started taking me to doors to run for this seat for the first time, he took me to home after home, where he shared stories with older men he had

fished with, gone to baseball games with or worked with in the school district. And every one of them was loyal. Loyal in a way that went well beyond politics. They knew his politics and some had to be up front with him where they didn't align. But political disagreements didn't affect their friendship. In more than one home, Jeff shared tears over stories of days gone past and, in those visits, I saw politics built on relationship that I knew I needed to emulate.

Jeff's fight for justice was also built on relationship. Despite being brilliant in a way I'll never match, with a head for dates, names, places that belied his Master's in history, justice was never just an intellectual pursuit for him. He fought for the men he knew, he sat down with them and demanded truth and then demanded it again if he felt they hadn't told him the full truth. And when he felt he knew their truth, then he fought for them. He always, in so many times and places that I saw, counseled people to come clean with the truth. He didn't believe in sugarcoating and he believed that when you have told the truth and taken responsibility, it was the job of the system, and Jeff's responsibility personally, to fight for justice with you. That those men wrongly convicted or punished too severely or who have come to a reckoning with society now deserve to have their lives back. And he would not abide by a system that could not be the equal to what those men had given of their time, their moral reckoning and their confrontation of their deepest fears. If these men can do that, this system should be held to the same high standards, the same moral reckoning.

And I personally don't believe in death, and I don't believe in heaven. I believe that when a person lives their life as fully as Jeff did that there are ways of connecting, of demanding truth and advocating for something better continue to resonate within those of us privileged enough to know him. They resonate in these halls with the ringing of those bells. They resonate in our speeches well delivered and in our friendships held dear. They resonate when we fight for what is right, with a little bit more pride. And they resonate when our eyes leak tears, as Jeff's did, because we were doing emotional work and we feel deeply and we want you to, as well.

Jeff's work keeps ringing within us. And so, it is important that we've taken a moment to commemorate his passing today, to celebrate his life and work in this Chamber and it is important that we share Jeff's story and work with those who will carry it on.

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

Representative **MILLIKEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my Friend from Warren, that was a difficult speech to follow, frankly.

A few years ago, I was invited by the NAACP prison branch to attend an event at the Maine State Prison honoring the former Representative Jeff Evangelos. I had already met the Honorable Jeff Evangelos here in the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, where he had come to testify about parole and the legislation that he worked so tirelessly to advance. But it was in the chapel of the prison in Warren that I believe I truly met Jeff, the real Jeff.

Handed a microphone and given the freedom to speak from his heart, he did exactly that. In a voice that filled the room, he spoke of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., of the killing of President John Kennedy, about justice delayed and justice denied. And then he spoke about a dark-skinned black man who here in Maine right now is sentenced to two life sentences for a non-homicide crime. A case in which no one was killed and in which another person admitted to committing the violence. One of the prosecutors in that case stated at the time of the sentencing that, quote, 'aside from colonial times, there has never been a life sentence imposed in Maine for a non-homicide.' It's a great day for justice in this country. Jeff fiercely responded that in colonial times, Maine legally permitted slavery and perhaps that was not an era that we should look to as a benchmark for justice. That was Jeff; fearless, unflinching, deeply rooted in history, unapologetic in his insistence that we can and must do better.

In the months and years that followed, I would often run into Jeff in different places, most frequently at the prison in Warren. Many times, even if I didn't see him, I would notice his name signed into the visitor log just before mine as I went in, or just after mine as I exited. It sometimes felt as though he spent more time in the prison than he did at home or anywhere else. Inside the prison walls, every man has a story about Jeff Evangelos. He got me an attorney, he helped me file an appeal, he filed motions for me. When new security rules prohibited visitors from bringing paperwork into the prison, including attorneys, Jeff adapted. He'd sit in the lobby or in his car with stacks of documents, memorizing as much as he could before stuffing them away. Then he would meet with whichever man he was there to help that day, gather whatever he could from memory and hurry back out to write everything down before it slipped away. He did this work unpaid, relentless, often invisible, while also undergoing chemotherapy and participating in medical trials to treat his cancer.

Jeff Evangelos was saving these men and dying at the same time. A few days after his passing, I was in the prison and I spent time with the men who may one day spend time outside of those walls because of Jeff's labor of love. I asked them if they would share some words that I could carry here into this Chamber. Here are some quotes from some of them.

Jeff is absolutely one of the best people I've ever met. My life is better because I was blessed to know him. Watching the way he showed up in people's lives made me want to be a better human. Everywhere he went, he left things better than when he found them. His loving, selfless, integrity-filled legacy of championing those deemed least in our society will live on in the hearts and minds of those who walked alongside him. Now it is our responsibility to carry forward his life work of redemption and humanity. He fought tirelessly for criminal justice reform, standing as a steadfast advocate for those who were incarcerated and too often unheard. Jeff's strength, conviction and unwavering belief in second chances touched all of our lives. He will be deeply missed. Jeff routinely visited us at the Maine State Prison to remind the least of Maine citizens that he recognized our humanity, which he demonstrated by doing so much to improve the quality of our lives. Most importantly, Jeff worked tirelessly to instill hope in all of us. A hope that with a bit of concern and empathy, we could use to help others.

The President of the NAACP at the Maine State Prison also shared with me that they will be naming an award in Jeff's honor, the Drum Major for Justice and Equity Award, recognizing him as a champion for change.

Mr. Speaker, on that day in the chapel when Jeff's voice echoed through the halls of the prison, I also was honored to meet the steady presence who sustained him in both his work and his illness, his extraordinary wife Harolyn, who is here today. Jeff didn't have a cell phone, so, when I needed to reach him, I would call their home and often would catch Harolyn on the other end of the line. She was always gracious, always warm and always willing to chat for a few moments before handing the phone over to Jeff. It was unmistakable

how deeply they cared for each other and supported each other. Jeff's work was extraordinary, but it was never solitary. Harolyn was his foundation. To Harolyn and to Jeff's entire family, I offer my deepest condolences and my profound gratitude for sharing him with us, all of the people of Maine and especially with some of the most forgotten souls in our great State. I learned a lot from that man and I will cherish everything he ever taught me.

Jeff would almost certainly want me to highlight in this speech that Maine abolished parole 50 years ago, and we need to do what we can to bring justice back to the State of Maine. And also, he'd want me to point out that not once has this State ever found an officer-involved shooting to be unjustified by the Attorney General's Office. He would not want us to remember him only for his words, he would want us to continue the work. He would want us to examine our systems honestly, to confront injustice directly and to legislate with extreme courage. We have a lot of work to do to carry on the legacy of this extraordinary man. Rest in power, Jeff Evangelos.

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

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I was serving my first term in the Legislature, we filled out our choices for Committee and I selected, I think, Education and HHS; Mom, nurse, those made sense to me. Nowhere on that list did I write Judiciary. And yet, I found myself on the Judiciary Committee, which I was immediately livid about and then, quickly learned that I loved serving on Judiciary. It was an incredible honor to serve with the folks that were on that Committee and that included, of course, Jeff Evangelos.

You know, we agreed on some issues, we disagreed wildly on other issues and he demonstrated that that was okay, and I think the thing that he illustrated most clearly to me during our time serving on Judiciary was voting based on principle rather than party. Of course, he was Independent, but we know which way Jeff leaned and I remember we had a vote on a budget, I don't recall the details, but I remember that myself, Jeff and another Representative, a Democrat, voted against the budget. And later, I joked with Jeff and said it sounds a little bit like a joke; a Republican, a Democrat and an Independent walk into the House Chamber and vote no. And so, we enjoyed that, but I'm really thankful to have had the opportunity to serve with Jeff and to see his example of voting on principle versus party. And I'm thankful for his example in that.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was sad to hear of Jeff's passing. I enjoyed serving with him.

We became friends here while we served together. The first connection we had was when he told me that he was a Kennedy Democrat and that connection made a connection that I had with my grandmother, who was a Kennedy Democrat, too. And Jeff held on to that, he held on to those beliefs and those principles and it was because of his integrity which led him to serve here as an Independent. And we, at the time, sat close by each other and also had a lot of conversations, and we disagreed on a lot of stuff; he was mostly left, I was mostly right; but there was one category where we agreed a lot, and those were on justice and civil liberty issues.

And one thing about Jeff is he always listened to me, no matter what the issue was, and there were a lot of times where he voted with me on stuff. And because he listened to me, I listened to him and there were some times where I went his way on things and he was a big help to me when we all came together and passed one of the most comprehensive civil asset forfeiture laws in the country that's in effect now. I never did quite come around on his opinions on parole, but because it came from Jeff, it really made me do a lot of inward thinking and looking at the subject and I gave it a lot of consideration, and still do, because of Jeff. And sometimes, that's what it takes is one person who can connect like that. And I'm sad that he's gone, but we have a good relationship here and those are the type of relationships that can exist when people talk to each other and know each other on a personal level, so, I'm sad that he's gone.

The SPEAKER: I just want to also offer my couple thoughts on Representative Evangelos. I know his family is up in the Gallery and two things stand out to me.

When I first served here, Representative Evangelos was often in the Retiring Room, which is where a lot of us hang out when we're spending long days here, and he was always on the phone, working on behalf of his constituents to solve problems. While the rest of us were in there chatting with one another, doing maybe work on our laptops and so forth, Jeff was working the phones, figuring out how to solve problems for folks who were counting on him to be their voice, advocating with, whether it be State agencies, the federal government, whomever, to solve some sort of problem. And that stands out to me pretty significantly.

The second thing that stood out to me was when I was running for this post the first time around, we had our Democratic caucus to nominate our choice to be the next Speaker. Jeff didn't have a vote in our caucus because he wasn't a Democrat, he was an Independent, he wasn't present that day, but just before the vote, he sent out a mass email to the Democratic caucus that was perhaps not the tact I would've taken in terms of choices of language. And so, I spent the day going around saying, you know, I didn't ask Jeff to send that out to everyone, but it was; his sentiment was that, you know, he supported me and supported and had his reasons for that, but was so genuine and it was so Jeff, and I think we all have, for those of us who have gotten to know him, have those moments where we can just say that was Jeffrey Evangelos to a tee.

