MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
14th Legislative Day
Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Representative DOUDERA of Camden assumed the Chair.

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

Prayer by Honorable Ann Higgins Matlack, St. George.

National Anthem by Patrick Vanmeter, Gorham Middle School.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Medical Provider of the Day, Minda Gold, MD, FAAFP, Damariscotta.

The Journal of Thursday, March 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:

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 398)

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

March 17, 2026
Honorable Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear Speaker Fecteau:
Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the following Joint Standing Committees have voted unanimously to report the following bills out "Ought Not to Pass:"
Criminal Justice and Public Safety
L.D. 2086 An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Authority of the Governor to Set Salary Rates for State Police Command Staff
Judiciary
L.D. 1259 An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement
Sincerely,
S/Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 399)

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

March 17, 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 Joint Standing Committee on Labor has approved the requests for "Leave to Withdraw" by the following sponsor:
Senator Tipping of Penobscot
L.D. 571 An Act to Improve Conditions for Maine Workers and Retirees
L.D. 574 An Act to Improve Labor Conditions for Workers in the State
Sincerely,
S/Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 400)

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

March 17, 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 March 10, 2026

Honorable Richard Rosen of Bucksport for appointment to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees.
Pursuant to Title 5, MRSA §12004-C, this appointment is contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

on March 13, 2026

Christopher C. Taub, Esq. of Brunswick for appointment as a Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.
Pursuant to Article V, Part First, §8, of the Maine Constitution, this appointment is contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.
The Honorable Julia Greenleaf Pitney of Yarmouth for appointment as a Justice of the Maine Superior Court.
Pursuant to Article V, Part First, §8, of the Maine Constitution, this nomination is contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.
The Honorable John P. O'Neil, Jr. for appointment as an Active Retired Justice of the Maine Superior Court.
Pursuant to Article V, Part First, §8, of the Maine Constitution, this nomination is contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

Arnold S. Clark, Esq. of Calais and Raphaelle A. Silver of Bangor for appointment as Judges of the Maine District Court.
Pursuant to Article V, Part First, §8, of the Maine Constitution, these nominations are contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

on March 16, 2026

The Honorable Emily Ann Cain of Orono for reappointment to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees.
Pursuant to Title 5, MRSA §12004-C, this reappointment is contingent on confirmation by the Maine State Senate after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.
Sincerely,
S/Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House

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

The Following Communication: (S.C. 872)

MAINE SENATE
132ND LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

March 12, 2026
Honorable Ryan Fecteau
Speaker of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0002
Dear Speaker Fecteau:
In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A. §158 and Joint Rule 506 of the 132nd Maine Legislature, please be advised that the Senate today confirmed the following nominations:
Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

- Matthew S. Colpitts of Winthrop for reappointment, to the Maine Retirement Savings Board,
- Rebecca M. Wyke, Ed.D. of Augusta for reappointment, to the Maine Retirement Savings Board.

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Transportation:

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

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

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING REFERENCE
Pursuant to Statute
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Representative PLUECKER for the **Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 8072 asks leave to report that the accompanying Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 348: Exemption for On-farm Raising, Slaughter, and Processing of Less than 1,000 Ready-to-cook Whole Poultry, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 1513) (L.D. 2238)

Be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** and printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

The Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Resolve was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** 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 Resolve, to Direct the Department of Corrections to Study Alternative Methods for Operating County Jails

(H.P. 1511) (L.D. 2235)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 73, section 2.

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

Sent for concurrence.

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

Representative ROBERTS for the **Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife** on Bill "An Act Regarding Public Records Maintained by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife"

(H.P. 1512) (L.D. 2236)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** pursuant to Resolve 2025, chapter 37, section 6.

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

Sent for concurrence.

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

SPECIAL SENTIMENT CALENDAR

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

Recognizing:

Walter Ridlon, of Lewiston, on his retirement after 60 years of service as an educator, including service as a teacher and coach at Mt. View High School and Gorham High School, as a principal at Sacopee Valley High School, as Director of Career Pathways at Central Maine Community College and currently as the Student Services Coordinator at Lake Region Vocational Center. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(HLS 605)

Presented by Representative WADSWORTH of Hiram.
Cosponsored by Senator ROTUNDO of Androscoggin, Representative ABDI of Lewiston, Representative HARRIMAN of Lewiston, Representative LAJOIE of Lewiston, Representative MCCABE of Lewiston.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative WADSWORTH of Hiram, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Hiram, Representative Wadsworth.

Representative **WADSWORTH**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is absolutely a special one today. I rise to recognize a man who spent the last 60 years as a cornerstone of Maine's educational and athletic communities and a man I am lucky enough to have known as a mentor, a coach and a guide.

We often talk in this Chamber about long-term impact of our policies, but if you want to see what long-term impact really looks like, in human form, look at Walter Ridlon. Mr. Ridlon is a legend in Maine sports, a Championship-winning Ram from Gorham High, an MVP Hilltopper at Gorham State and a Husky alum. He is known as the 1974 Maine Basketball Coach of the Year and a Gorham High Sports Hall of Fame Inductee. The University of Southern Maine recognized his lifelong commitment by naming him the 2020 recipient of the Richard A. Costello Special Achievement Award, given to a USM graduate who has distinguished him or herself from their commitment to student athletes and athletes.

In the classroom, Mr. Ridlon earned the Presidential Scholars Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award and was a nominee for the Walt Disney Teacher of the Year Award. But for those of us who sat in his classrooms, played on his teams, Mr. Ridlon was more than that list of accolades. Whether he was serving as a teacher at Mount View, as a principal at Sacopee Valley; my principal; and most recently as a student services coordinator at Lake Region Vocational Center, he was the consummate educator. He didn't just teach subjects, he taught character. He didn't just coach plays, he coached life.

Madam Speaker, it's a rare and humbling thing to stand on this floor as a State Representative and realize that I'm here in part because of the foundation laid by a teacher whose career has spanned six decades. Walter Ridlon continues to ensure that Maine's youth have the tools, the confidence and the discipline to succeed. As he prepares for the next journey in life, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to Walter Ridlon. Walter, thank you for your unwavering devotion to the people of Maine. We wish you a long and happy retirement.

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

Recognizing:

Annie Watson, of Whitefield, who received the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry 2026 Commissioner's Distinguished Service Award. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;

(HLS 612)

Presented by Representative FARRIN of Jefferson.
Cosponsored by Senator RENY of Lincoln.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative FARRIN of Jefferson, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Jefferson, Representative Farrin.

Representative **FARRIN**: Thank you, Madam Speaker Pro Tem. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Commissioner's Distinguished Service Award for 2026. That's quite a thing. I'd like to congratulate my new friend, Annie Watson of Whitefield.

Annie and her husband, Mike Moody, bought the Sheepscot Farm, or known as the Tibbett's Farm, on Townhouse Road in 2013, and are raising their three sons with a herd of 160 cows, milking around 30 of them each and every day. They also use the hay fields around the surrounding towns around their farm, totaling around 400 acres. She has been President of the Maine Dairy Farms Industry Association since 2022, representing 131 dairy farms in 15 counties throughout Maine. I congratulate her on this prestigious award.

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

In Memory of:

Christina Mary (Hanson) St. Pierre, of China and formerly of Augusta and Vassalboro. Mrs. St. Pierre had a 39-year career with Maine Municipal Association. She retired in 2020 as Director of Information Technology and Group Services. Raised on the family farm, Mrs. St. Pierre had a lifelong love of Maine's natural beauty and pristine environment. Mrs. St. Pierre will be long remembered and sadly missed by her family, friends and community;

(HLS 606)

Presented by Representative BRIDGEO of Augusta.
Cosponsored by Senator BRADSTREET of Kennebec, Representative SMITH of Palermo.

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

READ.

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

Representative **BRIDGEO**: Thank you, Madam Speaker Pro Tem. Just a few words about an old and dear friend, Christina St. Pierre.

As you heard, Christina spent 39 years as the glue that held the Maine Municipal Association together, frankly, in her capacity as a; typically, second in command of that organization, and I know there must be members in this Chamber who have had interaction and affiliation with the Maine Municipal Association over the years. Certainly, the Representative from Farmington can attest to the great loss that we all experienced when we learned of the sudden and unexpected passing of Christina this few months ago with her husband, Ralph St. Pierre, by her side.

In addition to knowing her through her work at the Maine Municipal Association, I was a good friend of Christina's. Her husband, Ralph, was my wingman for 15 years, at least, as Assistant City Manager in Augusta, and we enjoyed many, many great times together, Ralph and Christina and my wife, Janice and I. And we all miss her. She was a very special person. She was a proud Mainer, raised, as it says, on the family farm in Vassalboro and feisty, feisty as can be. She had a tattoo on the calf of her leg before tattoos were popular in any way, shape or manner, and as I stand here today and I think about her, I appreciate everything that she gave to our State, to her family and to her friends, and may she rest in peace. Thank you.

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

In Memory of:

Dale Leon Cushman, of Augusta. Mr. Cushman had a career at Noyes Tire in Augusta, which he managed for over 40 years, building and maintaining relationships across central Maine. An athlete, he played softball and volleyball for G&E Roofing, coached his sons in baseball and supported their athletic pursuits through college. Mr. Cushman will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family, friends and community;

(HLS 607)

Presented by Representative BRIDGEO of Augusta.

Cosponsored by Senator BRADSTREET of Kennebec, Representative ROLLINS of Augusta.

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

READ.

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

Representative **BRIDGEO**: Thank you, Madam Speaker Pro Tem. Dale Cushman represented about the best of what the community of Augusta had to offer, as a native of the community and a long-time actively involved member of our community. I'm going to do what Dale would've enjoyed, because he was really heavy into sports throughout his entire life, and that is I'm going to pass the ball to my teammate, Representative Rollins, who, if you will indulge him, I'm sure has more to say about our friend, Dale.

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Augusta, Representative Rollins.

Representative **ROLLINS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker Pro Tem. Ms. Speaker, I rise today to share with the State of Maine a life well lived. Recently, here in Augusta, we lost a special member of our community, Dale Cushman. If the true meaning of life is to fill your time with simple pleasures, Dale lived a life full of such moments. Not that he was a simple man; *au contraire*; he just lived a simple life to the max.

I quote from his obituary. First of all, Dale grew up with a type 1 diabetes diagnosis at the age of 14. That never slowed him down, that never stopped him. "After being voted as 'Most Athletic' for his 1970 class at Cony High School, Dale attended the University of Maine at Orono, playing baseball his freshman year. He went on to earn a business degree in 1974. While in Orono, he was a prolific participant in intramural and recreational sports, including representing the University of Maine at the ping pong national championships in consecutive years. He was also in college where he excelled socially, something he carried with him the rest of his life.

"After paying for college with picking chickens at Lipman Poultry;" and to be sure, I don't mean on the production line taking chicken apart, I mean out at the farm, grabbing chickens and stuffing them in cages and loading flatbeds, not pretty work. After that, "Dale started his career at Noyes Tire in Augusta, Maine. While there were several different owners and names;" Noyes Tire, Goodyear Tire, Haley Tire, Sullivan Tire; Dale always came with the business and he "managed the store for over 40 years, building and maintaining relationships with the Central Maine community in a most endearing way. Dale also left an indelible mark on his employees, several of whom are lifelong friends and remained in touch with him until his passing.