And those moments will stick out amongst several others, and I just want to thank his family for sharing him with us, having the sacrifice that it takes to serve here in this Body and also the sacrifice that we heard of time to serve those at the Maine State Prison as well. He obviously went above and beyond his role just here in Augusta. So, thank you for sharing him with us, we will all be saying a prayer and remembering him in the days and months and years ahead. And with that, I ask that we take a moment of silence.

At this point, the Members of the House stood and joined in a moment of silence in honor of the Honorable Jeffrey Evangelos, of Friendship.

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

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

Representative **FROST**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a very respected member of our community, Mrs. Verna Hammond. Unfortunately, the storm created a little chaos for the Clerk's Office and her Sentiment was mistakenly left off today's Calendar. It will, however, be printed in Thursday's edition. But I would like to read the Sentiment for you now.

State of Maine, Whereas the Legislature has learned with deep regret of the death of Verna Hammond, of Belgrade. Following her high school graduation, Mrs. Hammond spent a summer working at a local defense plant in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, before returning to Belgrade to work for Maine's Department of Agriculture. Dedicated to the care of her children, she volunteered in many capacities at their schools and in their Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts activities. In 1953, Verna and her husband, Clifton "Skip" Hammond, founded the Clifton K. Hammond Lumber Company in Belgrade, currently Hammond Lumber Company. The company has grown from a handful of employees to 33 Maine locations and one in New Hampshire, with a total of 1,200 employees. She worked for 58 years before retiring at 85 years of age. She and Skip also owned Christmas tree farms and were involved in the Maine Christmas Tree Growers Association. On December 10, 2024, she received the Boston Post Cane from Belgrade. She was also a longtime member of the Grange. Mrs. Hammond will be long remembered and sadly missed by her family, friends and community; therefore, be it Resolved that we, the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives, pause in a moment of understanding and prayer to inscribe this token of sympathy and condolence to all who share this great loss and respectfully request that when the Legislature adjourns this date, it do so in honor and lasting tribute to the deceased.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this Body to hear just a bit about Hammond Lumber, a company that has had such a major impact on our community. As mentioned in the Sentiment, it was Mrs. Hammond's husband, Skip, who founded this enterprise and up until just a few years ago, she herself was still making her way to Hammond every day to open and sort the mail. Not only does Hammond employ many people in our district, but it's not uncommon for these employees to stay right through to retirement. I believe this speaks to a very healthy work environment where all are respected, but perhaps even more special is how generous Hammond Lumber has been over the years, not just to our community but to the entire State of Maine.

I couldn't possibly list all the organizations that Hammond has supported through the years, but I'd like to name some. The Travis Mills Foundation, Wreaths Across America, Make-a-Wish Maine, Habitat for Humanity, Maine Strong Memorial Foundation, Good Shepherd Food Bank, LifeFlight Foundation, Maine Cancer Foundation, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Barbara Bush Children's Hospital, Alfond Youth and Community Center, Seven Lakes Alliance, Festival of Trees, Belgrade Center for All Seasons, Messalonskee Performance Center, local food pantries, local youth sporting programs and countless community events.

When I think about all the good Hammond Lumber does, I would say that Verna Hammond as matriarch of her family has left quite a legacy to honor and celebrate. And from my own personal memories, I can still remember the joy on her face when we would bring the kids by at Halloween. She made sure to comment on each of the costumes, bringing pride and joy to every one of those little trick-or-treaters. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, Verna Hammond will be dearly missed but always remembered for a life well lived. Thank you.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Refer to the Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Pursuant to Resolve

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development** on Bill "An Act to Establish the Maine Blue Economy Center"

(S.P. 903) (L.D. 2216)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 114, section 7.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** in concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Pursuant to Resolve

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** on Bill "An Act Related to the Electronic Tagging of Deer"

(S.P. 904) (L.D. 2217)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 32, section 1.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** in concurrence.

Refer to the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Pursuant to Resolve

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** on Bill "An Act to Amend the Composition of the Landowners and Land Users Relations Advisory Board"

(S.P. 905) (L.D. 2221)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 82, section 6.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** in concurrence.

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, have preference in the Orders of the Day and continue with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

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)

TABLED - February 10, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative CARUSO of Caratunk.

PENDING - **FINAL PASSAGE**.

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

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. It's a deep privilege for me to stand here before this Body and honor Gordon Berry, Sr. He was the owner of the infamous Berry's General Store on Route 201 in the West Forks, and I think that the chances are quite high that probably the majority of the people in this Body or who hear my voice have driven on Route 201 over the Kennebec River, over this bridge, maybe on their way to Quebec, to Jackman, to the iconic Moxie Falls, maybe while they've been hunting, fishing, rafting or snowmobiling. The bridge itself is a landmark. And if you've rafted over the Kennebec or the Dead, the bridge is the end of the rafting trip, just to bring perspective, and it's just above the confluence with the Dead, which is why they call the town the Forks. Well, just a quarter mile north of this landmark bridge is Berry's General Store. It was the epitome of a Maine general store and local meeting place of the young and old, and it still is. It's the only store for 50 miles between Jackman and Bingham. It means a lot to us.

First of all, I wanted to say that Gordon Berry, Sr., was an amazing man. He's an amazing husband, father, entrepreneur and a friend. He was loved by all who knew him, and he knew people from all over Maine, all over the country, because they came to his store. He was also the steadfast pillar of our Forks area community. Gordon's heart for people and the Forks area, whether it's the logging and tourism community, is what brought over a thousand people to his service this summer after he passed suddenly at the age of 70.

I met Gordon over 33 years ago, when I became a local resident and West Forks business owner. And he would greet everyone who walked in the store with the same joy and warmth. He was a ready source of wisdom and good old Maine common sense. He was also a wealth of local knowledge and history of the area and the geography. His input in local decision making was always sought after and critical. An avid outdoorsman, an expert hunter and fisherman, he not only worked hard in his store, but for his community. He helped create the Forks area snowmobile trail system, he served on the volunteer fire department for 40 years and he founded the local deer feed program 30 years ago. He was always there to pitch in to the collaborative efforts of the Forks area business economy, and at the public hearing and at his service, we repeatedly; and in fact, just today in the State House, we heard stories of how Gordon would help anyone in need. And in many ways, Gordon carried our community and our logging and tourism industry, our businesses, their guests and the local townspeople who were truly dependent on Berry's Store for gas and supplies.

I am so glad that Gordon's son, Brandon, is here today in the State House. You may know him as a professional boxer, "the Cannon" Berry. And he wouldn't miss this moment where we can commemorate the honor of his father.

So, just final words. Gordon prioritized his family, they are a close-knit family, they all work in the family store, they all live in the family town, his son Gordon couldn't be here and his wife Carol of 46 years, they're just a precious family. Gordon's store is the pillar of the Forks area and Gordon was at the center. He was a steadfast heartbeat of our community. And I feel it's only fitting that naming this bridge after Gordon will allow him to still welcome people into our area and to carry our community. Thank you for helping me honor Gordon Berry, Sr.

Subsequently, the Resolve was **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

CONSENT CALENDAR
First Day

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

(S.P. 804) (L.D. 2126) Bill "An Act to Eliminate the Juvenile Crime of Willful Refusal to Pay a Fine or Comply with the Terms of a Court Order" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(S.P. 166) (L.D. 374) Bill "An Act to Provide Comparable Compensation and Benefits for Deputy and Assistant District Attorneys, Assistant Attorneys General and Public Defenders" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-496)**

(S.P. 810) (L.D. 1997) Bill "An Act to Authorize Issuance of Securities to Modernize and Consolidate Certain Court Facilities" Committee on **JUDICIARY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-497)**

(H.P. 1382) (L.D. 2069) Bill "An Act Designating July 21st as Maine Commercial Fishing Remembrance Day" Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 1456) (L.D. 2167) Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 100: Enforcement Procedures, a Major Substantive Rule of the Maine Health Data Organization (EMERGENCY) Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 1379) (L.D. 2055) Bill "An Act to Amend or Correct Certain Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Laws" Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-799)**

(H.P. 1385) (L.D. 2072) Bill "An Act to Make Changes to the Laws Governing Financial Institutions and to Eliminate Certain Administrative Fees Paid by Banks and Credit Unions Under the Maine Consumer Credit Code" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-807)**

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

There being no objection, the Senate Papers were **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED** or **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.

ENACTORS

Emergency Measure

An Act to Protect Children from Technology-facilitated Sexual Abuse

(H.P. 343) (L.D. 524)
(C. "A" H-789)

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

Representative KUHN of Falmouth **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 Falmouth, Representative Kuhn.

Representative **KUHN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Honorable Colleagues. If Enacted, this bill will allow Maine law enforcement to charge individuals for the creation, possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material that is created using artificial intelligence or AI-generated images. It closes a gap in current law by amending Maine's CSAM Statutes to keep up with this emerging technology, which we know is being used in this manner in our State right now. For example, last year, it was reported that a man in Maine went to a children's soccer game and took pictures of the kids playing. He subsequently applied photos of their faces to sexual abusive AI-generated images. This was one example among many that we heard about in Committee where law enforcement knew it was happening, knew who was doing it, but lacked the tools they needed to hold perpetrators accountable.

LD 524 is really the final component of legislation the Judiciary Committee took up in the first year of this biennium to comprehensively address AI-generated sexual abuse material. I want to express appreciation to the Committee for their expedited work on this second half of that project, holding a public hearing over the interim, just as soon as the bill language was prepared, and then coalescing around a unanimous Report to the Chambers, so that we can protect Maine children from this form of abuse. Thank you.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nothing is more vile than sexual abuse against children. We heard a moment ago about someone serving two life sentences and hadn't even committed murder. I can think of a lot of people who have committed this crime that should do multiple life sentences. It's vile, it's disgusting.

We recently saw a very high-profile person who had even ran for Chief Executive in this State commit crimes in this category and get just months in jail and then subsequently violate that probation multiple times. So, there is a lot of work left to do here, Mr. Speaker, a lot of work to punish these people very harshly and we should continue. But this is a good bill, and I hope you'll all join me in supporting it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **McINTYRE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I've spoken before about the importance of listening, so, I'm going to offer this. Let us be abundantly clear, child sexual abuse and materials depicting it are a societal scourge. I do believe that the Representative in this room that spoke those words, you will recall when he did, they resonated. This is not a good bill, this is an exemplary bill of what is possible through collaboration of both sides of this aisle. I want to thank the Representative from Falmouth and the entire Judiciary Committee and I really would like to see that board go green. Thank you.

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

Representative **HENDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I would like to echo the sentiments from the Representative from Lowell in just thanking the Representative from Falmouth on her leadership on this issue. I've done so on the Judiciary Committee, but the Committee is just a sampling of what we have here today.

You know, there are few issues that we in this House Chamber can agree on. I think one of them is is that some of the worst of the worst crimes that an individual can commit in this State is sexual abuse against children. I at times have had to hold my tongue; I'm not a violent person anymore, I'm not a violent person; I didn't mean to say that. Maybe I didn't hold my tongue very well. But there's a part of Rachel in her 20s that wants to come back when we start to discuss these types of topics.

But I do want to thank the Representative from Falmouth for her leadership on this, her thoughtfulness on this. You know, a lot of work went into this bill before it was ever presented to us, from herself as well, but a number of the Representatives on this side of the aisle actually met via Zoom time and time again as we really dug into the subject matter. And it was, to me, very rarely do we have the opportunity or the time, really, to give to a bill like this, but it underscored the quality of people, I think, that are sitting in these chairs and the intent to ensure that those that commit crimes against children are held accountable.

This unfortunately is not a feel-good bill, this is a do-good bill. There was a lot of work that went into this in the Judiciary Committee to make sure that this could come out unanimous, and many thanks to that. But some of the bills that come out when a Judiciary Committee can vote a unanimous on something, it's fairly rare. I don't know if you guys know this, but we're all very opinionated and we're all always right. But on this one, we got it right. But I can tell you when we all voted yes, it was not a jovial moment, it wasn't a happy moment; it was sobering, it was somber and, yes, a sense of accomplishment that we now are able to give law enforcement the tools that they need to prosecute these criminals that are engaged in such debauchery.

But I would strongly encourage everyone, this is a good bill, this needs to go into effect now. If there was a way to make it like a super-emergency bill, I would support that, but this for sure is an emergency measure. We currently have people in the State of Maine who are generating AI-generated child pornography, that is either purely AI generated or that it depicts children who are currently living in Maine. Children that you may know. And law enforcement has no way to prosecute those people. They are getting away scot-free and it's time that we as a Legislature stood up and said we are not going to have that in our State, no is no. Vote yes on this bill.

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.

This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken.

ROLL CALL NO. 619

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Ardell, Arford, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Cimino, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Libby, Lookner, Lyman, Macias, Malon, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - NONE.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Chapman, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Jackson, Lanigan, Osher, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Skold, Supica, Warren.

Yes, 128; No, 0; Absent, 20; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

128 having voted in the affirmative and 0 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 20 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Licensure of Wholesalers and Manufacturers Under the Maine Pharmacy Act

(H.P. 1349) (L.D. 2019)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 104 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Amend the Extreme Risk Protection Order Procedure

(H.P. 1362) (L.D. 2032)
(C. "A" H-796)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 104 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Increase the Debt Limit of the North Jay Water District

(H.P. 1371) (L.D. 2041)
(C. "A" H-792)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 106 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Dissolve the Great Salt Bay Community School District

(H.P. 1374) (L.D. 2050)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 104 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Improve Safety by Allowing the Use of Variable-message Signs on Certain Vehicles

(H.P. 1377) (L.D. 2053)
(C. "A" H-797)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 104 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Acts

An Act to Increase the Size and Balance of Jury Pools

(H.P. 238) (L.D. 338)
(H. "A" H-798 to C. "A" H-159)

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

(H.P. 792) (L.D. 1187)
(H. "A" H-784 to C. "A" H-632)

An Act to Authorize Registration of Certain Cash-dispensing Machines Through the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System and Registry and to Limit the Use of Certain Cash-dispensing Machines as Virtual Currency Kiosks

(S.P. 811) (L.D. 1998)

An Act to Raise the Ogunquit Sewer District Debt Limit

(S.P. 833) (L.D. 2043)

An Act to Bring the Law Governing Emergency Equipment for Trucks and Truck Tractors into Alignment with the Federal Motor Carrier Laws

(H.P. 1381) (L.D. 2068)
(C. "A" H-793)

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

Resolves

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

(H.P. 341) (L.D. 522)
(H. "A" H-786 to C. "A" H-49)

Resolve, to Designate Route 3 in Trenton as the Deputy Luke Gross Memorial Highway

(H.P. 1363) (L.D. 2033)

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

An Act to Enhance Support of Local Nutrition Incentive Programs by Modifying the Eligibility Requirements of the Fund to Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives

(S.P. 820) (L.D. 2004)

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

On motion of Representative PLUECKER of Warren, was **SET ASIDE**.

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

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

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this bill simply strikes the word "federal" in three locations. It makes funds available to address food insecurity and provide incentives to more local options. I hope you'll join me in supporting the bill.

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. 620

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Ardell, Arford, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Cimino, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Libby, Lookner, Lyman, Macias, Malon, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - NONE.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Chapman, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Jackson, Lanigan, Osher, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Skold, Supica, Warren.

Yes, 128; No, 0; Absent, 20; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

128 having voted in the affirmative and 0 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 20 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**.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE
Ought to Pass Pursuant to Public Law

Report of the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Update the Laws Governing the Geographic Boundaries Between Certain Judicial Divisions in Aroostook County"

(S.P. 898) (L.D. 2205)

Reporting **Ought to Pass** pursuant to Public Law 2025, chapter 436, section 6.

Came from the Senate with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

The Report was **READ** and **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** in concurrence.

Representative ROBERTS for the **Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** on Bill "An Act Relating to Nonwater-dependent Floating Structures"

(H.P. 1494) (L.D. 2215)

Reporting **Ought to Pass** pursuant to Public Law 2025, chapter 378, section 13.

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

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Create a Process for the Residents of a Municipality to Withdraw from a School Union"

(S.P. 805) (L.D. 1992)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BAGSHAW of Windham
BRENNAN of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
HAGGAN of Hampden
LYMAN of Livermore Falls
MITCHELL of Cumberland
SARGENT of York

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

Signed:

Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representative:

CARLOW of Buxton

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

READ.

On motion of Representative MURPHY of Scarborough, 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** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-805)** on Bill "An Act to Protect Private Wells from Hazardous Substances"

(H.P. 1430) (L.D. 2115)

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
WOODSOME of Waterboro

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

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 Orrington, Representative Campbell.

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. This is a bill that was generated by the good Representative from Brunswick because there was an event where their wells became contaminated. I'm not opposed to helping those good people from Brunswick, as we helped the good people from Fairfield once we learned the source. This bill is broad, it's statewide and it has an annual contribution to create a fund of a million dollars a year. So, this is a reason I oppose it, Ought Not to Pass. I think it should be refined, amended and narrowed to support those good people in Brunswick. Thank you.

Subsequently, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-805)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-805)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-801)** on Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Consent for HIV Testing and Disclosure of Related Medical Information for Insurance Purposes"

(H.P. 1314) (L.D. 1970)

Signed:

Senators:

BAILEY of York
BALDACCI of Penobscot

Representatives:

MATHIESON of Kittery
ARFORD of Brunswick
BOYER of Cape Elizabeth
CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham
FLYNN of Albion
FOLEY of Wells
MASTRACCIO of Sanford
MORRIS of Turner
OLSEN of Raymond

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

Signed:

Representative:

CIMINO of Bridgton

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "B" (H-801)** 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-801)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Remove the MaineCare Program from the Prescription Drug Benefit Provisions in the Maine Insurance Code"

(H.P. 1341) (L.D. 2011)

Signed:

Senators:

BAILEY of York
BALDACCI of Penobscot
HAGGAN of Penobscot

Representatives:

MATHIESON of Kittery
ARFORD of Brunswick
BOYER of Cape Elizabeth
CIMINO of Bridgton
CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham
FLYNN of Albion
FOLEY of Wells
MASTRACCIO of Sanford
MORRIS of Turner

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

Signed:

Representative:

OLSEN of Raymond

READ.

Representative MATHIESON of Kittery moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass** Report.

Representative LIBBY of Auburn **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: 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. 621

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Ardell, Arford, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Cimino, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Cray, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredette, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Guerrette, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lavigne, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Parry, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Webb, Wood P, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Caruso, Chapman, Collins, Daigle, Fredericks, Haggan, Lance, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Olsen, Paul, Perkins, Schmersal-Burgess, Underwood, Walker, White J, White R, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Jackson, Lanigan, Osher, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Skold, Supica, Warren.

Yes, 106; No, 23; Absent, 19; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

106 having voted in the affirmative and 23 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 19 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.

Majority Report of the Committee on **HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-806)** on Bill "An Act to Create a Statewide Housing Resolution Board"

(H.P. 1282) (L.D. 1921)

Signed:

Senators:

CURRY of Waldo
BAILEY of York
BENNETT of Oxford

Representatives:

GERE of Kennebunkport
EDER of Waterboro
GOLEK of Harpswell
JULIA of Waterville
LOOKNER of Portland
MALON of Biddeford
MINGO of Calais
YUSUF of Portland

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

Signed:

Representative:

COLLAMORE of Pittsfield

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-806)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-806)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-808)** on Bill "An Act to Establish Greater Alignment of Penalties for Certain Labor Law Violations"

(H.P. 1045) (L.D. 1587)

Signed:

Senators:

TIPPING of Penobscot

RAFFERTY of York

Representatives:

ROEDER of Bangor

BECK of South Portland

GEIGER of Rockland

MACIAS of Topsham

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. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start with this; this bill was amended and it was amended on the day of our work session. We personally would like to see that, you know, at least 24 hours in advance, but it was dropped on us and we dealt with it, because that's what we have to do.