"Dale was a man who embraced life with enthusiasm and humor. Known affectionately as 'Quill,' 'The Zoidman' or 'The Alley Cat,' he was a true character, always ready with a joke or a barb and often the life of the gathering. His penchant for good-natured ribbing was only matched by his athleticism and competitive spirit. Whether it was racquetball, tennis, ping pong, golf or backyard games like horseshoes, monkey ball or cornhole, Quill played with an uncanny skill and passion and often full-on verbal assault of his opponents.

"Often donning shorts, a 'loud' shirt and Chuck Taylors, Dale was a fixture in Maine gymnasiums and on athletic fields for years. He played softball and volleyball for G&E Roofing, coached his two sons in baseball and later transitioned to support the boys' athletic [pursuits] through college;" sent two children to Colby and Dartmouth. "When his boys were done playing, he went into full Grampy mode, faithfully cheering on all six of his grandchildren as they explored their own athletic passions. He could easily recite the grandkids' statistics, marveling at the number of points, goals, hits and runs in each game.

"His favorite times are the five months of the year spent at Cobbossee Lake, where he was head grounds keeper, maintenance guy, entertainer, underwater anchorman and fire chief. Later, Dale taught the six grandchildren how to enjoy life at the lake. This part cannot be overstated."

I played basketball and baseball with Dale in high school and in Legion baseball. When I think back to my memories of Quill, I go back to Little League baseball and the day I was faced with my inner fears. I was nine years old, first-year Little Leaguer. Quill was a 12-year-old veteran capable of playing at higher levels with teenagers. A fierce left-handed hitter, he could and often would tear the top off of a ball. I was positioned at second base and aware that he could rip one right at me. I had to muster up all the courage I could and get down and get ready. As fate would have it, he did rip one right at me, a scorching ground ball that again happened his second time at bat. Both times, I fielded the ball cleanly, got it out of my glove and was able to throw out "The Mighty Quill" by one step at first base. There were no headlines, there was no coaches or parents' reaction, just a young boy coming to terms with his own self-doubts and growing from the experience to muster up courage. I do not think I ever had another moment where I didn't have courage to face circumstances before me.

Thank you, Dale Cushman, for being a great member of our community, a great teammate and making me a better athlete. You will be truly missed.

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

In Memory of:

William Ernest Clark, of Skowhegan. Wearing many hats over his life, Mr. Clark worked as a farmer on the family farm, in door-to-door milk delivery and finally as an insurance agent. For over 40 years, he owned and operated the William E. Clark Insurance Agency. He was a member of the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry and held many offices at the state and local levels over 75 years. Passionate about buying, tinkering with and selling antique tractors, he was a founder of and major contributor to the Maine Antique Tractor Club. In 2019, he was inducted into the National Hall of Fame of the Early Gas Engine and Tractor Association, Inc. in recognition of his work preserving, collecting and exhibiting antique machinery. Mr. Clark will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family, friends and community;

(HLS 608)

Presented by Representative POIRIER of Skowhegan.
Cosponsored by Senator FARRIN of Somerset.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative POIRIER of Skowhegan, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

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

Representative **POIRIER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise today to recognize and honor the life and accomplishments of Willliam E. Clark of Skowhegan, a man whose lifelong commitment to his community, his neighbors and the State of Maine left a meaningful and enduring legacy.

Bill was a proud lifelong resident of Skowhegan and a steadfast believer in the strength and character of Maine's small towns. Through both his professional work and his civic involvement, he demonstrated the values that define Somerset County; hard work, integrity and a deep sense of responsibility to one's community. He owned and operated William E. Clark Insurance Agency in Skowhegan for over 40 years, a business that served generations of local families and other businesses. Through his work in the insurance industry, he provided not only professional guidance and security to his clients, but also the reassurance that comes from doing business with someone who genuinely cares about the people he serves. His office was more than a place of business; it was a place where neighbors helped neighbors and where trust and personal relationships mattered.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Bill also played an important role in preserving and celebrating Maine's agricultural heritage. He was a farmer on the family farm and he was the founder of the Maine Antique Tractor Club, an organization dedicated to restoring, preserving and showcasing the machinery that helped build Maine's farming communities. Through this effort, he brought together generations of enthusiasts, historians and farmers who shared a love of the State's rural traditions. His leadership helped ensure that the history and craftsmanship of antique farm equipment would be remembered and appreciated for years to come. You could easily identify Bill's property when traveling down Route 104 in Skowhegan. It's a place known to locals as Clark's Hill and it has about every John Deere tractor imaginable.

Those who knew Bill remember him not only for what he achieved, but for the kind of person he was. He was a thoughtful neighbor, a dependable friend and someone whose words carried weight. He approached life with humility and quiet dedication, always willing to lend his time, his knowledge and his support to others. His life reminds us that the strength of our communities depends on people who are willing to step forward and serve, whether through business, civic involvement or preserving the traditions that connect us to our past.

Today, I want to recognize William E. Clark's life of service and express my gratitude for the many ways he contributed to the community of Skowhegan and to our State. I also want to recognize that above all else, Bill put his family first. He was a loving husband, a Dad and the best Grandpa to his grand and great-grandchildren. I know they'll forever cherish his memory, his great smile and the hugs that he gave. May we honor his memory by carrying forward the same spirit of service, community and respect for Maine's heritage that exemplified who Bill was. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matters, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment Thursday, March 12, 2026, had preference in the Orders of the Day and continued with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

Expression of Legislative Sentiment Recognizing People Plus, of Brunswick

(SLS 1642)

- In Senate, **READ** and **PASSED**.

TABLED - February 26, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative ARFORD of Brunswick.

PENDING - **PASSAGE**.

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

Representative **ARFORD**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your patience with me and for the opportunity to speak at this moment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Please join me in celebrating the 50th anniversary of People Plus, a Brunswick-based service organization which has absolutely excelled at supporting Maine people with dignity and care, creating opportunities for young and old alike to learn, grow and thrive.

Yes, for 50 years, People Plus has been serving the people of Brunswick and surrounding communities. I've heard many, many times how beloved People Plus is by all who benefit from their services in the communities of Brunswick, Harpswell, Topsham, Bowdoin, Durham and Bath. Their services, which are offered to older adults at the People Plus Community Center and youth grades six through 12 at Brunswick's Coffin School building, are nothing short of amazing. They include over one million visits to the Community Center, in-home services, nutrition and pharmaceutical deliveries, free durable medical equipment and providing over 265,000 miles of free transportation to homebound seniors since opening their doors 50 years ago. I also know from personal experience that for all who live in the People Plus service district, on your birthday, if you would like a call to wish you a happy one, just join up and you will receive a wonderful congratulatory happy call.

I will close with a shoutout to Stacy Frizzle-Edgerton, who has served as the Executive Director of the People Plus for 15 years. Stacy, along with a group of People Plus members, including two representing their board, are with us today in the

Gallery to celebrate their 50th, their Golden Anniversary. Congratulations.

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

Representative **ANKELES**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wanted to say what a great job the Representative from Brunswick did articulating all the ways in which People Plus is such a key part of social infrastructure in our region, particularly with respect to older residents and, in the case of the teen center, younger residents, one of those being my son, Sam, my 12-year-old, who after school often goes there with his friends and has a fun place to go after school while I am stuck up here and can't parent him.

So, I am just thrilled with everything they have been doing for our community for so long. I'm so glad that they were able to make the trip up to Augusta today. It's nice for all of us to be able to welcome them here and show them that we're grateful that they do a lot of the hard work on the ground while we're here making policy to help facilitate that. Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

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

Representative **MACIAS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker Pro Tem. I'm grateful to praise People Plus today. They have quietly done something simple but essential. They connect people across generations. They help older adults live independently, makes sure someone gets to their doctor appointment and creates spaces where people can gather, learn and stay active, ensuring that no one in this community feels forgotten.

At its core, their mission is about dignity. Being seen, being valued and staying connected, no matter your age or circumstance. In Brunswick and Topsham, two towns bound by shared history and a tradition of looking out for one another, People Plus has lived that value every day with consistency, compassion and people showing up for each other without fanfare. They don't just offer services, they build community, measured by how we care for one another. So, I say well done. My question now is: How do we replicate this in every town? Thank you.

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

The SPEAKER PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Caratunk, Representative Caruso, who wishes to address the House on the record.

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Madam Speaker Pro Tem and Fellow Members of the House. It's an honor to rise today because in the Gallery, I'd like to recognize the Kennebec Valley High School Girls and Boys Class S State Championship Basketball Teams for their hard work and awesome achievements this season.

If you haven't heard of Class S, it's because it's a new division created for schools with under 100 students, and out of the 64 high school students at the Kennebec Valley High School, which serves rural towns of Bingham, Moscow, Pleasant Ridge, Concord, Caratunk, Athens and Solon, 12 of those 64 are on the girls basketball team, 13 are on the boys basketball team. They are leaders in the school both academically and athletically.

Now, it has only happened five times before that one high school has both their boys and girls as Champions. Their families, schools and communities couldn't be more proud of these players. You could feel it on the courts at every game. And at the Civic Center for the Regional and Championship games, nearly one whole side was blue, with Valley fans turning out in droves and that's why I'm wearing blue today.

Now, you may feel like this is a little *déjà vu* for the girls to be here, and you're right. Last year, we honored this team's perfect season and Gold Ball as Class D Champions. This year, we honor this Class S State Championship team with their 21-1 record. They averaged 73.2 points each game and gave up an average of only 28 points. That's a point spread of 45. And they completed the last three seasons with a record of 64-2.

A special congratulations to senior co-captain Kirsten Bigelow. She surpassed her 1,000th point this year. Kirsten, along with sophomores Delia Hill, Liana Hartwell, were East-West All-Stars, and junior Brianna Mills and freshman RyLee Clark received honorable mentions. The first four girls were also on the All-Tournament team for the Division, and Liana was named the Southern Maine Tournament MVP.

I also would like to acknowledge their coaches, Head Coach Gordon Hartwell, a long-time Valley coach, had 287 career wins. He was named the 2025 Class S Coach of the Year. He was assisted by Assistant Coach Crystal Rollins, a middle-school English teacher, whose leadership has greatly contributed to their success.

Madam Speaker, these young women have not only brought pride to their school and community, but they are an inspirational model to young girls competing for athletic success. In fact, many of them showed their courage last session by standing up for their convictions on fairness and safety in girls sports and by testifying at the public hearing.

It's also my honor to rise today and recognize the Kennebec Valley Boys Class S State Champion basketball team. This is the eighth Gold Ball that the Valley Cavaliers boys have won. The last time was 10 years ago in 2016. Preparing since mid-June of last year, this team of 13 boys competed with and won against Class A, B, C and D teams while preparing for this season. Ending with a 20-2 record, their only losses came from the top-seeded Class D and C teams. They defeated Easton at the Northern Maine Championship at the Civic Center last month.

This hardworking team averaged 75 points per game while only allowing an average of 46, with a 32-point margin of victory. Also this year, two of the three seniors ended their careers by beating the all-time scoring record for Valley High School. Harry Louis ended his career with a total of 1,807 points, taking second place on the list. And Fisher Tewksbury is now Valley High School's new all-time scoring champion with 1,845 career points. After five years of these boys playing together in a total of 102 games, they only end up 38 points apart. Harry Louis, Fisher Tewksbury and junior Levi Short were All East-West Conference All-Stars.