The purpose of this bill is to allow the Department of Labor to investigate, issue subpoenas and apply penalties for violations. In 2024, this Body enacted significant reforms aimed at strengthening the labor law compliance. These reforms included substantially increasing fines for wage and hour violations, with penalties scaled based on employer size and the severity of the infractions. We also shifted the Bureau of Labor Standards towards a more strategic enforcement model, allowing for proactive investigations and audits, even in the absence of a formal complaint. These were meaningful changes designed specifically to address concerns about enforcement and accountability.

In the Department of Labor annual report, which we got last week, on wage and hour complaints for 2025, the Department on page 14 quotes they began partnering with the Attorney General's Office to pursue judgments and collection actions against employers who failed or refused to pay what was owed to workers or penalties owed to the State.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on this side, we agree that those people that are violating the wage should be penalized, and we passed those laws in 2024. Mr. Speaker, the question before us is pretty straightforward. Why are we seeking to make further changes when the reforms we adopted have not yet been in effect for even a full year? Responsible governance requires that we allow time to evaluate the effectiveness of policies before layering on additional mandates. Let's give the 2024 reforms the opportunity to work as intended. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Body to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you.

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

Representative **BECK**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Distinguished Colleagues of the House. This amended bill clarifies the Bureau of Labor Standards investigatory authority. It's focused on seeking remedies for workers who have been wronged by employers, that have violated Maine labor laws. It creates no new criminal violations, it helps ensure that existing laws could be enforced, while due process protections are preserved at every stage of an investigation.

This bill would ensure that the Department of Labor has the legal means necessary to conduct an effective investigation of possible labor law violations. It provides for a clean and just process. It's not mandatory. LD 1587 as amended sends a clear message that when seeking remedies for workers, the Department will have the necessary tools to conduct a robust investigation and make aggrieved workers whole. It limits the ability of violators to circumvent their enforcement authority.

For those being investigated, there is a clear process and they will know exactly what to expect. This amended bill puts the Bureau of Labor Standards and the Wage and Hour Division on equal footing with many other State agencies when it comes to subpoena power during the course of an investigation. It would be a standard administrative subpoena. Once it's issued, the recipient is obligated to appear with the records being requested or to give evidence in an investigation. All of the Bureau's investigations are confidential by law and any information or trade secrets that are revealed by the use of the subpoena would remain confidential. Once findings are final and all appeals have been exhausted, it allows for the Department of Labor to issue an additional penalty for noncompliance.

Right now, if the employer doesn't properly pay their workers what they're owed, there's no penalty for that. Refusal to follow the law to pay their workers promptly would trigger a penalty of not more than $1,000 a day, which would incentivize timely payment of paying workers what they're owed. It allows the Department to order the correction of ongoing violations, and failing to do so could result in a penalty of not more than $1,000 per day. The goal is to ensure compliance, not to punish. If an employer still refuses to pay the money they owe, the bill would allow the Department to issue a notice of levy to their bank to prevent their assets from being transferred or spent before the workers are paid the money they're owed. The bill would also require an employer who has violated labor standards to post in a conspicuous place a notice of citation, so that employees are made aware that they're owed something by the employer. They also must contact former employees if the citation covered a period of time when the former employees worked there.

The overwhelming majority of Maine employers agree that their workers have the right to be paid in a timely manner for the work that they do. For those employers, they should welcome this bill. They pay their workers on time, and this helps promote a level playing field for employers who comply with the law. LD 1587 as amended recognizes that in some cases that doesn't happen, even after employers are afforded multiple opportunities to contest and settle the violation. As such, the Bureau of Labor Standards should have the same

investigatory tools afforded to many other State agencies to make sure those workers get paid the money they're owed as quickly as possible.

Finally, it should be noted that this legislation is a product of a collaborative effort, as the bill as amended before you includes language recommended by the Maine Department of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General. I thank them for the productive dialogue. If we have labor laws on the books, they should be enforceable and enforced fairly. LD 1587 as amended does exactly that. Please help protect Maine workers by joining me in supporting the pending motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Department of Labor was before us in the; I believe in the 131st, there was some question about whether the Department of Labor was changing from a posture of being a Department that helped employers and trained employers and worked with employers that we desperately need in the State of Maine. The Department then assured us, despite publications that said to the contrary, that they were not changing their posture.

While this bill is purported to be one that says it's going to help people and it's not punitive, the mere fact that there is the inclusion of the notice of levy makes it a punitive action. That means if you have money in your bank account and you owe somebody for work that they have done, the State of Maine can grab that money and that's punitive. Thank you.

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

Representative **DRINKWATER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for rising for the second time, but there's been some misinformation promoted, and I have in my hands right here in the report from the DOL given to us about wage violations, and on this graph right here, Mr. Speaker, it's talking about what industries had problems, and penalties paid. Penalties were paid, not forgiven; the penalty is there for the Department to use. This one group right here, $283,000 was paid.

Mr. Speaker, penalties are already part of the law, this bill is not needed. Thank you.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak plainly about what this bill does. It does not create new labor standards, it does not invent new violations and it does not remove appeal rights. It clarifies how the Bureau of Labor Standards investigates violations of existing law and how it enforces final orders once due process has run its course.

Under this bill, when the director believes a violation has occurred, the director may conduct an investigation; may conduct an investigation. That includes examining relevant records, issuing subpoenas and taking testimony. Those are standard administrative tools used across State government. If, after the investigation, a violation is found, the director may issue a notice of violation and order remedies that are already authorized in Statute, including payment of wages, damages, interest or civil penalties consistent with existing law. Importantly, those orders do not become final until all administrative and legal appeal rights are exhausted. Employers retain the right to appeal under Maine's existing procedures. Judicial review remains available.

This Amendment also addresses what happens after a final order. If a person or employer fails to pay wages, damages or penalties once an order is final and delinquent, the director may issue a notice of levy. An administrative levy authority exists in other areas of Maine law, including tax and unemployment contribution enforcement. This Amendment places labor law enforcement on similar footing; not higher footing, not lower footing, on similar footing. It does not eliminate court oversight, it does not bypass due process, it simply allows the Department to enforce final, legally upheld obligations without requiring workers to pursue additional proceedings after appeals are complete.

The Amendment also includes civil penalties for failure to pay a final order or to correct an ongoing violation. These penalties are discretionary. They apply only after appeal rights are exhausted, they are designed to encourage timely compliance with final orders of law. Without an ongoing consequence for continued noncompliance, enforcement loses effectiveness. The purpose here is not punishment for its own sake, it's to ensure that once a matter has been fully adjudicated, the law is followed.

In sum, this bill clarifies investigatory authority, preserves administrative and judicial appeal rights, aligns labor enforcement tools with other areas of Maine administrative law, provides reasonable mechanisms to ensure compliance with final orders. It is not an expansion of labor law, it is not a departure from due process, it is a clarification. And as the Good Representative from Milford mentioned, we did have a lot of information and passed a bill about the enforcement in a prior Legislature. I just want to remind that we heard that in 2022 and 2023, the average money collected per violation, not per employee, but per violation, was $3.80. We passed some laws to help the Department of Labor. This is giving them an additional help. They maintain that discretionary ability, and what we have heard time and time again from the Department, which I choose to believe, is that they would rather educate and resolve than punish and fine. Thank you.

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

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Discretionary ability for a department to pick and choose which businesses to levy bank accounts sounds like a very dangerous thing. We have courts, we shouldn't be levying bank accounts by discretion of a bureaucrat. Thank you.

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

Representative **BECK**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to rise a second time.

I just want to clarify the levy authority the bill seeks to provide the Department. It is not to seize anybody's assets from the bank, it's to prevent an employer who has failed to pay their workers correctly after all appeals, prevent them from frittering away the money that's in the account or transferring it to another account. It is not to seize their assets. Levy authority is only available after final determinations and failure to pay and it's consistent with enforcement mechanisms used in other areas of law. It ensures workers can actually recover the wages and damages that are owed to them. Thank you.

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

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way I find out what the purpose of any bill is, is to follow the money. So, in this particular case, follow the money. Appreciate it if you'd vote no to the pending motion.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 622

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

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, 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, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Jackson, Lanigan, Osher, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Skold, Supica, Warren.

Yes, 64; No, 65; Absent, 19; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

64 having voted in the affirmative and 65 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 19 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

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

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Clarify the Setting of Group Life Insurance Coverage Levels Under the Maine Public Employees Retirement System"

(H.P. 1352) (L.D. 2022)

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
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

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

Signed:

Representative:

LIBBY of Auburn

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.

Majority Report of the Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-800)** on Bill "An Act to Provide an Exemption from Pilotage Requirements for Passenger Ferry Service Between Bar Harbor, Maine and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia"

(H.P. 969) (L.D. 1477)

Signed:

Senators:

NANGLE of Cumberland
FARRIN of Somerset
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

CRAFTS of Newcastle
ANKELES of Brunswick
MASON of Lisbon
PARRY of Arundel
RAY of Lincolnville
WHITE of Guilford

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

Signed:

Representatives:

BISHOP of Bucksport
EATON of Deer Isle
MONTELL of Gardiner

READ.

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

Eight Members of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-802)** on Bill "An Act to Eliminate the ConnectMaine Authority by Repealing the Advanced Technology Infrastructure Act"

(H.P. 1319) (L.D. 1975)

Signed:

Senators:

LAWRENCE of York
GROHOSKI of Hancock

Representatives:

SACHS of Freeport
GEIGER of Rockland
KESSLER of South Portland
RUNTE of York
WARREN of Scarborough
WEBB of Durham

Three Members of the same Committee report in Report "B" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-803)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representatives:

FOSTER of Dexter
MCINTYRE of Lowell
WADSWORTH of Hiram

Two Members of the same Committee report in Report "C" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "C" (H-804)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representative:

PAUL of Winterport

READ.

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

Representative FOSTER of Dexter **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 Madison, Representative Ducharme.