I'd also like to honor their coaches, Head Coach Mike Staples, a local business owner who also coaches the boys' soccer team with quite a few of the same boys, and Assistant Coaches were Darin and Dylan Bean. They were a huge support to these boys. And for all these coaches, I could see from the stands the impact that they had on their players.

So, for all these reasons, on behalf of the Chamber, the House of Representatives, I say congratulations to the Valley Cavaliers State Champions for your hard work, talent, team play and two unforgettable seasons.

Expression of Legislative Sentiment Recognizing Rebecca Young, of Caratunk

(SLS 1658)

- In Senate, **READ** and **PASSED**.

TABLED - March 3, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative CARUSO of Caratunk.

PENDING - **PASSAGE**.

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

Expression of Legislative Sentiment Recognizing Ben Towle, of Caratunk

(SLS 1659)

- In Senate, **READ** and **PASSED**.

TABLED - March 3, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative CARUSO of Caratunk.

PENDING - **PASSAGE**.

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

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

The House was called to order by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair wishes to thank the Representative from Camden, Representative Doudera, for her service as Speaker Pro Tem and her four consecutive terms as a State Representative.

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

ENACTORS

Emergency Measure

An Act Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs and Pulling Events

(H.P. 1411) (L.D. 2096)
(C. "A" H-823)

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. 105 voted in favor of the same and 3 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Clarify and Strengthen the Government Shutdown Loan Guarantee Program

(H.P. 1417) (L.D. 2102)
(C. "A" H-826)

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. 102 voted in favor of the same and 16 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Acts

An Act Regarding the Inclusion of Racial and Other Demographic Data from State Agencies in the Legislative Process

(S.P. 274) (L.D. 590)
(C. "A" S-502)

An Act to Facilitate the Development of Ambulatory Surgical Facilities by Increasing the Monetary Threshold for Certain Facilities Under the Requirement to Obtain a Certificate of Need and to Index the Threshold Annually Thereafter

(H.P. 1261) (L.D. 1890)
(C. "A" H-827)

An Act to Increase the Annual Cap on Funds Assessed for the Safety Education and Training Fund

(S.P. 806) (L.D. 1993)
(C. "A" S-524)

An Act to Improve Localization of Emergency Broadcast Messaging

(S.P. 819) (L.D. 2003)
(C. "A" S-526)

An Act to Update Certain Statutes Governing School Nutrition

(H.P. 1347) (L.D. 2017)
(C. "A" H-829)

An Act to Clarify Activities Allowed Under the Natural Resources Protection Act

(S.P. 851) (L.D. 2063)
(C. "A" S-508)

An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Municipal Reporting on Residential Buildings

(H.P. 1394) (L.D. 2079)

An Act to Clarify Contractual Rights of Personal Sports Mobile Dealers

(H.P. 1419) (L.D. 2104)
(C. "A" H-825)

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

An Act Regarding Energy Fairness

(S.P. 756) (L.D. 1949)
(C. "C" S-504)

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

On motion of Representative SACHS of Freeport, 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 Freeport, Representative Sachs.

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

At its core, this bill addresses something every one of us hears about at the grocery store, at town meetings and around our kitchen tables, and that is the cost of electricity. This legislation focuses on three simple principles: affordability, transparency and accountability. It strengthens the framework for how decisions about our electric system are made and it ensures that the household budgets of Maine people are part of that conversation.

First, the bill requires that the Public Utilities Commission, or the PUC, consider affordability for residential customers while carrying out its regulatory duties. Our Statutes are very clear, Mr. Speaker, about reliability and safety and prudent investment, and they should be. But they are far less clear when it comes to affordability. So, this bill corrects that imbalance. It ensures that when decisions are made by the PUC about our electric system, the question is; not only is it reliability, but also, can Maine people afford it. The bill also directs the PUC to develop an affordability metric. Because if we want to have serious conversations about affordability, we need a clear way to measure it. Simply put, you cannot manage what you cannot measure.

Secondly, the bill advances transparency regarding the publication of credit and collection data for our largest utilities. That information may exist today, but it's not easy for the public to find or understand and this provision makes certain that it is clear and accessible. Because transparency builds trust, trust strengthens accountability and accountability leads to better policy.

Finally, the bill requires a holistic review by the PUC of electric delivery rate design; we did it for the supply side in the first session, this is its companion on the delivery side; to see whether there are additional ways to contain costs, reduce volatility and make bills easier for customers to understand.

Mr. Speaker, Maine people are not asking for rhetoric, they're asking for greater focus on affordability, transparency and accountability, with data-driven decision making, and this bill is a practical step forward. Thank you. For those reasons, I urge you to support the pending motion.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can honestly say I didn't intend to speak on this bill or I would have when it came before us in its initial round through the House. It's a bit ironic that we bring it forward now, I guess, with the change of the seasons that occurred yesterday, it's an important issue now that we get a Roll Call on this. I'm all for that.

I've been here almost eight years now, and it's interesting that now that we are entering that new season that affordability is the word of the day. Well, I've been talking about affordability for all my time here, and what we have done to electric ratepayers in the State of Maine with the bills that have been passed, dozens and dozens of bills that came out of the EUT Committee, came before this House and was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Chief Executive that increased the cost of electricity in the State of Maine. In spite of the many bills that were put forward that would have decreased costs in the State of Maine, we refused to do so. And now, we bring before us a bill with the word affordability in it and, in my opinion, it's just a bold gesture to raise this in front of the people.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I have a definition of what I think affordability is, and I'm sure you have a different definition of that. How in the world do we expect the PUC to come up with a definition of affordability that matches either yours or mine or is fair to all the ratepayers in the State of Maine? That alone raises great concerns for me on this particular bill. It also requires the PUC to do some of what they are already doing as they consider rates in the State of Maine. As a matter of fact, many of us here may remember the press releases the PUC put out when Central Maine Power asked for a significant rate increase to try to meet the demands of not only ratepayers in the State of Maine for more reliability, but of the bills that came out of the EUT Committee demanding that they meet the requirements of reliability, setting standards for them that they have to meet. And when they came up recently with a proposal for a rate structure to the PUC that would allow them to go out and take down more trees, allow them to improve the structure of the grid, the transmission lines, the distribution lines, to help improve reliability and meet constraints that this Body and this Legislature have put on them in the last several years, the PUC came out and said Maine ratepayers can't afford that.

So, this bill is unnecessary. I just say it's a matter of timing for this new season that started on March 16th of 2026. I will be voting against the pending motion now, even though I was content to let it go the last time it came through this Chamber. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **BOYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this bill, after hearing the Good Representative from Dexter talk on it, it seems like, I mean, government's good at one thing; breaking your legs, handing you crutches and telling you, look, now you can walk. And the affordability crisis that we're facing today was created in this Chamber two years ago, four years ago, six years ago and eight years ago. I don't have much faith in this bill to lower the price of electricity, either. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **GEIGER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rise to remind Members of the House that the true cause of the incredible increase in electrical prices are due to the fact that Maine is dependent on natural gas for 45% of its fuel for making electricity. Gas is traded on a global market. The war in Ukraine and now the war in Iran will see rapid escalation and once again we can expect our standard offer to soar. It has very little to do with renewables. The more renewables we have, in fact, the less likely that we are to be so dependent on a national market. Thank you.

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

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, I don't remember even discussing this bill, really, with my colleagues, because it was just going to go under the hammer. But here we are, discussing energy fairness and affordability and Mr. Speaker, honestly, I sit here in my seat laughing, because the Good Representative from Poland is absolutely correct. The policies that have been passed in this Chamber and signed into law by our Chief Executive are costing Mainers, are costing ratepayers money that they cannot afford to spend on energy. And so, it's laughable to me to hear talk of accountability and transparency and affordability from folks who have literally perpetrated the exact opposite on Maine people.

And so, let me tell you what some actual solutions would look like. Let's repeal the goal for 100% clean energy by 2040, and then we won't have to have mandates and subsidies for types of energy that are costing Maine people, with subsidies that they cannot afford and they see on their bill every single month. Let's level the playing field for all types of energy. Get government out of the business of deciding what types are allowed or not allowed in Maine. Let's pursue new technologies like small modular nuclear, allow the free market to do its job and allow Mainers to choose what they want for their energy source in our State. Let's repeal the cap on hydro, Mr. Speaker, and let's allow expansion --

Representative **SKOLD**: Point of Order.

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

Representative **SKOLD**: Just wondering about the relevance of some of these issues specifically to the bill that's at hand.

On **POINT OF ORDER,** Representative SKOLD of Portland asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative LIBBY of Auburn were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would rule that the bill is about energy costs, affordability, I believe the Member is in order.

The Chair **RULED** that the remarks of Representative LIBBY of Auburn were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, I think I was talking about repealing the cap on hydro. Mr. Speaker, there are so many ways that this Chamber has cost Mainers, continues to cost Mainers thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars; $330 million Mainers are paying because of the policies passed in this Chamber. And that blame does not lie in one party, but there's only one party that's seeking to fix it these days.

Mr. Speaker, we should allow expansion of every resource, including natural gas, expanding the pipelines instead of trying to shut it down. Supply and demand, Mr. Speaker. When the demand is there and the supply is low, the cost is high. This is basic economics.

We don't need to pass more bills regarding energy fairness; we need to repeal legislation that this Chamber has passed and allow Mainers access to affordable energy instead of stuffing policies down their throat that they cannot afford. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be voting No.

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

Representative **CAMPBELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I've been around a long time. I cut my teeth on passive solar houses in 1973. I understand the sun, I understand the energy, I understand how you can, with good orientation and good insulation, get the heat in and keep it in. I never once got a nickel of subsidy to lead this industry into homes of 2,500 square feet that you can heat with a cord and a half of wood.

Solar and wind are not the answer, as the Good Representative from Auburn mentioned. Other generation options need to be explored. The reason our energy costs are so expensive is because of the subsidies for solar and wind that we, the Body, have passed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **RUNTE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just two things quickly. Let's go back to the real numbers and the current administration. The current administration in Washington, D.C.'s Department of Energy evaluated the reasons for price increases over the last five years in electricity rates. They looked specifically at Maine, and they determined that more than 50% of the rise was due to natural gas, that 30% of it was due to storm recovery and upgrades to distribution and transmission costs. Yes, there was an impact from policies that were taken here in this Chamber, but they are miniscule in comparison with all the other factors that have caused these rates to be where they are.

And secondly, you know, we hear talk about the free market. But right now, 70% of the fossil supplies for Asia are stuck in the Strait of Hormuz, and multiple countries have begun to stop operations because they know what it's like to lose these sources, these fuels. With two exceptions; China, which now has more renewables than fossil generation and they are not in trouble at all, and Pakistan, who decided several years ago when the Ukraine war began to discontinue natural gas. We import, believe it or not, natural gas from overseas, and that's a portion of what comes into this system here that generates power in New England.

So, we need to be careful about sweeping statements about causes for electricity rates and look once again at specifics in the regulatory framework of how we can better manage what's going on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As is very evident by the lack of industry in the rural areas of this State, we have seen the policies that have brought us here, we've seen what it's done to drive families and drive industry out of this State. As we compare to the price of electricity in other states, it's evident, very self-evident, the people around the State of Maine now currently understand that the policies put forth by this Body over the last decade or so have led to this day.

Mr. Speaker, you're running out of other people's money. We can talk about adding more and more subsidies, but you're never going to dig yourself out of this hole. It's the problem that we all understand, it's as plain as the nose on your face, the subsidies that this Body has put forward has brought us here, and we can tell from other states that didn't go down this path that there's another way. So, we can sit here and pontificate about it all day, but I won't be supporting this.

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

Representative **SOBOLESKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen. Maine ratepayers are set to pay approximately $234 million in 2025 alone to cover solar development subsidies under this State's Net Energy Billing program. We have over 140 solar farms, and the Good Representative from Winterport reminds us on a continual basis how ineffective they are in providing anything to the ISO New England grid. Approximately, what, one and a half, maybe two on a general day.

The most inexpensive electric rates in this nation are in Washington State. Why? Hydro. They tapped it, they use it, and it gives them what they need, the effective rates. My electric bill at my little home alone, which was about $40 a month, I'm relatively conservative, is now, over the past couple years, has gone to over $100 a month. My district alone has a huge amount of retirees in it. I have the western mountains, Oxford, Franklin, Somerset Counties, parts of it. And there's a lot of retirees up there, a lot of mobile homes, a lot of people on fixed incomes that can't afford this at all. And I think we should keep that in mind. I heat with gas, $2.39 per gallon. No problem there. But as far as putting more money into solar or more money into subsidies is a bad deal for our State and only sends up prices. Thank you.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Facts sometimes are few and far between.

Part of the policies that we have passed in this Legislature has caused the cost of electrical generation with carbon fuels to rise, because, for instance, Wyman Station is sitting there idle most of the time, burning No. 6 oil when they need to really generate electricity because our renewable energy sources don't provide enough or because the City of Boston needs more energy to run air conditioners in the dog days of August, they fire that plant up. One of the reasons that they are not running all the time is because we need them available part of the time, and we've passed laws that say that we don't want to burn that fuel. Same thing with our natural gas plants. We can sit here and say how much natural gas energy costs because we restrict their production, they're not running at the highest efficiency rate all the time that they can. That's because of legislation that's been passed saying we have to buy solar and wind renewable energy first. We also subsidize that at a higher rate.

Mr. Speaker, we've passed or have not passed legislation that would've allowed looking at expanding natural gas supply into the New England region, which would allow us to get away from that being delivered from foreign sources to power our natural gas plants as a bridge fuel to get us to when we can have all renewable energy, but we've said no in this Legislature, we don't want the cheap natural gas on the other side of New York State available to New England.

Mr. Speaker, when the facts are looked at, recent reports show that the overall natural gas price of the electricity produced from natural gas generation, the average price over the course of a year is between five and six cents per kilowatt-hour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **ARATA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I pose a question through the Chair for anybody who wishes to answer?

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **ARATA**: Thank you. Although this is a very interesting debate about the history of energy policy in Maine, I just wonder if I'm looking at the correct Amendment. The Amendment that I believe we're voting on says, in executing its duties, powers and regulatory functions under this Title, the Commission, while ensuring system reliability, shall consider the impact on affordability for residential customers. That is the entirety of what the Amendment says that I'm reading, and if anybody can point me in the right direction if I'm missing something, I would really appreciate it. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from New Gloucester, Representative Arata, has posed a question through the Chair to any Member who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Presque Isle, Representative Underwood.

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This affordability question, and we give the government bureaucrats a lot of thought processes in order to define what affordability is. In my opinion, this is coming from people who can't even determine what a woman is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 650

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

NAY - Albert, Ardell, Bagshaw, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Campbell, Chapman, Cimino, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Daigle, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eder, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Greenwood, Haggan, Hall, Hymes, Lance, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, McIntyre, Mingo, Morris, Nutting, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, White J, White R, Wood S, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Gifford, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 86; No, 56; Absent, 7; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

86 having voted in the affirmative and 56 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 7 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** with the exception of matters being held.

CONSENT CALENDAR
First Day

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

(S.P. 815) (L.D. 2001) Bill "An Act to Clarify the Laws Governing Facilities for Children and Adults Under the Health and Human Services Laws" Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-536)**

(S.P. 827) (L.D. 2008) Bill "An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and Clarify Sending School Administrative Unit Obligations" Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-537)**

(S.P. 817) (L.D. 2128) Bill "An Act to Reorganize the Emergency Medical Services' Board to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-530)**

(S.P. 862) (L.D. 2144) Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-531)**

(S.P. 889) (L.D. 2184) Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to Erect Signs on Warren's Bridge Between the Town of Hiram and the Town of Cornish Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-535)**

(H.P. 1408) (L.D. 2093) Bill "An Act to Codify and Update a Provision of Private and Special Law Governing Temporary Disability for State Employees" Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 1459) (L.D. 2171) Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 305: Natural Resources Protection Act - Permit by Rule Standards and Portions of Chapter 335: Significant Wildlife Habitat, Major Substantive Rules of the Department of Environmental Protection (EMERGENCY) Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 1162) (L.D. 1744) Bill "An Act to Modify Provisions of the State Civil Service System Governing Employee Recruitment and Retention" Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-857)**

(H.P. 1343) (L.D. 2013) Bill "An Act to Authorize the Commissioner of Marine Resources to Adopt Emergency Rules to Protect Certain Marine Mammals in Exceptional Circumstances" Committee on **MARINE RESOURCES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-856)**

(H.P. 1360) (L.D. 2030) Bill "An Act to Expand the Scope of Practice of Independent Practice Dental Hygienists" Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-852)**

(H.P. 1376) (L.D. 2052) Resolve, to Study the Use of Technology in Classrooms and Study Safeguards Related to Its Use (EMERGENCY) Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-841)**

(H.P. 1389) (L.D. 2076) Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Reporting of Incidents by Municipal Fire Chiefs" Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-847)**

(H.P. 1410) (L.D. 2095) Bill "An Act to Prohibit Bulk Purchasing of Tickets in Certain Lottery Games" Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-846)**

(H.P. 1472) (L.D. 2191) Bill "An Act to Establish a Biennial Inspection System for Vehicle Rental Companies" Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-855)**

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

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

(S.P. 849) (L.D. 2062) Bill "An Act to Enhance the Safety of Public Transit Bus Operators Through the Installation of Vehicle Security Barriers" Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-532)**

On motion of Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle, was **REMOVED** from the First- Day Consent Calendar.

The Committee Report was **READ**.

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on **ACCEPTANCE** of the **Unanimous Ought to Pass as Amended Report**.

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

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

ROLL CALL NO. 651

YEA - Abdi, Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Guerrette, Hall, Harriman, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lee, Lemelin, Lookner, Lyman, Macias, Malon, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Osher, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Skold, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Warren, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Bagshaw, Boyer D, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Greenwood, Haggan, Lance, Libby, Poirier, Quint, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Friedmann, Gifford, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 125; No, 16; Absent, 8; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

125 having voted in the affirmative and 16 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 8 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the **Unanimous Ought to Pass as Amended Report** was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-532)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-532)** in concurrence.

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Reports

Majority Report of the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-534)** on Bill "An Act to Support Victims of Trafficking in Maine in Response to Federal Funding Cuts" (EMERGENCY)

(S.P. 835) (L.D. 2136)

Signed:

Senators:

INGWERSEN of York

NANGLE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MEYER of Eliot

DEBRITO of Waterville

GRAHAM of North Yarmouth

MCCABE of Lewiston

SHAGOURY of Hallowell

ZAGER of Portland

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

Signed:

Senator:

MOORE of Washington

Representatives:

DAIGLE of Fort Kent

FREDERICKS of Sanford

GRIFFIN of Levant

LEMELIN of Chelsea

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-534)**.

READ.

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

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

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

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

Representative **LEMELIN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Friends of the House. This bill is not about supporting or not supporting victims of trafficking. It's about fairness.

Preble Street is the only organization that's going to receive this money. There are many organizations that provide victims of trafficking resources. They're not included in this bill. Preble Street has indicated that they were worried they weren't going to get their federal funding, another HR 1 hocus pocus. They got their funding, and now they're indicating that the next funding is not going to come until later in this year. Well, yeah, it does every time. They're also saying that there's a huge waitlist and they need the extra money, on top of the federal funding that this was supposed to supplement, in case they didn't get it. Well, this is the same for all providers. They could all use this money. But we're providing it to only one resource, which is not fair.

This HR 1 hocus pocus has to go away. All HR 1 says is that HHS here in Maine has to get their act together. That's all it says. If you get your act together, you get your money. If you don't, you don't get your money. It's really simple. All you have to do is get your act together and you get your money. Preble Street found out that it's all hocus pocus because they got their money, and now they're asking for the additional money. Well, I have no problem with helping out victims of trafficking. None of us do. I haven't talked to anybody in this Body that is not in favor of this. The problem is this only helps out one organization. It's not fair to the others, they're hurting just as badly.

So, this bill is just unfair. Preble Street claims that they're being hit the hardest, this is what I heard this morning. What exactly does that mean? If I contact the other organizations, I promise you, Mr. Speaker, they're going to tell me the same exact thing. There's no organization in the world that does this kind of work that even if you give them a billion dollars, they're not going to sit there and say, well, we could use a little more. Every organization is like that.

So, what I'm saying here is that this bill is unfair. If somebody wants to come up with a floor Amendment that gives money to all the different organizations, that's more palatable. But Preble Street has not given us one reason why they are in more dire straits than any of the other organizations and why they should get this $317,000, when the purpose of it was in case they didn't get the federal funding, that they did get and they're going to get next. The federal government is not going to fund victims of trafficking. Nobody is going to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we need to do here is just think this through and realize that the premise of the bill was great; if they didn't get their funding, they needed the money. But they got it, so this bill is no longer needed. Thank you.

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

Representative **MEYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House. First of all, facts matter. The funding gap for Preble Street's Anti-Trafficking Services program has nothing to do with HR 1. Zero. And they have not received their money. There continues to be a funding gap, services have been scaled back and there is a waitlist, and they are the only organization providing these services; by the way, they are the largest provider of anti-trafficking services; they are the only provider in Maine who is experiencing this funding cliff as a result of federal funding.

LD 2136 will provide one-time funding of $317,000 to our State's largest anti-trafficking service provider. This is a direct response to an unexpected federal funding delay that is disrupting services for survivors of human trafficking here in Maine. For more than a decade, Preble Street's Anti-Trafficking Services program has relied on federal funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. That funding expired last fall and the next round of federal funds has been significantly delayed, leaving a gap in services at a time when survivors are actively seeking help. Because traffickers leverage their victims' unmet basic needs to keep them trapped in exploitive situations, supporting survivors' basic needs for food, shelter, other necessities through case management and wraparound services outside of a trafficking victimization is critical.

This provider has begun, as I said, waitlisting survivors. These are Mainers who have experienced severe trauma and exploitation and are trying to find safety and stability. A delay in these essential support services can have serious consequences. This is a targeted, time-sensitive measure to make sure trafficking survivors are not turned away simply because of an administrative failure of the federal government. This funding will provide a one-year bridge to replace the lost federal funding, allowing anti-trafficking services at Preble

Street to continue supporting survivors so that they can find the dignity, safety and healing that they deserve. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Fort Kent, Representative Daigle.

Representative **DAIGLE**: Mr. Speaker, I'm a real stickler for a level field and accurate information. In Committee, I asked Preble Street a couple questions. Have you received your funding? The answer was yes. I asked them if they were the sole organization that treated or worked with human trafficking victims, they said no, there are some others. I asked, did they request extra funding. The answer is no.