Representative **DUCHARME**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout the course of this Second Session of the 132nd, we hear the word affordability nearly every day. It seems that with every turn, life gets less affordable in the State of Maine. Finally, we seem to be recognizing that perhaps this Body can do something about it.

Today, we are debating the bipartisan LD 1975, which proposes to end ConnectMaine and eliminate that fee that is imposed on every Mainer that has a phone. Because the goal has been accomplished. When ConnectMaine passed in 2006, the goal was to provide access to the internet to most everyone in Maine. Remember, the goal was to provide access to the internet to most Maine communities. Part of the ConnectMaine legislation was to impose a fee of 10 cents per mobile line and 25% of the cost of internet from every Mainer on their phone bill. And if you look at your phone bill today, you'll see that.

The Majority Report before you today says that we know that we've accomplished the goal, but now we have a new goal that we've determined is absolutely necessary and we need this funding to achieve the new goal. That new goal is internet speed of 100 megabytes per second up and 100 megabytes down. Maine Connectivity Authority believes that they should continue to get this two million dollars per year extraction from the wallets of the people of Maine regardless of the fact that the original stated goal of this funding has been achieved.

Maine Connectivity Authority was formed by the Legislature in 2021. It has effectively swallowed up ConnectMaine. Since 2023, Maine Connectivity Authority, or MCA, has been awarded nearly $300 million by the federal government to enhance internet access and broadband across the State of Maine. Earlier this month, it was announced that MCA was awarded another $50 million to advance internet access in Maine. The Majority Report before you asks you to allow MCA to take time and study what they're going to do with the two million dollars annually that they extract from the people of Maine through their phone bills that was originally approved for ConnectMaine. Once that study is completed, there will no doubt be legislation proposed to change the use of these funds, that two million dollars per year taken from Maine people, to advance the goals of MCA.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge this Body to defeat the Majority Report and approve the Minority Report, Amendment "B." The Minority Report, Committee Report "B," allows the remaining pieces of ConnectMaine to finish their work before terminating the funding source based on the memorandum of understanding with MCA. That work is due to be completed by June 30, 2027. Minority Report "C," if passed, would repeal ConnectMaine and the funding stream upon passage and signature of the Chief Executive. Committee Report "B" allows for completion of work currently being done by ConnectMaine and the funding from that, under the direction of MCA.

Mr. Speaker, technology is advancing at a rapid pace. When ConnectMaine was enacted, internet access via satellite was merely a dream in the mind of Elon Musk called Starlink. Now, Mainers look up into a clear night sky and see what looks like strings of lights flying across the blackness of the night sky. Those strings represent satellites providing internet access in remote areas of Maine.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this Body, in the interests of putting action behind our words about affordability, to defeat the motion on the floor and pass the Minority Report, Amendment "B." If we want to talk about affordability, we have to walk the walk. Let's defeat this motion and start to make life more affordable for the people of Maine. Thank you.

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

Representative **SACHS**: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support the pending motion, and I think a few factual pieces need to be interjected into this conversation.

ConnectMaine and Maine Connectivity Authority are two separate entities; closely aligned, yes, but two separate entities with distinct statutory responsibilities and separate funding streams. Through a contract and service agreement, those two agencies operate under a 'no wrong door' approach, ensuring that Mainers, municipalities and State agencies can access the combined expertise, programs and grants and technical assistance of both organizations.

Ample testimony was made at the public hearing that made clear that due to existing federal and State funding obligations and statutory requirements that the operations of these agencies cannot be fully combined until that memorandum of understanding is executed. More importantly, these agencies have already started to plan on their transition. The Report in the pending motion, the Majority Report, requires that the two entities report to EUT on the status of the transition, so necessary statutory changes can be considered.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we all know the dangers of a politician standing in front of a big banner that says mission accomplished, when it is not. The success of both agencies is well documented; however, at a time when affordability is at the forefront of legislative concerns, dismantling ConnectMaine would seriously jeopardize Maine's ability to do its statutory obligation of not just unserved but underserved populations, particularly here in rural Maine. When questioned on this point, the Sponsor stated he did not agree with Maine's longstanding statutory commitment to reaching underserved Mainers in rural areas. However, the Majority Report, by contrast, respects those bipartisan goals.

The fee that the Good Representative from Madison has talked about leveraged over $300 million in federal broadband funds. So, the federal funds that are currently coming to Maine cannot be used as match, they need additional dollars, which

is the reason that the fee was established. They target; both MCA and ConnectMaine targets middle mile expansion, development of a cellular connectivity roadmap and continued support for digital literacy and internet safety. As AARP testified in support of the Majority Report, seniors in particular depend on this ongoing assistance not only for access and skills, but also for education to protect against fraud and scams.

If the Sponsor had truly wanted to have affordability, then perhaps a proposal to change the Statute against assessing or against allowing technology companies to pass the fee onto consumers would've been more prudent. Because, Mr. Speaker, the Statute allows; this is a third-party process where telecommunication companies are assessed a 10 cent fee on every line. That is collected by a third party and distributed. The Statute states that telecommunication companies can pass that on to Maine consumers; they don't have to, they choose to. I didn't come to Augusta to subsidize the bottom lines of these major tech companies.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, ample evidence, as I stated, was provided to the Committee that to dismantle this now would actually cost more than current fees assessed due to the complicated machinations that need to formally transfer and approve both for Maine voters, for example, the $15 million bond that was awarded to ConnectMaine and their statutory obligations.

So, to recap, if you do not pass this Majority Report, Mr. Speaker, it will cost us more money, programs to help seniors to not only access technology but also protect themselves against scams will be impacted, it will stop our ability to leverage millions of dollars, hurt rural underserved communities with access to reliable broadband and deny bipartisan legislative oversight. The pending motion represents a careful, responsible approach, one that supports the successful transition between ConnectMaine and Maine Connectivity Authority, preserves critical capacity and ensures appropriate legislative oversight. I urge the Body to support the pending motion.

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

Representative **McINTYRE**: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to speak on this topic.

I do not support this motion; I do support Committee Amendment "B," and I'd like to read from ConnectMaine's website. The ConnectMaine Authority is now an operational unit of the Maine Connectivity Authority. The functional integration of Maine Connectivity Authority and ConnectMaine operations provides a single-door solution that simplifies access for Maine citizens, broadband stakeholders and governmental partners. By streamlining operations and financial resources, the State can efficiently plan, develop, fund and maintain our broadband infrastructure. ConnectMaine funding responsibilities and staffing had been contractually assigned to the Maine Connectivity Authority by the ConnectMaine Authority Board of Directors. To learn more, go to our website.

Mr. Speaker, briefly, I spent 21 years in the federal domain and I saw so much redundancy and duplication of resources that ultimately led to waste. That's what I'm seeing. We can help the ratepayers, we can help the taxpayers contribute to affordability; the buzzword of the next several months, I'm sure. The Good Representative's proposal to support Committee Amendment "B" is the right thing to do. Thank you.

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

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is so refreshing to hear my colleagues concerned about rural Maine. My district is, arguably, the most rural district, since it is a frontier recognized by the federal government and we have more unorganized territory than any of the other districts.

We've been confronted with this ever since the ARPA funds first hit the scene, where people came to the county and towns and wanted to run fiber out through the woods to houses along the way, sometimes over 30 miles before they could connect two or three full-time residents in some of these areas. As my Colleague from Madison mentioned earlier, for less than a cup of coffee, Starlink is available right now and, you know, the equipment comes free and the fees are about $40 a month. So, when we have a snowstorm, a blizzard, an ice storm, something that takes lines down, you know, how quick can you get back online when the fiber is down and you're one of three houses at the end of that piece of fiber? It's going to be quite a while before your equipment is repaired, and at a great cost.

The idea that these folks out my way don't have opportunity to be online is a misnomer. While I was County Commissioner in Piscataquis, we offered some local subsidies for this and very few people took us up on it. We did surveys and I spoke to hundreds, if not a thousand of my constituents directly that lived in rural areas, remote areas, and I've seldom come across someone who thought the subsidy was a good idea. We have the availability to go online if we need to and we truly don't need this in place any longer. So, that's my view from the woods. Thank you.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Facts are important, especially when we're considering the good people of Maine's money.

This bill would, if we defeat the pending motion, would allow the Authority to complete its work. When the Authority was; when the bill went before the EUT Committee, came before us to form the Authority, I questioned why we couldn't dissolve ConnectMaine at that time and was assured that it would go away once the loose ends were taken care of that were necessary to use that funding that had been provided where that ConnectMaine was listed as the portion of the government, if you will, that would take care of spending those funds. During our hearings on this bill, we learned that most of those loose ends have been taken care of, have been tied up.

If we defeat the pending motion and go to the "B" version of this bill, the last of those ends, we were told, could be taken care of, ConnectMaine would no longer be required and we could let the folks of Maine have that small portion of tax they've been paying, use that for something else while we continue to spend dollars that are available on connecting. And I'm sure we've all heard the press releases that have already claimed, not from this side of the aisle, but have already claimed victory in fulfilling promises that everyone in the State of Maine would have the opportunity to access the internet as part of the reason for forming this Authority.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, I hope you'll follow my light and vote down the pending motion.

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

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Though I'm a little unique, I stand here as not just a legislator, but I happen to be the Broadband Director for Somerset County, on behalf of Somerset Economic Development, I led the program in Somerset County that was part of the Regional and Tribal Broadband Partner Program established for bridging the digital divide throughout this State and using the federal funds that came in the State to bring digital equity and opportunities to our rural and low income and more struggling population groups. And so, I am a big fan of the work that we have done and most of the greatest work came in at that grassroot level, working with people who are actually helping our residents. And to be clear, MCA was the facilitator for those big federal funds that came in through the State and administered and facilitated our broadband plans and, you know, all of that.

I stand, though, because I believe that with regards to this majority Amendment, which is a two-year study, I fundamentally disagree that that is necessary. The very purpose that the Maine Connectivity Authority was created was to transition and supersede ConnectMaine. That was the premise. And this organization has been in place since 2021 or 2022 and has been performing these duties currently on behalf of ConnectMaine. From all of my sources and discussions, they already know how to make this transition and I think a two-year study is just bloating bureaucracy longer than it is necessary. And I think it's a misuse of taxpayer funds.