If we're going to keep this fair and we keep it with accurate information, let's stick to the accurate information, not stretch things out and make it look dire. Every organization could use the extra funding, but to provide it to just one is not acceptable. Thank you.

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

Representative **MEYER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for allowing me to rise a second time. I'm going to read some responses from Preble Street's Advocacy Director, Mr. Miller, that I obtained just several days ago.

Question one: Has the Department of Justice's Office of Victims of Crime, OVC, released a notice of funding opportunities; that's the ability to apply for grant funding; for FY 25? OVC released its notice of funding opportunities, or NOFO, on December 30, 2025, eight months after it is typically released. That is simply the notice that the grant opportunity can be applied for. Even if applications move quickly, funding is unlikely to be released until the second half of 2026, leaving survivors in Maine without access to critical support for almost a year.

Question two: Why is State funding still necessary if the OVC grant competition for 2025 has now opened? Answer: Our waitlist continues to steadily increase, and while funding may be available on July 1st, it is not guaranteed. Survivors need and deserve services now. This funding will immediately enable us to serve many survivors on the waitlist. Without State intervention, our team will face a backlog of cases, even if federal funding becomes available. Additionally, this funding has a ripple effect on our other services. The allocation of State funds would also mean that the ever-rising number of minor victims of trafficking children can be served immediately as well. Finally, the applicant pool for the FY 25 NOFO was expected to be larger than normal. We anticipate that recipients with grants expiring in FY 26 will apply, in addition to recipients whose grants expired in FY 25. With more competition, Maine is less likely to receive this vital funding.

And finally, number three, why would Preble Street be the only recipient of these funds? Answer: While Preble Street collaborates with many valued partners to address human trafficking in Maine, we are the only Maine organization that experienced a funding cliff because of the federal funding lapse. Thank you.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 652

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

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

ABSENT - Adams, Gifford, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 81; No, 61; Absent, 7; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

81 having voted in the affirmative and 61 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 7 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-534)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-534)** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **LABOR** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-527)** on Bill "An Act to Improve the Public Employees Disability Retirement Program by Modifying Provisions Controlling the Reduction of Benefits and Clarifying Terminology"

(S.P. 879) (L.D. 2169)

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

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-527)**.

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-527)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-527)** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-529)** on Bill "An Act Regarding the Prohibition of Online Sweepstakes Games"

(S.P. 825) (L.D. 2007)

Signed:

Senators:

HICKMAN of Kennebec
DUSON of Cumberland
TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin

Representatives:

SUPICA of Bangor
FAIRCLOTH of Bangor
FREDERICKS of Sanford
FROST of Belgrade
GRAHAM of North Yarmouth
HYMES of Waldo
MALON of Biddeford
TERRY of Gorham

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

Signed:

Representatives:

BOYER of Poland
CHAPMAN of Auburn

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-529)**.

READ.

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

Majority Report of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-849)** on Bill "An Act to Notify the Public of Juveniles Who Are Wanted Persons"

(H.P. 67) (L.D. 102)

Signed:

Senators:

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox
CURRY of Waldo

Representatives:

HASENFUS of Readfield
ABDI of Lewiston
BUNKER of Farmington
LAJOIE of Lewiston
MILLIKEN of Blue Hill

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-850)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senator:

CYRWAY of Kennebec

Representatives:

ARDELL of Monticello
MCINTYRE of Lowell
NUTTING of Oakland
PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft

READ.

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

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

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

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

Representative **NUTTING**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Top of the afternoon to you. The Members who find themselves on the Minority Report here don't object that much to the Majority Report, but we suggest it doesn't go far enough.

The way the Law currently is, if a juvenile escapes from Long Creek and is on the run somewhere, law enforcement is able to be notified as to who it is and where to look for them, but the public is not. The Majority Report fixes that for anyone who escapes from Long Creek if, in fact, they might prove to be a risk to themselves or to the public at large. Currently, law

enforcement is privy to that information, the general public is not. So, the Majority Report allows, under limited circumstances where harm is possible, that the child or the juvenile's physical description, photograph, recent location and any likely future location, among other things, can be released to the public. I think that's fine. I also think that if a juvenile is in custody somewhere other than at Long Creek, and they run and hide, if under the same limited circumstances they pose a risk either to themselves or to someone else, that it should be allowable for their description to be released to the public.

We see in lots of instances where crimes have been committed that pictures of perpetrators, alleged perpetrators, are released to the media; their age, their description; you can do that now with juveniles. So, the Minority Report, if we should make it to it after defeating the Majority Report, expands it beyond escapees from Long Creek to anyone who is in custody and escapes. I believe that I'm going to vote against the Majority Report, hoping we get to the better Minority Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **HASENFUS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the Good Colleague from Oakland has articulated this bill quite eloquently. And I would just like to point out that the majority of the Committee felt that this Amendment before us was the appropriate Amendment. Part of the reason for that is because of the work that happened over the summer.

As you'll remember I think two summers ago, there was a number of juveniles who escaped from Long Creek and that was the impetus behind this Chief Executive's bill. But the juvenile code is very complex and one of the cruxes of that code is confidentiality, understanding that we treat juveniles different because we don't want their records and their past conducts haunting them forever and ever in the future. And in today's day and age, where a photograph or a description can instantaneously go to millions of people through one click, we wanted to ensure that whatever policy we adopt was the exact right policy.

And so, with that, we requested a group of juvenile justice practitioners who meet regularly to review the draft of LD 102 and to come back to our Committee with recommendations. And that group of practitioners felt very strongly that right now, we should limit it only to escapes from the Department of Corrections, and we should only give the Department of Corrections Commissioner or their designee; mind you, that the Associate Commissioner of Juvenile Justice Corrections is well versed and always up to speed on the appropriate juvenile laws and understands that fine balance between protecting the confidentiality of juveniles and providing public safety of both the juvenile and the public at large. And so, that practicing group really recommended that we should limit our actual statutory changes only to that subset of individuals that are escaping from Department of Corrections custody and only give the Department of Corrections the ability to release this information publicly. Mind you, it does not have to release this information, but it can. They did not advise that we should allow every single police department in every jurisdiction across Maine to release this information to the public, that it should come from the Commissioner.

Additionally, what my Colleague from Oakland did not mention is that in the Majority Report there's also a Resolve, tasking essentially that same group that I just discussed to review when perhaps the public should get information and to come back to our Committee next year and see if this is appropriate for the Long Creek or if we should expand it to other circumstances. But the majority of the Committee did not feel that it was best left up to us at this particular time to determine every single situation that we should address the Department of Corrections escapes first and then send it to the experts to come back to us to see if there is more work to be done on this issue.

And that's why I would implore my Colleagues in this Body to vote for the Amendment before you, implement this now to narrowly address the problem that we have seen and then let the Committee continue to work to see if there's further action that needs to be taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **ARDELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Majority Report we'll be voting on is not a bad bill. It addresses juvenile escapes from Corrections custody only. However, the Minority Report is a better policy. It's one that addresses juvenile escapes not only from Department of Corrections, but from county jails and law enforcement custody statewide. This is a policy that needs to be addressed.

Both measures, the Majority and the Minority Report, have the same probable cause requirement, they have the same necessary threat to self of the escapee or public safety, generally. They require the same high-level decision maker, the head of the agency that makes the decision. I ask this Body to take the step to address the policy of escaped juveniles more broadly and to apply the same policy to Department of Corrections to all county jails and all law enforcement officers everywhere.

I think the additional part of the Majority Report contains a Resolve that, quite frankly, is unnecessary, and to not implement the Resolve would save Mainers taxpayer money. I think either measure is good, but the Minority Report is broader and better. Thank you.

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

Representative **PERKINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with my Colleagues, and I believe that both measures are good, but I do believe that the Minority Report is better, and I believe it's much better, and I'm going to tell you why.

One of the issues we deal with in this State is we have a rash of dead children in State custody and the requirement for the distribution of the information to the public by different police agencies in the Minority Report includes the safety of the child. And the last thing I want to see, Mr. Speaker, is another kid in this State killed because the State did not do its diligence and doing everything possible to make sure that one more kid in this State wasn't killed, simply because we didn't do our job or because some State agency didn't do its job. And that, to me, is enough to push forward the Minority Report.

And I would remind the Body, Mr. Speaker, if I may, that for those of us that are old enough, we remember the D.C. sniper case. That was a case where there was one adult and one juvenile and they were out causing harm to the public. And that case didn't come to an end until there was a release of a photo of the juvenile suspect. And that's extremely important to remember that. Sometimes, while we understand and we can respect the need for the privacy of a juvenile suspect, sometimes public safety for, innocent people in our State or the safety and welfare and the life of that child sometimes just far outweighs that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 653

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

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

ABSENT - Adams, Gifford, Hymes, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 76; No, 65; Absent, 8; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

76 having voted in the affirmative and 65 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 8 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-849)** 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-849)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-848)** on Bill "An Act to Repurpose Long Creek Youth Development Center and Build a Community System of Support"

(H.P. 1284) (L.D. 1923)

Signed:

Senators:

BEEBE-CENTER of Knox
CURRY of Waldo

Representatives:

HASENFUS of Readfield
ABDI of Lewiston
BUNKER of Farmington
LAJOIE of Lewiston
LOOKNER of Portland
MILLIKEN of Blue Hill

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

Signed:

Senator:

CYRWAY of Kennebec

Representatives:

ARDELL of Monticello
MCINTYRE of Lowell
NUTTING of Oakland
PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-848)** 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-848)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-853)** on Bill "An Act to Update Certain Higher Education Statutes"

(H.P. 1413) (L.D. 2098)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
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

Representatives:

BAGSHAW of Windham
CARLOW of Buxton
HAGGAN of Hampden
LYMAN of Livermore Falls

READ.

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

Representative LYMAN of Livermore Falls **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 Livermore Falls, Representative Lyman.

Representative **LYMAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members of the House. I rise in opposition to this motion.

The bill is intended to update parts of Maine's higher education laws. It repeals some older Statutes, changes the application process for schools who want to grant degrees and allows the Department of Education to collect applications from those institutions. Even though it updates Statutes, and that can be worthwhile, this bill raises several concerns that I believe should be taken seriously.

One of those concerns is the bill gives too much power to the Commissioner of Education to decide application fees without setting limits in the Law. While the intent may be to cover administration costs, the bill provides no cap, no clear formula and no legislative oversight. Important fees like this should be set or limited by the Legislature, not left entirely to the discretion of one official.

Another concern is the bill allows the State Board of Education to skip another full review if a school's programs were approved within the last five years. Granting an institution the authority to award degrees is a serious responsibility. Allowing that authority without a fresh evaluation could mean that a school is approved to grant degrees based on outdated information.

And a third concern that relates to that second one is the bill says reviews reports are given to the Legislature after the State Board already recommends the school. That means that the Education Committee may receive important information only after the recommendation has already been made. The Legislature should have the opportunity to review this information before recommendation is finalized, not after.

And finally, high or unpredictable application fees could make it harder for new schools to start in Maine. If fees are not clearly defined or limited, smaller, innovative institutions may be discouraged from applying in the first place. Thank you.

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

Representative **SARGENT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I rise to express support for this measure.

This is an important measure that actually puts Maine in alignment with most of the other states regarding a fee structure and a review of outside institutions that want to get a foothold in Maine, basically to be able to offer virtual programs across the nation or beyond. Reviewing those applications is sometimes arduous and we want to be in line, frankly, with the fee structure that other states are providing in terms of getting a foothold here. That's what a great deal of this measure is about.

The issue of whether or not to allow an institution to offer a particular degree, *et cetera*, and whether or not the State Board of Education needs to do a full review of an institution, for example, College of the Atlantic, that is approved for a certain level of Bachelor's degrees to be awarded. Basically, is something that we need to do to be able to make certain that an institution like College of the Atlantic can be responsive to many of the mergers and the changes that are happening in higher education today. We looked back in a similar situation, actually, when Husson University was able to expand some of the degrees that it offered and found that what the College of the Atlantic was requesting, which is to change their Special and Private Bill to be able to do this, was completely in order and that it would actually serve College of the Atlantic greatly going forward and believe that this was an absolutely sensible measure. Thank you.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 654

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

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

ABSENT - Adams, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, O'Halloran, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 75; No, 67; Absent, 7; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

75 having voted in the affirmative and 67 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 7 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-853)** 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-853)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-843)** on Bill "An Act to Amend Certain Eligibility Requirements for Secondary Students Receiving State Subsidies for Postsecondary Courses"

(H.P. 1414) (L.D. 2099)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CARLOW of Buxton
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
HAGGAN of Hampden
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:

BAGSHAW of Windham

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-843)** 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-843)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass** on Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 33: Rule Governing Physical Restraint and Seclusion, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education, State Board of Education (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 1460) (L.D. 2172)

Signed:

Senators:

RAFFERTY of York
LIBBY of Cumberland
PIERCE of Cumberland

Representatives:

MURPHY of Scarborough
BRENNAN of Portland
CARLOW of Buxton
CROCKETT of Portland
DODGE of Belfast
HAGGAN of Hampden
MITCHELL of Cumberland
SARGENT of York

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-842)** on same Resolve.

Signed:

Representatives:

BAGSHAW of Windham
LYMAN of Livermore Falls

READ.

Representative MURPHY of Scarborough moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass** Report.

Representative BAGSHAW of Windham **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. 655

YEA - Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cluchey, Collamore, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Harriman, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, 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, Osher, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Quint, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Skold, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Warren, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Bagshaw, Cimino.

ABSENT - Abdi, Adams, Bishop, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 139; No, 2; Absent, 8; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

139 having voted in the affirmative and 2 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 8 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Resolve was **READ ONCE**.

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

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

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-845)** on Bill "An Act to Limit Rates Charged to Low-income Electricity Consumers"

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

Signed:

Senators:

LAWRENCE of York
GROHOSKI of Hancock
HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

SACHS of Freeport
GEIGER of Rockland
KESSLER of South Portland
MCINTYRE of Lowell
RUNTE of York
WADSWORTH of Hiram
WARREN of Scarborough
WEBB of Durham

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

Signed:

Representatives:

FOSTER of Dexter
PAUL of Winterport

READ.

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

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

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

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

Representative **SACHS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the pending motion, just to highlight the strong bipartisan Report and highlight the importance of its contents.

Recent reports submitted to the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee about the competitive electricity provider markets show a troubling pattern. Maine households that purchase electricity through competitive electricity providers, also known as CEPs, routinely pay more than they would under the standard offer. Between 2016 and 2024 alone, Mainers paid over $156 million more for electricity than they would have if they had remained on standard offer, money that could have stayed in their pockets.

So, last session, this Legislature asked the Office of the Public Advocate to take a closer look at how these higher prices affect recipients specifically of the Low-Income Assistance Program, or LIAP. We asked that question because every LIAP dollar matters. It is funded both with ratepayer and currently General Fund taxpayer dollars. What that report found should concern all of us. LIAP recipients are more likely than other customers to be enrolled with CEPs, and when they are, they pay higher rates on average than consumers who are not receiving LIAP assistance. In other words, some of the households we are trying hardest to help are also the ones most likely to be paying the highest electricity supply prices.

So, LD 2203 offers a simple and responsible fix. It says if a LIAP recipient chooses to purchase electricity from a competitive supplier, that supplier cannot charge more than the standard offer rate for electricity supply. The bill preserves consumer choice while ensuring that the program designed to help low-income households is not undermined by higher market prices. So, this bill does not eliminate the competitive market or take away anyone's ability to choose a supplier. It simply clarifies that when public assistance dollars are involved, that funding should not be used to pay inflated supply prices.

If we allow competitive electricity suppliers to charge LIAP customers more than standard offer, we will effectively subsidize higher electricity rates with scarce public dollars instead of helping families afford the energy they need. LD 2203 protects consumer choice and protects the integrity of the LIAP program and, most importantly, it protects Maine households that need the help the most. For those reasons, I urge you to support the pending motion. Thank you.

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

Representative **FOSTER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just a couple of things, a brief bit of history.

In the 131st Legislature, the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee passed a bill, and it later went through the process, approved by the Legislature, that increased the bar, if you will, for income where that folks could qualify for LIAP. That LIAP, the Low-Income Assistance Program, that was expected, and it did, increase by 10s of millions of dollars, the amount that would go to folks who are struggling with paying their electric bills. At the time, I asked the proponent for the bill, Public Advocate Howard, if we would continue to see as rates increased in the State of Maine over time that we would have to raise that bar again. His response was that we might have to.

I should point out, as the Good Representative I don't think pointed out, the Good Representative from Freeport, that LIAP is paid for by ratepayers. Again, another expense that falls on those ratepayers who can afford their electric bill in the State of Maine. This bill should effectively help keep that amount down that other ratepayers are having to pay for the LIAP program because, although there are good CEP providers in the State of Maine who may be able to go out and bid for electric rates that will keep those on those CEP programs who decide to go with them, keep their rates below the standard offer, we have learned in EUT that there are several unscrupulous CEP providers in the State of Maine who start folks off at a low rate and then those rates go up over time, so that the average cost they pay in a year is much higher than the standard offer.

This bill, although some would say it doesn't go far enough, doesn't go as far as some of the bills that were proposed early on in this session, it will allow those ratepayers who are funding LIAP to keep their rates down, because these CEP providers who, I would say, are unscrupulous or talked people into this program, they will have to conform to this requirement that they cannot charge a rate to LIAP customers above the standard offer and that, in fact, will help save money. None of us, you know, I go back to the old episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond* when Robert needed some money and Raymond gave him a bunch of money and Robert decided to go to Las Vegas with it. That is, in effect, what we are doing when we subsidize these unscrupulous CEP companies by giving money to folks who can't afford their electric bill and then having them give some of that money to these CEPs. So, I thank you, and I will ask you to follow my light.

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. 656

YEA - Abdi, Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Hall, Harriman, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, Lee, Lemelin, Lookner, Lyman, Macias, Malon, Mason, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Milliken, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Osher, Parry, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Shagoury, Simmons, Skold, Smith, Stover, Strout, Supica, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Wadsworth, Walker, Warren, Webb, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Bagshaw, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Gifford, Haggan, Libby, Morris, Paul, Quint, Schmersal-Burgess, Soboleski, Underwood, White J.

ABSENT - Adams, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 129; No, 14; Absent, 6; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

129 having voted in the affirmative and 14 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 6 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-845)** 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-845)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-858)** on Bill "An Act to Establish the Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Resource Hub"

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

Signed:

Senators:

LAWRENCE of York
GROHOSKI of Hancock

Representatives:

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

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

Signed:

Senator:

HARRINGTON of York

Representatives:

MCINTYRE of Lowell
PAUL of Winterport
WADSWORTH of Hiram

READ.

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

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-858)** 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-858)** 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 "A" (H-851)** on Bill "An Act to Require Prior Notification of Closures of Labor and Delivery Units and Changes in Maternity or Newborn Care Services by Hospitals as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State"

(H.P. 1470) (L.D. 2189)

Signed:

Senators:

BAILEY of York
BALDACCI of Penobscot
HAGGAN 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.

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

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

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

The SPEAKER: 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. 657

YEA - Abdi, Albert, Ankeles, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Beck, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Brennan, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cluchey, Collamore, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Crockett, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Faircloth, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Harriman, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Julia, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, 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, Osher, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Pluecker, Poirier, Pomerleau, Pugh, Quint, Rana, Ray, Rielly, Roeder, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sato, Sayre, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Skold, Smith, Stover, Strout, Supica, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Warren, Webb, White J, White R, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Cimino, Swallow.

ABSENT - Adams, Collins, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair, Soboleski.

Yes, 139; No, 2; Absent, 8; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

139 having voted in the affirmative and 2 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 8 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-851)** 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-851)** and sent for concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **MARINE RESOURCES** reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on Bill "An Act to Offer Military Veterans a 50 Percent Discount on the License Fee for a Commercial Shellfish License"

(H.P. 1361) (L.D. 2031)

Signed:

Senators:

TEPLER of Sagadahoc

MOORE of Washington

Representatives:

HEPLER of Woolwich

EATON of Deer Isle

FARRIN of Jefferson

GIFFORD of Lincoln

GOLEK of Harpswell

RIELLY of Westbrook

SIMMONS of Waldoboro

STROUT of Harrington

WOOD of Norway

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-854)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representative:

THORNE of Carmel

READ.

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following matter, in the consideration of which the House was engaged at the time of adjournment Thursday, March 12, 2026, had preference in the Orders of the Day and continued with such preference until disposed of as provided by House Rule 502.

SENATE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (6) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-522)** - Minority (5) **Ought Not to Pass** - Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** on Bill "An Act to Protect the Right to Harvest Wildlife"

(S.P. 559) (L.D. 1343)

- In Senate, Minority **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

TABLED - March 5, 2026 (Till Later Today) by Representative MOONEN of Portland.

PENDING - **ACCEPTANCE OF EITHER REPORT**.

READ.

Representative DILL of Old Town moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative MASON of Lisbon **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

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

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Lisbon, Representative Mason.

Representative **MASON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not support the pending motion. Maine has enjoyed a long history and tradition of hunting, fishing and trapping in this great State. It's part of our fabric, it's part of our DNA. Mr. Speaker, there's been groups that have tried to take away different aspects of our hunting and trapping laws, and to do that, I mean, if we were to lose the coyote hunting in this State, we see stories all the time of, you know, cats and dogs being missing, if we were to lose that ability in this State, a form of conservation, it would be a lot worse than what we're seeing right now.

Bear hunting, they've come after bear hunting. I mean, they're roaming the streets now, they're starting to come down from the north and they're in the southern part of the State, they've had sightings. And this bill will help protect our hunting, fishing and trapping laws. We need to cement this into our State, so that we won't lose these rights. We must protect our rights to hunt, fish, trap and to steward these rights for our future generations. Our kids, our grandchildren.

And the Attorney General; we had a representative in Committee and he said there may be litigation over this Law, if it should become Law. Well, what's the Attorney General's Office for? It's for litigation. We just strengthen our hunting, fishing and trapping laws. This won't allow hunting on Sunday, this won't allow any of our current laws to be broken if this should pass. So, I'm asking you to follow my light this afternoon and defeat this motion. Thank you.