I do think that we can go back and make a better solution for this or the minority Report that brings a slow transition to the point where that the transition can take place and we can make good use of the funds, make good use of the infrastructure that we have and still do a great service to our population. And so, for that reason, I ask that we would vote against the majority Amendment that is being proposed right now.

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

Representative **GEIGER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to rise and speak on this bill.

As a Member of the EUT, I have to say when this bill first came up for discussion, it felt like a bill that was a solution in search of a problem. MCA has been unbelievably successful in taking hundreds of millions of dollars of federal funds and turning those into access statewide. They already have a plan for ending the two organizations, it ends in 2027. This seems like an unnecessary step by legislators to meddle in what is already a well-established plan set by Statute. The amount of money we're talking about is 10 cents a month, which means that most of the more urban Mainers are paying to ensure the final steps are taken that rural Maine has full access to broadband. This is a real success story, it's a real triumph for Maine that we will have this kind of access. It allows small towns and rural places in Maine to look at growth as we become more and more dependent on the ability to use the internet. I urge you to vote for the majority Report. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would remind Members to not question the motives of other Members.

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

The SPEAKER: 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. 623

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

NAY - Albert, Arata, Ardell, 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, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hymes, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Jackson, Lanigan, Osher, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Skold, Supica, Warren.

Yes, 65; No, 64; Absent, 19; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

65 having voted in the affirmative and 64 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 19 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-802)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-802)** and sent for concurrence.

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

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Resolution: (S.P. 901)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2026 AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

WHEREAS, Maine's Black history and the story of Maine's role in the global economy of enslavement have been largely effaced from our narratives and from our collective consciousness; and

WHEREAS, from the earliest arrivals of people from Europe and Africa in the Americas, Africans and African Americans have been part of the story of this land, and researchers have identified over 2,000 people of color who lived in what is now called the State of Maine prior to the year 1800; and

WHEREAS, Africans who were brought involuntarily to these shores suffered generations of enslavement, and their descendants faced the injustices of lynch mobs, segregation and the denial of basic fundamental rights; and

WHEREAS, people living in Maine engaged in the slave trade for at least 113 years, with the earliest known slaving voyage departing from Maine's shores taking place in 1749 and the last known slaving voyage on a Maine-built vessel taking place in 1862; and

WHEREAS, a total of 70 Maine-built vessels are known to have transported enslaved people, representing only the tip of the iceberg, and slaving vessels were constructed in at least 26 Maine towns; and

WHEREAS, Maine merchants were deeply entangled in the global economy of enslavement, as were the banks that handled their accounts and the insurance firms that secured their investments, and at a time when Havana, Cuba was the hub of the illicit slave trade, that city was Portland's number one trading partner; and

WHEREAS, it was not only Maine's coastal towns that were complicit in the global economy of enslavement through shipbuilding and merchant trading activities, but its inland regions as well: crops and livestock were routinely shipped in the "coastwise" trade to provision the sugar plantations of the West Indies, along with salted fish and even ice from this region; and

WHEREAS, great quantities of Maine timber were processed into barrel staves and shipped throughout the 18th and 19th centuries to the West Indies, where enslaved Africans were forced to fashion them into barrels; they then filled these barrels with the sugar and molasses that were shipped back to Portland and distilled into rum, which was used as currency in purchasing more captive Africans; and

WHEREAS, African Americans in all walks of life have shown resilience despite suffering under slavery and injustice and have made significant contributions throughout the history of the State and across the United States; and

WHEREAS, from the Revolutionary War through the abolitionist movement, to marches from Selma to Montgomery and across America today, and in this State, African Americans have remained devoted to the proposition that all of us are created equal, even when their own rights were denied; and

WHEREAS, the month of February is officially celebrated as Black History Month, which dates back 100 years ago to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period of time in February to recognize the heritage and achievements of African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month was officially observed for the first time in 1976 when President Gerald Ford issued a message recognizing Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, in 1986 Congress passed a Public Law designating February as "National Black History Month"; 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 the significance of Black History Month on its 100th anniversary as an important time to honor the contributions of African Americans in the nation's history and encourage all people in the State to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped the State and the nation.

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

READ.

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

Representative **DeBRITO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a lead Co-sponsor of this Resolution recognizing February 2026 as Black History Month on its 100th anniversary.

One hundred years ago, Carter G. Woodson created what was then called Negro History Week, because black history was being left out of classrooms and public memory. He wasn't trying to start a slogan; he was responding to something missing. A century later, we're still doing some of that work.

For me, this month isn't abstract, it's personal. I represent Waterville. In many rooms in my district, I am the only Black person serving in elected office. This simply is the reality. But small numbers don't mean small history. When people talk about Maine, we talk about ships, trades and the Atlantic economy. My own roots trace back to Cape Verde; a small island nation deeply connected to the same maritime world. Cape Verdean sailors worked on whaling ships throughout New England. They moved through the same ports that helped build the coast of Maine. So, when we talk about Maine's early economy, we don't hear a distant story. I hear a connection. And that matters.

In Kennebec Valley, Black people were present long before most people realized. Black men served at the Fort Western in the 1700s, Black residents lived and worked in Augusta in the 1800s, Black entrepreneurs opened business, Black sailors served in civil wars. These stories exist whether we highlight them or not. In Waterville today, we have Black families raising children and building lives. We have a Jamaican restaurant that brings something new into our community. That may seem small to some, but it isn't. It is part of the continuous story of who Maine is.

So, when we mark 100 years of Black History Month, we're not just recognizing a date. We're recognizing a century-long effort that makes our history reflect reality. And that work is not finished. We are celebrating 100 years, it is fair to ask what we want the next 100 years to look like. I hope it looks like a Maine where young people don't have to search for themselves in the margins of textbooks. I hope it looks like a history where everyone is included who helped build it. And I hope it looks like leadership that is comfortable telling the full story even when it's complex. Black history matters in large cities, it matters in places like mine, it matters whenever belonging can feel uncertain and whenever history has been simplified.

This Resolution does not divide us; it acknowledges the full story of the State that we serve. One hundred years of carving out space for that story I believe is worth reaffirming. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **MACIAS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this final week of Black History Month. American history.

I recently had a conversation with a colleague he used the term woke as a criticism. I'd like to take this moment to define the word woke and what it actually means to the community that originated the term. It wasn't used as a partisan insult. According to scholars, it is African American Vernacular English that means to be aware of discrimination, oppression and racial injustice. It means to be aware of the black-skinned experience in a nation built on slavery and inequality; three-fifths, to be exact; wholly unfair, made legal in

a document crafted by slave owners and religionists. Who knew? They did. The Black and indigenous people who were enslaved, defiled, humiliated, tortured and killed, hung from trees and murdered in the streets for infractions like offending the wrong person or defending the right one. Just this month, Kyle Bassinga, a 21-year-old college student in Georgia was strung up from a tree in Cobb County. It was ruled a suicide. Black men don't hang themselves from trees. Stay woke. That's American history.

I'd also like to describe what woke me up to the systemic inequality worldwide. I wasn't watching the news or reading another history book, I was lounging on the deck with my eyes closed. There was a sudden moment I felt connected to everyone and instantly understood that each and every one of us is a child of God, and that our Creator isn't bound by borders or defined centuries ago by men who had visions of privilege and power instead of universal oneness and global harmony. Every one of us carries the same human worth. Every one of us is bound up in the fate of the other. Whether one understands that through faith, through conscience or simply through lived experience, the conclusion is the same; we are all one. And when we become aware of one another's full humanity, something in us shifts, regardless of race, creed, class, gender, nationality or ability. We quit resisting a growing urge within us to be guided by the light of justice to make things right in our own reality and others. We all live in separate bubbles of our own making, and we sometimes share common truths and experiences, but individual truths and experiences will always change. There is one changeless truth that has guided me through life since that moment: What we do to others, we do to ourselves. Distance doesn't matter, and we justly invite peace into our lives and in that of others when we see them as our Creator sees them.

So, here's a lowercase truth. We're not all awake and we can't legislate the belief of equality onto those who insist on hitting the snooze button. But when we do understand the personal recognition of physical differences as a test and a gift rolled into one, we become truly free and we light the way for others. Stay woke.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with great disappointment that I rise, as I have many, if not all occasions that this particular Resolution has been brought forward. This is the same Resolution that we see year after year and my frustration with it grows more every time I see it, especially as we have continued discussions about the divisiveness and the separation in our country and how our words have meaning and how we should do more to come together and tone down the rhetoric, and then we put a Resolution like this, which will be recorded in the State records and, you know, I think people will look back historically and say, wow, look at the inflamed rhetoric that was put down in this.

And this is during a time when we're recognizing Black history, which was created as something of unity, so that everybody could learn about Black history and experience it. And that doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that we never talk about the bad stuff; we talk about the bad stuff, too; but this Resolution should be about accomplishments of Black people. And particularly when you look at a Resolution like this, and I'm going to dissect it a little bit, but this whole thing is a condemnation of the State of Maine and the people of Maine.

It says in the beginning there, 2,000 people of color lived in what is now called the State of Maine, and that's an interesting way of phrasing it, but prior to the year 1800, which was correct, because we were the State of Massachusetts prior to 1800. And one of those Black men was a man named Frazer who lived in Winter Harbor, he was the first settler of Winter Harbor. He had a saltworks, he married a Passamaquoddy woman, they had children, they had a saltworks there and everything was great, it was probably a pretty quiet place at that time. And to this day, that location is named after him, Frazer's Point. It's now on Acadia National Park, millions of people come there every year and visit.

But then it goes on talking about how 70 ships were built that were used in the slave trade, 26 towns, it says that they were complicit because they traded ice and saltfish for sugar and molasses. They engaged in trade, as did every other human on the planet at that time. And it condemns them, the people of Maine, for building barrels. Newsflash, we had timber, we built ships, we built barrels. That was how we participated in the economy at that time. But it says nothing about how the fact that the State of Maine was created out of abolition in the Missouri Compromise, that Maine was a Republican State full of abolitionists who were against slavery, that the white Christian people of Maine had a long history of doing everything within their power from way up here, separated many, many miles from the slave trade, to do what they could to stop slavery. And a state was created with two new senators and, I can't remember how many seats in Congress at the time, I think it was five or seven, that they sent to Washington, D.C. to do what they could to end slavery. There's no mention of that, and there's no mention of the long history of Mainers participating in the Underground Railroad. There were stops all over Maine. There's a memorial to it in Brewer, Maine, how the slaves were hid there and made it to freedom in Canada.

So, Maine has a long, great history of abolition and there's a lot of good actual Black history that we could've talked about that this has nothing to do with that, this is just divisive; as my Colleague over here said, divisive wokeness. Here is a Resolution that I've written, that I'm going to read, that I think should be the type of Resolution that we see.

Whereas, Maine Black history and the story of Maine's historical Black citizens and their accomplishments and contributions are barely remembered today; and

Whereas, Reuben Ruby, a Black man, was born in Gray in 1798; and

Whereas, Reuben was the first person in the State of Maine to have a taxi, then known as a hack, and one of the riders was William Lloyd Garrison, who was given a tour of Portland by Ruby before the Boston abolitionists joined the city's Black leaders at Ruby's home for dinner; and

Whereas, Ruby was only 29 when he became an agent of *Freedom's Journal*, the first African American owned newspaper in the country, and in October, 1834, he was the only Black among those representing the City of Portland at the forming of the Maine Anti-Slavery Society in Augusta; and

Whereas, Ruby was one of two Black people to represent Maine in the Fifth Annual Convention of the Improvement of the Free People of Color held in Philadelphia in 1835, the convention elected Ruby as its president; and

Whereas, the Maine native was elected a vice president of the American Moral Reform Society, a national group led by James Forten, a Black abolitionist from Philadelphia. In 1840, Ruby was elected president of the Manhattan Anti-Slavery Society in New York City; and

Whereas, Reuben Ruby's son, George Thompson Ruby, was the first Black graduate of Portland High School; and

Whereas, George was elected to the Texas State Senate during Reconstruction and was a delegate to the 1868 Republican National Convention in Chicago and the party's convention in Philadelphia four years later;

Whereas, the spot where Reuben Ruby's hack stand was located on the corner of Temple and Federal is recognized with a stone monument as part of Portland's Freedom Trail; and

Whereas, Lois Ann Dickson Fitt Rice, a Black woman, was born in the City of Portland and went on to become valedictorian of Portland High School in 1950 and president of Radcliff College in 1954. She became a national Vice President for the College Board, is considered the mother of the Pell Grant, a federal financial aid program that benefits millions of students each year; and

Whereas, in 1950, Lois's mother, Mary Daly Dickson, an immigrant, was named Maine's Mother of the Year, becoming the first Black woman to gain such an honor; and

Whereas, Lois Dickson Rice's legacy of achievement continues in her daughter, Susan Rice, who was U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, then National Security Advisor to Barack Obama Administration and has been tapped to run the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Joe Biden; and

Whereas, Maine has a long history of Black stories of accomplishment as well as suffering; and

Whereas, from the Revolutionary War through the Abolitionist Movement, the marches from Selma to Montgomery and across America today and in this State, African Americans in Maine have remained devoted to the proposition that all of us are created equal, even when their own rights were denied.

That's the type of Resolution I'd like to see, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SALISBURY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker; and thank you, I would like to offer a thank you to the Representative from Winter Harbor for reminding us what white privilege looks like and I request a Roll Call.

Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook **REQUESTED** a roll call on **ADOPTION**.

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

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

Representative **DHALAC**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One hundred years ago, in 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson became the father of Black history and launched a Negro History Week with a simple but powerful belief that a people without knowledge of their history are vulnerable to erasure. He understood that Black history is not a sidenote to American history, it is an American history. What began as a single week has grown into Black History Month and now, a century later, we pause not only to celebrate progress, but to reflect honestly on the journey.

Over these hundred years, Black Americans have shaped this nation in immeasurable ways through resilience in the face of enslavement, courage during segregation, leadership in the Civil Rights Movement and brilliance in every field imaginable; education, science, medicine, labor, art, public service and community building. Mr. Speaker, Black history is the story of people who fought to make democracy real even when it did not yet include them. It's the story of organizing when the law was unjust, voting when voting was dangerous, of loving this country enough to demand that it lived up to its promises.

Here in our State, Mr. Speaker, Black communities, many of them immigrants and refugees, continue that legacy. They are workers, caregivers, entrepreneurs, faith leaders, artists and elected officials. They are raised in families contributing to our economy and is strengthening the social fabric of Maine. Their stories matter, their presence matters. As we mark the Centennial, we must be clear; celebrating Black history is not about the past alone, it's about the present and the future we are building together. It calls on us to tell the truth of our history, even when it is uncomfortable. It challenges us to confront ongoing iniquities and it invites us to recommit ourselves to justice, dignity and opportunity to all.

Let this 100-year milestone be more than a commemoration, let it be a re-commitment to education, to inclusion and to policies that ensure every child in every community knows they belong and have the chance to thrive. I'm proud to stand here today honoring the generations who came before us, celebrating those who walk with us now and believe deeply in the generations still to come. May we continue this work not just this month, but every day of every year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SAYRE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are unprepared remarks. Hopefully they will not be untoward.

I'd like to thank the Good Representative from Winter Harbor for demonstrating how vitally important it is that we have Black History Month and that we have this Joint Resolution.

History, if done right, is difficult. History, if done right, raises troubling feelings. And the history of the relationship between the races in this nation is such troubling history. It should not be forgotten, it should not be whitewashed.

I see nothing in this Resolution that is divisive or inflamed. I see statements of fact. So, too, are the statements of fact that the Good Representative from Winter Harbor shared with us about exemplary individuals in our State whose memory should also be honored. But I would suggest that we not fall into the Jackie Robinson trap, where we extoll the one individual who managed to transcend and use that inspiring story to set aside the story of hardship, loss, suffering of the hundreds of other ballplayers who never were able to play in the Major Leagues because of the color bar, or those franchise owners who lost everything when Black players were finally admitted and the Negro Leagues folded. There's always more to the story than the one exemplary individual, and it is important to remember the full story, with its full impact, with a full community, which is what this Resolution aims to do.

I wanted to add two other quick additional points of fact. It is true that Maine was founded in 1820. It is also true that the Republican Party was founded in 1854. There were no Republicans when Maine was founded as a state. Further, I appreciate the Good Representative's sharing with us the history of local place names in honor of local residents, and this too is something that we need to recall in our local history. In my own town, there is an area that I cannot name on the floor of this Chamber. I will refer to it as N-word Ridge, which is the name for the location of a community of people of color who lived for approximately 30 or 40 years after emancipation, until the last member of that community passed away. It is a not perplexing problem of history why none of the residents of that community persisted in town, none were able to buy property in town.

So, I will close by simply saying history; where I began; history is difficult, history involves many different threads and we cannot let the pleasant story be the only story just because the full story makes us uncomfortable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just got to say I'm taken aback that an example of white privilege is standing up for several minutes and talking about the accomplishments of great Black people here from Maine. I am taken aback by that and the fact that you allowed it without saying anything about it, Mr. Speaker. Disgraceful. We talk about; it's just exactly what I was talking about, the way we talk to each other, the divisiveness, the rhetoric.

Was it white privilege for the 75,000 Mainers that went off to the Civil War? Was it a white privilege for the 9,000 that died? Was it a white privilege to be standing across the top of Little Round Top and have no ammunition left, with bullets flying at you and a charging gray hoard and told to put on a bayonet and run down the hill? Was that a white privilege?

It's just disgusting where we've come to this point in time, and I'd like to think it can get better, but it's not going to if we keep treating each other like this, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to vote no on the Resolution because I don't agree with the words that are in it.

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

Representative **CLUCHEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to stand and very quickly say that I am very grateful for my colleagues that put forward this Resolution. I am supportive of the language that is included. I'm grateful to my colleagues Rep. DeBrito, Rep. Macias, Rep. Dhalac, Rep. Sayre, who have spoken so eloquently in support of Black Americans and Black History Month. I am incredibly horrified that the Representative from Winter Harbor chose to make this political. It is embarrassing and absolutely the opposite of --

Representative **LIBBY**: Point of Order.

The SPEAKER: The Chair inquires as to the objection from the Representative from Auburn.

Representative **LIBBY**: It seems abundantly clear to me that the Representative is assuming intent in her words, and I would ask the Speaker to deal with that, as he has not to this point. Thank you.

On **POINT OF ORDER,** Representative LIBBY of Auburn objected to the comments of Representative CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham because she was questioning the motives of other Members of the House.

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

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

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **CLUCHEY**: I think people's words can speak for themselves.

Again, I'm grateful for my colleagues. I wish this didn't have to make headline news probably, but now it probably will as political theater. We hear so much about how we shouldn't make things divisive and how we shouldn't make things political, and then just the hypocrisy that is then spoken with the next words out of --

Representative **LIBBY**: Point of Order.

The SPEAKER: The Chair will inquire as to why the Representative from Auburn rises.

Representative **LIBBY**: I think that using the word hypocrisy, referring to other's words in the Chamber is probably impugning the character, Mr. Speaker.

On **POINT OF ORDER,** Representative LIBBY of Auburn objected to the comments of Representative CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham because she was questioning the motives of other Members of the House.

The SPEAKER: The Chair will remind the Member to not characterize the words of other Members.

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

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **CLUCHEY**: Okay. I mean, I think the words speak for themselves and I think everybody knows the definition of hypocrisy and can take it from there. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair has given a reminder to the Member several times. The Chair would ask that the Member respect the decision of the Chair when provided direction on her comments. Thank you.

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

Representative MOONEN of Portland assumed the Chair.

The House was called to order by the Speaker Pro Tem.

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

Representative **FECTEAU**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. There's a lot I think that needs to be unpacked here, but I think the points that I want to make just real quickly.