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

Representative **BRIDGEO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members of the House. I completely respect the position of those in the majority out of Committee on this issue, but I have to say that based on the fact that the law court has already decided, opined, that the right to hunt is already existent and they made that clear and that following up on that we did hear, as the Representative from Lisbon just said, from the Attorney General's Office, informing us that, in their opinion, passing this particular Statute would open the door to some significant opportunities for mischief in this subject matter area. The Minority; and when I say the Minority, I think it's almost a split vote; did not want to create that opportunity and felt comfortable that the right to hunt in Maine is and will be protected by the existing Laws and Constitutional Amendments that we have. So, for that reason, I support the Minority Ought Not to Pass Report.

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

Representative **CARUSO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rise in opposition to this motion and in support of this Bill.

I just wanted to read the short Statute. It's the "Right to harvest fish and wildlife. Pursuant to the right to food as declared in the Constitution of Maine, Article I, Section 25, the people of this State have the right to harvest fish and wildlife by hunting, fishing or trapping for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health or well-being.

"Limitation. The exercise of the right to harvest fish and wildlife is expressly limited by all applicable laws, rules and regulations authorized pursuant to this Title, which the Department shall enforce."

It just codifies what is going on right now. It doesn't change anything or open us up, but it reinforces the Constitutional right and properly confirms the definition of the word harvest. And so, I am in support of this, and I hope others will be, also. Thank you.

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

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to the pending motion and hopefully I'll save the Representative from Fairfield standing up and speaking to the Body because here we go again, running a Minority Report.

This is a bipartisan bill that was put forth and it was discussed about codifying in Law that Mainers have the right to hunt and fish. So, therefore, I'll be voting in opposition of the pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Old Town, Representative Dill.

Representative **DILL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I think everybody's kind of arguing the same thing here.

The Attorney General did come in and talk to us and basically said that in the Right to Food, it does give the definition of harvest and harvest meant to hunt and fish and therefore, it's already there, this would be redundant and is not needed. And as already been stated, the opinion of the Attorney General's Office was that this could open up to litigation and other shenanigans around the whole issue, and it's already been resolved, so. Thank you.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to the Minority Report before us. I'd like to just read the Committee Amendment to this bill, so everybody can hear it.

"The Legislature recognizes that the harvesting of fish and wildlife by hunting, fishing or trapping is a valued part of the cultural heritage of this State. The Legislature further recognizes that these activities perform an essential role in the State's economy and in funding the State's management programs for game and non-game species. Such activities also perform an important and sometimes critical role in the biological management of certain fish and wildlife habitats, as well as minimizing disease and conflicts with people within this State.

"In recognition of this cultural heritage and the tradition of stewardship it embodies; in recognition of the important role that the harvesting of fish and wildlife by hunting, fishing or trapping perform in the State's economy and in the preservation and management of the State's fish and wildlife populations; and pursuant to the right to food as declared in the Constitution of Maine, Article I, Section 25, the Legislature declares that the people of the State have the right to harvest fish and wildlife by hunting, fishing or trapping, subject to the applicable laws, rules and regulations authorized pursuant to this Title, which the Department shall vigorously enforce."

This is what the Amendment says, Mr. Speaker. As the Representative from Old Town has said, there was a court decision that pretty much said that the right to food does include a limited right to hunting and fishing, but this right here is a statement by the Legislature to put this into Statute, to codify that. I don't see anything wrong with the words in here, there's nothing wrong with stating what everybody right now understands is where we're at, and this is significant because years down the road, when these sorts of things come to court for the judicial system to decide, they will see that at this time, the Legislature went further and codified this simple fact that just states pretty much how we all understand our fish and game laws as they pertain to the right to food.

This is a simple statement to put in, it doesn't change any of our laws, it doesn't do anything like that, it doesn't make hunting on Sunday legal or anything different than we understand it now, Mr. Speaker. But what it will do is codify this for future generations so that they don't have a question what this Legislature, what these legislators meant when they put it into Law at that time. I support the Majority Report, which puts this into Statute. Very simple, it will straighten things out, and you know what, it will make a lot less lawsuits, because it'll clear up the ambiguity that we have right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Harpswell, Representative Golek.

Representative **GOLEK**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to stand and say a couple of things about this.

First, if people look at the testimonies, the Department of Marine Resources also testified against this for how it will affect the fishing industries and the Department of Inland Wildlife and Fisheries, while neither for nor against, there's a lot of against in the testimony.

But I really want to stand up and speak about is, let us remember that when these bills come up with the right to harvest and right to food and stuff, there is a back door open to Sunday hunting, to Sunday harvests, which can open those doors. And I stand here to say I'm not against Sunday harvesting, Sunday hunting, whichever you want to call it, but we have been to court for this issue and it comes up time and time again.

And why is that important to our State? It's important to our State because whenever these bills come up and they could potentially open a door to the argument to allow Sunday hunting, we lose hunting ground. And those who need hunting ground are those who need to hunt for food, because more lower income people do not own enough land to hunt on their own land.

So, I'm just asking people when they look at this, look beyond the word right to harvest and all the implications around it and take a peek at the testimonies from the Departments. I will be supporting the Minority Report. Thank you.

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

Representative **KESSLER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Permission to pose a question through the Chair?

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **KESSLER**: My question is, besides what the Representative from Harpswell had just said, if somebody could share what potential shenanigans could take place if this LD were to pass.

The SPEAKER: The Member has posed a question through the Chair to any Member who wishes to answer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Carmel, Representative Thorne.

Representative **THORNE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, there will be no shenanigans. This shouldn't be a partisan issue, before this Body votes on this, we'll see what happens, but it shouldn't be a partisan issue.

The analogy that I'll give on this bill is, it started out as pretty innocuous, the right to hunt and fish in Maine. Can you imagine anything more Maine than the right to hunt and fish? But it's like going down a logging road in the wintertime and all of a sudden, you start drifting off, drifting off and before you know it, pow, you're right in a snowbank. I'm hoping that we can pull this bill out and everybody safe and drive away. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **UNDERWOOD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Anybody like to have nice trip between here and Houlton, for example, you'll see some signs up there that says moose or deer or what have you, quite a heavy concentration. And may all of you folks that would enjoy a trip otherwise, I hope you hit a moose doing about 75 or 80 miles an hour. You'll figure it out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Point of Order.

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

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Point of Order would be a question to the Chair. Mr. Speaker, why don't you ask the Member how they wish to vote?

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

ROLL CALL NO. 658

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

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

ABSENT - Adams, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Roberts, Sinclair.

Yes, 71; No, 72; Absent, 6; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 72 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 6 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **NOT ACCEPTED**.

Subsequently, on motion of Representative DILL of Old Town, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "B" (S-522)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-522)** in **NON-CONCURRENCE** and sent for concurrence.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 401)

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

March 17, 2026
Honorable Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
Dear Clerk Hunt:
Pursuant to my authority under House Rule 201.1 (H), I appoint Representative Victoria W. Doudera, of Camden to serve as Speaker Pro Tem to convene the House on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.
Sincerely,
S/Ryan D. Fecteau
Speaker of the House

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

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

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Resolution: (S.P. 913)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

WHEREAS, the 100th Congress of the United States passed a Joint Resolution on March 12, 1987 to designate the month of March as Women's History Month; and

WHEREAS, Maine women of every race, class and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our State in countless recorded and unrecorded ways; and

WHEREAS, Maine women of every race, class and ethnic background have served and continue to serve as leaders in the establishment of charitable, philanthropic, commercial and cultural institutions in our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Maine women have played and continue to play critical economic, cultural and social roles in every sphere of the life of our State, whether in the workforce and as the majority of the State's volunteer workforce; and

WHEREAS, Maine women have protected and defended our collective rights, responsibilities and freedoms in myriad spheres, including serving our country courageously in the military; and

WHEREAS, Maine women have been leaders, not only in securing their own rights of suffrage and increased opportunity, but also in expanding the rights of all who experience oppression as leaders in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement and the peace and justice movement, among others, all of which work to create a more fair and just society for all; and

WHEREAS, despite these contributions, the role of Maine women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued in the body of American history; and

WHEREAS, Congress sent the Equal Rights Amendment to the states for ratification more than 50 years ago, and it is long past time that the principle of women's equality be enshrined in the federal and state constitutions; 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 designate March 2026 as Women's History Month, a time to celebrate and honor the contributions of all Maine women and girls, and to recognize March 8, 2026 as International Women's Day.

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

READ.

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

Representative **LIBBY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Joint Resolution recognizing Women's History Month is timely. There's a lot going on in Maine that I'd love to discuss, but I want to start by speaking to our history, because I think that we need a reminder of our history.

Mr. Speaker, just over 100 years ago, in 1920, women first were allowed to vote, the 19th Amendment was passed. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act prohibited employment discrimination based on sex. In 1972, Title IX was passed that expanded access to education and athletics. This was an important step and, Mr. Speaker, I am a runner and I think of the practical examples of how far we've come as women. In 1966, Bobbi Gibbs ran the Boston Marathon for the first time. First woman. And her name isn't really in the history books, because she didn't register to run. Women were not allowed to register to run in the Boston Marathon as recently as 1966 and 1967. Bobbi hid and then when the race started, she jumped in and ran the course. In 1967, Kathrine Switzer registered, pretending to be a man, because again, she wasn't allowed to run the Boston Marathon as a woman. While she ran the marathon, a man, the race director, tried to physically shove her off the course. Other men; her boyfriend, her coach; protected her and she was allowed to finish over that race director's objections. She went on to be the first officially registered woman to run the Boston Marathon.

In recent years, Mr. Speaker, when I was a member of a disaster relief team out of Boston, I used to volunteer, working the ICU medical tent at mile 19 for the Boston Marathon. And you see thousands and thousands of women running in that marathon, how far we have come from the late 1960s, when a woman was prohibited from running, was physically assaulted and attempted to be shoved out of the race, to now see thousands of women running in this race. This was recent history, Mr. Speaker.

In 1974, the Equal Credit Opportunity was passed, and you know what, Mr. Speaker, now women could finally fully access financial services independently of their husband. What an amazing accomplishment in 1974.

In the 2000s, Mr. Speaker, and particularly the 2020s, we are moving backwards in Maine regarding women's rights. Women and girls are being discriminated against in our State and our laws condone that discrimination. The Maine Human Rights Act says that you cannot discriminate on the basis of sex, and it also says that you cannot discriminate on the basis of gender identity. Mr. Speaker, those two are completely at odds with each other and there is an extreme ideology that prioritizes gender identity over sex, meaning that Maine women and girls are discriminated against in multiple contexts. And in so doing, erased and diminished. Our uniqueness and our hard-fought-for rights and accomplishments are being diminished and erased by men.

Mr. Speaker, when anyone can be a woman, what is the point? And the irony that a man can decide that he is a woman and enter women's spaces or sports over women's objections, talk about the patriarchy. Mr. Speaker, never did I ever think that I would be standing here calling myself a feminist, and not fourth-wave feminist, because that's not actually supporting women's rights.

Mr. Speaker, what is history? Tomorrow will be history on Thursday, and last month, there was a letter published from a woman in a Maine prison that says where we are headed as a State.

"To whomever receives this, hi, my name is Katie Mountain. I am an inmate at Maine Correctional Center. I knew coming to serve my 10-month sentence wouldn't be a walk in the park, but I never thought in a million years it would be a straight nightmare from hell. I am hoping by sending my story out to the world, I might get some help not only for me but for the women who come after me.