The Joint Resolution before us provides a commentary on the history that is being recognized in this Resolution. It is, of course, not the entirety of the history of Black people in the State of Maine or in this country or in this world. That would be impossible. There are not enough Whereases to capture the history. I think where we went sort of afield here today is by criticizing the Whereases that are in this Joint Resolution, which are recognizing a real history that occurred, and instead of taking the opportunity to provide commentary that is an addendum to the history that's reflected in this Joint Resolution, there was criticism of the content of this Resolution. I think that is the challenge that we face here today.

This is real history, but so is the history that was outlined by the Representative from Winter Harbor. But what makes those people extraordinary, what makes those people extraordinary that were mentioned by the Representative from Winter Harbor is that they were able to do those things after this history that's outlined in the Joint Resolution. That's what makes it extraordinary. It wouldn't be extraordinary if all of this history that is outlined in this Joint Resolution did not happen in this country or in this State. That's what makes them not just ordinary Americans.

Representative **THORNE**: Point of Order.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Member will defer. The Chair inquires as to the Member's Point of Order.

Representative **THORNE**: The tone in which we are being spoken to, we're being yelled at.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair would remind all Members to keep their tone decorous, although the Chair does not agree that yours was not. The Member may continue.

Representative **FECTEAU**: I think people have spoken with a great deal of passion in this Chamber before.

So, I will conclude my remarks by just saying that by building bridges, whether it be on the topic of Black history, race, whatever it may be, I think the first starting point is not criticize the history that is outlined in this Joint Resolution, that was drafted by Members of this Body and of the Other Chamber who are Black. I would like to defer to those folks on what they think this Joint Resolution should state. But that does not mean that Representatives in this Body; the Representative from Winter Harbor and anyone else; shouldn't be able to stand up on this floor and speak to what this Joint Resolution could not capture, which is many more people, many more organizations, many more entities who have done amazing things despite the ugliness that preexisted some of the extraordinary things that they accomplished. That is what we should be celebrating today. That is what this conversation should've been like in this Chamber.

I'm sorry that it got to the point where it got, but I think it's a lesson learned and I hope it's a step forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Representative from Winter Harbor, Representative Faulkingham, having spoken twice requests unanimous consent to address the House for a third time. Hearing no objection, the Member may proceed.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, so, a few moments ago, I felt personally attacked, and I still do, but I shouldn't let my pride interfere with my better judgment or interfere with other people's better judgment.

I can't question, you know, the motives of the Sponsor of this, I think highly of her, and I guarantee there wasn't as much thought put into this as I may have assessed. I still contend that the entirety of this Resolution is a condemnation on the people of Maine, the white people of Maine at that time, and honestly, none of it is really about; it doesn't have anything about Black accomplishments, but you know what, maybe it doesn't have to. Obviously, obviously, it has been a very divisive debate, but I'm not going to let my pride get in the way of passing this Resolution, so, I'm going to vote yes for it and if I am in the Legislature again in another session, I will try to work with people to come up with a better Resolution. I think that's the proper way to move forward from this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bridgton, Representative Cimino.

Representative **CIMINO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look at this Resolution and I see that it, to me, it only touts the bad part of history. And I am not afraid of history. I think if we forget history, we're destined to repeat it. So, I appreciate the history that's in here, but I also think that if we are trying to uplift, I think we need to show the accomplishments of Black people. And while Representative Faulkingham primarily listed one person and the genealogy of that one person, there are so many instances of Black accomplishments in Maine. And I think that to uplift should be what these Resolutions do. And we should not only be presenting the bad part of history, but also the good part of history and what that bad part of history actually created that good.

So, I don't support this Resolution the way it's written. I would hope that in the future there's some bipartisan input on this type of a Resolution, because I think it's something we all feel. So, those are my comments, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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

Representative **ROEDER**: Thank you so much. I will start by saying anyone can put in any Resolution they choose, and I welcome everyone to do so, since there seems to be quite a lot of feelings from people on Black History Month.

I wanted to share another Whereas. Whereas, slavery throughout its entire existence in the United States is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion, the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment and hopeless servitude or absolute extermination, in utter disregard and violation of those eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence. That is from John Brown. Thank you.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 624

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Arford, Beck, Bell, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Carlow, Caruso, Cluchey, Cooper, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Ducharme, Eaton, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Foster, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Guerrette, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Libby, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Webb, White J, Wood P, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Ardell, Cimino, Drinkwater, Flynn, Lance, Lavigne, Paul, Perkins, Underwood, Walker.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Bagshaw, Bishop, Campbell, Chapman, Collamore, Collins, Copeland, Crafts, Crockett, Eder, Foley, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Haggan, Hymes, Jackson, Lanigan, Lemelin, Lyman, Osher, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Schmersal-Burgess, Skold, Soboleski, Supica, Wadsworth, Warren, White R, Wood S.

Yes, 100; No, 10; Absent, 38; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

100 having voted in the affirmative and 10 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 38 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED** in concurrence.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 366)

SENATE OF MAINE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 12, 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 Tanya Emery of Bangor to the *Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission*, effective immediately.
On this board, she will serve as a member of the commission from a statewide association representing municipalities.
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. 367)

SENATE OF MAINE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 18, 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 5, MRSA, Chapter 163, §2003, I am pleased to reappoint Mal Carey of Newcastle to the *Maine Library of Geographic Information Board*, effective February 28.
With this reappointment, Mr. Carey will continue to serve as a member of the public appointed by the Senate President.
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. 368)

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

February 17, 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 Education and Cultural Affairs from its review and evaluation of the Maine Community College System under the State Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35.
The committee finds that the Maine Community College System is operating within its statutory authority.
Sincerely,
S/Sen. Joseph Rafferty
Senate Chair
S/Rep. Kelly Noonan Murphy
House Chair

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 369)

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

February 18, 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 Education and Cultural Affairs from its review and evaluation of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy under the State Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35.
The committee finds that the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy is operating within its statutory authority.
Sincerely,
S/Sen. Joseph Rafferty
Senate Chair
S/Rep. Kelly Noonan Murphy
House Chair

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 370)

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

February 18, 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:
Pursuant to State Government Evaluation Act ("the GEA"), Title 3, chapter 35 of the Maine Revised Statutes, we are pleased to submit the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services resulting from a review and evaluation of the State Employee Health Commission ("the Commission") under the GEA. As a result of our review, the committee finds that the State Employee Health Commission is operating within its statutory authority.

We want to commend the Commission for the work it is doing as fiduciaries and good stewards of the group health plan provided to State employees and other ancillary groups. The committee appreciates the Commission's ongoing analysis and evaluation of the group health plan and other health and wellness programs and willingness to make changes based on that analysis and evaluation. The committee believes these efforts provide meaningful benefits to the individuals covered under these programs and the State's taxpayers.

Sincerely,
S/Sen. Donna Bailey
Senate Chair
S/Rep. Kristi M. Mathieson
House Chair

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 371)

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

February 24, 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:"

Health and Human Services

L.D. 1835 An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation

Judiciary

L.D. 1572 An Act Regarding Prosecution Standards for Nonfatal Strangulation or Suffocation in Domestic Violence Cases

L.D. 2120 An Act to Enable Survivors of Abuse to Disable Connected Vehicle Services

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

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 372)

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

February 24, 2026
Honorable Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear Clerk Hunt:

Please be advised that pursuant to her authority, Governor Janet T. Mills has nominated the following:

on February 19, 2026

William Benson of Gorham for appointment, and Jane L. Lincoln of Farmingdale and Thomas J. Zuke of Saco for reappointment to the Maine Turnpike Authority Board of Directors.

Pursuant to Title 23, MRSA §1964-A, this appointment and reappointments are contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation.

Curtis Haycock of Millbridge and Jeffrey Reardon of Manchester for reappointment, and Ryan Raber of Falmouth for appointment to the Marine Resources Advisory Council.

Pursuant to Title 12 MRSA §6024, these nominations are contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources.

Sincerely,
S/Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 365)

LORING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF MAINE
119 WEINMAN ROAD
LIMESTONE, MAINE 04750

February 1, 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 annual report from the Loring Development Authority of Maine, due by February 1, 2026. Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Respectfully submitted,
S/Jonathan M. Judkins
President & CEO

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

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

Representative MILLIKEN of Blue Hill moved that the House stand **ADJOURNED**.

Representative HENDERSON of Rumford **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ADJOURN**.

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

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Point of Order.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Phillips, Representative Soboleski, and inquires as to his Point of Order.

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier you said that that motion was not in order, and then you called for a Roll Call and went to the vote. So, what is it? Is it not in order, or is it?

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair said that a motion to Adjourn is always in order.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 625

YEA - Ankeles, Arata, Arford, Beck, Bell, Boyer M, Bridgeo, Cluchey, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Farrin, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Graham, Gramlich, Hepler, Julia, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lookner, Macias, Malon, Matlack, McCabe, Meyer, Milliken, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, Pugh, Rana, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Stover, Terry, Warren, Webb, Yusuf.

NAY - Albert, Ardell, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer D, Brennan, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Dill, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Faircloth, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gifford, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hymes, Kessler, Lance, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Ray, Roberts, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Walker, White J, Wood P, Wood S, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Archer, Babin, Bishop, Collamore, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Foley, Friedmann, Golek, Greenwood, Jackson, Lanigan, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Osher, Parry, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sargent, Skold, Supica, Wadsworth, White R, Woodsome D.

Yes, 51; No, 67; Absent, 30; Vacant, 2; Excused, 1.

51 having voted in the affirmative and 67 voted in the negative, 2 vacancy with 30 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the motion to **ADJOURN FAILED**.

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

On motion of Representative FECTEAU of Biddeford, the House adjourned at 2:40 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 26, 2026, in honor and lasting tribute to the Honorable Jeffrey Evangelos of Friendship, Isaac Kenneth Beal of Beals, Kenneth "Kenny" Leaton Weber, Jr. of Franklin, Valaree Jean Langley-Foss of Canaan, Eugene Keith Fogg of Lowell and Verna Hammond of Belgrade.