"I am a 40-year-old Baptist married woman. I came to MCC in December and stayed in Foxtrot, or the Pods, as they say, for the first 11 days before they moved me up to the women's center. I was moved to B-walk quad. I don't think there's a reason anymore to be called a quad, because it houses six inmates, but it used to only house four.

"When moving into this quad, I was forced into a situation of sharing a bunk with a male inmate. This inmate claims to be transgender, but physically is still male and has a very masculine personality. He makes jokes like, 'sorry, I can't help you, but I can put a baby in you,' or hits you with a teabag and says, 'I teabagged you.' He makes many jokes concerning his manhood. It was a very hard move for me, because I'm a married woman and sharing a bunk with him goes against everything I believe.

"So, I immediately went to the sergeant with some of my concerns, but the women there already warned me I needed to be very careful what I say, because it would be me they lugged back to seg if I expressed feeling unsafe. So, I tried to move to a different room. Over the next few weeks, I went to the sergeant multiple times. I even tried to talk to the unit manager. My husband even tried to call and get help from the outside. I just kept getting told to hang in there, I would be moved soon. I was even told to have my husband call, but it would not change anything.

"I do have to tell you at this time I was having a hard time telling them what I was fully going through because I was ashamed and embarrassed. Even though it wasn't my choice, I was living in sin against my religion. Not to mention I was scared, because my roommate was sitting at the top of my bed, just staring at me when I slept, then would make comments like, 'don't worry, if you don't wake up, I smothered you with a pillow,' or thinking it's funny saying, 'Mountain, wanna murder that light for me?' One morning, she asked me to go into the bathroom. He wanted to read some of the story he was writing for me, to me. I came to find out it was a sex scene. While sitting on the sink, and her in the gray shower chair in front of me, things got awkward. I jumped up early to get out the door, but wasn't quick enough. She pushed me back to the wall and kissed me; I turned, so, she got my nose and cheek; and then pushed past her and ran.

"When the sergeant told me I wasn't leaving this week, either, I finally snapped, called him a liar and told him I couldn't live in there anymore and I would do anything, like go smash my roommate in the mouth, so I could get free of it all. I didn't think I could stand one more second living in fear and straight stress like I had been. I was lugged to seg and had everything taken from me. I was even punished by them keeping my medication from me that first day, so, I was so sick. I did not get clean clothes for the first three days and no hygiene until day seven. I lost pre-release and SCCP home containment and my level four, all because of this.

"My roommate, Andrea Balcer, is still at the women's center, living her best life. He assaults women like me and they look the other way, as I have now found I am at least the sixth girl he has done this to. I have all six other women's names. The prison is doing nothing to stop him. Trump pulled our funding for him being here and women being unsafe, so, them knowing he's a predator and allowing it makes it so much worse. The prison has shattered every part of my soul. The hell of living in sin while fearing your roommate all day, every day, is cruel and unusual torture. It is not fair to anyone.

"I am praying I can get my story out so I can make things safe for the women who come after me. This is only the basics of my story, there is so much more. No person should ever suffer. Please help me get this out, so I have a chance to fix and save others who come into a situation. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Mr. Speaker, this is a terrible part of Maine history and we should be ashamed of ourselves that we allow this to go on, that we allow women to be diminished and erased, to be attacked, that we not speak up because it's more important to insist that someone can believe that they are a different gender, and so, that is the priority. We all know the story of last year. Young women who've worked for years of their lives pushed aside because a young man decided to participate in the girls' pole vault and won the State Championship. That is not fair, this is not safe and to look the other way is reprehensible.

This Joint Resolution makes a mockery of Women's History Month in that Maine is not upholding women's rights. And to say that it is long past time that the principles of women's equality be enshrined in the Federal and State Constitutions, how can you say that with a straight face? How can anyone say that with a straight face, while allowing what is going on in our State regarding the discrimination against women and girls? Anyone who says that they stand for women's rights and is not appalled and taking action regarding Katie Mountain --

The SPEAKER: The Member will defer. The Chair will remind the Member we do not use props during the course of debate.

The SPEAKER: The Member may proceed.

Representative **LIBBY**: Mr. Speaker, if I heard what I just read into the Record and I turned a blind eye, I would be a hypocrite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **SARGENT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I stand, I recognize that the issue that the Good Representative from Auburn brought up is extremely troubling and requires scrutiny. To say that it is a mockery, that it is not true that Maine is advancing and pursuing, and frankly, women all over the world are not advancing with justice for all, all humans, is simply incorrect and outrageous.

The Good Representative mentioned many of the ways in which women have advanced. I'll mention a few more, if I may, because the purpose of this Resolution is to celebrate, commemorate, recognize the enormous progress in history of women and also to celebrate women around the world.

Since I have been alive, we don't need to exactly pin down how long ago that was, when I was a child, there were no women who had been elected to lead a government, either by head of government or head of state. None. Zero. Since that time, there have been 174 across the globe. Some of them we know and we celebrate. Indira Gandhi led her country, India, through the India-Pakistani War. Golda Meir was a titan at the beginning of her country of Israel. Margaret Thatcher was the Iron Lady. Angela Merkel saw the reunification of Germany. And now, we have actually four members of the G20 that are women; the Prime Minister of Japan, the President of Mexico, the Prime Minister of Italy and the President of the European Commission. This is progress. This creates aspiration for all women. Our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, our granddaughters all basically can achieve and the justice must be pursued.

There still are incredible things that women need. I'm very proud this Legislature passed Paid Family Leave. That helps women. We want to help women? We solve and end domestic violence. We want to help women? We make certain that we have equal pay for equal work.

Maine has been a high achiever as we have pushed in these last 60 years. Three women, United States Senators, women serving in the United States House as well as, of course, now our first Chief Executive. We have much to be proud of, and we have much to fight for. I will not listen to the denigration of all of the progress globally women still fight for, and I just ask that we pass this celebratory Resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **QUINT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I would actually like to commend both of the women who spoke before me, because they both brought up some very good points.

Last year, I actually spoke up about issues in prisons in California where women had been raped or impregnated by their cellmates, and it is a genuine concern, as you know, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken with you personally about this. And so, it's a concern when I do hear about a letter that that can possibly be happening here. And I truly hope that we can, in a bipartisan manner, make sure that this is addressed and that women who are locked away are not put in situations where they are unsafe. I find it abhorrent.

But at this time, recognizing women and all of our accomplishments, I would just like to say that I believe the importance of women was ordained by God himself. I would like to celebrate our often overlooked, but vital roles that contribute to the very fabric of our society. That of wives, homemakers and mothers, those who are full-time parents. It is missing in this, Mr. Speaker. I do celebrate all these things, but I celebrate these women that are often overlooked as well.

When I was a home-schooling mother, I never in a million years imagined myself in the role that I now hold. But it is that role of mother and the love that I have for my children that propelled me to be here. I'm very grateful to be here. I'm grateful to be able to speak up and say that there could be problems within our prison system. I was grateful last year to be able to speak up when a young lady in my District was beat out in a race by a boy and I was able to congratulate her, as her Representative, and give her the dignity that I felt that she deserved. I'm very grateful for that. I am very grateful for the women before me who provided that opportunity and paved that way for me. And as I said before, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of both of the ladies that got up and spoke before me. Thank you.

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

Representative **KESSLER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was moved to speak today because there's sort of a convergence of things. It's Saint Patrick's Day today, and I could not help but think of our former Colleague, the Honorable Lois Galgay Reckitt from South Portland, and I just wanted to stand to recognize her memory and her work in advocating for women who have been victims of sex trafficking and all of the work that she had done for women over the course of her life. And the endless efforts that she tried to pass the ERA through this Body, and I just wanted to stand to honor her and her efforts and express my hope that this Body moving forward in the future will honor her work, pass the ERA and someday stop talking about peoples' genitals. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **COLLINS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how do we honor women in Maine? Specifically, how do we honor and celebrate incarcerated women in Maine? The Representative from Auburn already spoke to this, but I, too, feel that I need to speak up.

Quote, "she shoved me against the bathroom wall and tried to force me to kiss her." Quote, "she slid down so that I could feel her, you know, so I could feel that it was a man." Quote, "he's done this to a lot of girls at this point, and we're all traumatized." These are just three accounts of women describing their living conditions at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham. Their living conditions being housed with a man, 6'1", 310 pounds, a biological man. Quote, "I've complained at least four times." Quote, "I've gone to my sergeant six times and my unit manager twice to get moved out." Quote, "we've brought it up to the men at the desk, who then forwarded it to the sergeant, but nothing became of it."

You know, domestic violence does need to be addressed on the streets, in our homes and in our prisons here in the State of Maine. When woman after woman after woman has asked for help and nothing has been done. Quote, "women are paying each other with Pop Tarts and Mountain Dews to accompany them to the bathroom, because they're so afraid." Mr. Speaker, this is how we honor Maine women during Women's History Month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Subsequently, the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED** in concurrence.

Non-Concurrent Matter

JOINT RESOLUTION TO HONOR THE LIFE, FAITH, LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY OF CHARLES "CHARLIE" JAMES KIRK

(H.P. 1485)

READ and **ADOPTED** in the House on February 12, 2026.

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

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

Representative MILLIKEN of Blue Hill **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **INSIST**.

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

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

ROLL CALL NO. 659

YEA - Abdi, Albert, Arata, Archer, Ardell, Arford, Babin, Bagshaw, Bell, Bishop, Blier, Boyer D, Boyer M, Bridgeo, Bunker, Campbell, Carlow, Caruso, Chapman, Cimino, Collins, Cooper, Copeland, Crafts, Cray, Daigle, DeBrito, Dhalac, Dill, Doudera, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Eaton, Eder, Farrin, Faulkingham, Flynn, Foley, Foster, Fredericks, Fredette, Friedmann, Frost, Gattine, Gere, Gifford, Graham, Gramlich, Greenwood, Guerrette, Haggan, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hepler, Hymes, Kessler, Kuhn, Lajoie, Lance, Lee, Libby, Lyman, Malon, Mason, Matlack, McCabe, McIntyre, Meyer, Mingo, Mitchell, Montell, Moonen, Morris, Murphy, Nutting, O'Halloran, Olsen, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Pomerleau, Quint, Ray, Rollins, Rudnicki, Runte, Salisbury, Sargent, Schmersal-Burgess, Shagoury, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Stover, Strout, Swallow, Terry, Thorne, Tuell, Underwood, Wadsworth, Walker, Webb, White J, Wood P, Wood S, Woodsome, Yusuf, Zager, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Ankeles, Beck, Brennan, Cluchey, Dodge, Faircloth, Geiger, Golek, Harriman, Julia, Lookner, Macias, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Milliken, Osher, Pluecker, Pugh, Rana, Rielly, Roeder, Sachs, Sato, Sayre, Skold, Supica, Warren.

ABSENT - Adams, Collamore, Crockett, Hall, Jackson, Lanigan, Lavigne, Lemelin, Roberts, Sinclair, White R.

Yes, 111; No, 27; Absent, 11; Vacant, 1; Excused, 1.

111 having voted in the affirmative and 27 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 11 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the House voted to **INSIST**.

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

On motion of Representative ROLLINS of Augusta, the House adjourned at 2:00 p.m., until 10:20 a.m., Wednesday, March 18, 2026, in honor and lasting tribute to Christina Mary (Hanson) St. Pierre of China, Dale Leon Cushman of Augusta and William Ernest Clark of Skowhegan.