MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Legislative Record

One Hundred and Thirty-First Legislature

State of Maine

Daily Edition

Second Regular Session

Beginning January 3, 2024

Beginning with Page S-1593

19 Senators having voted in the affirmative and 14 Senators having voted in the negative, with 2 Senators being excused, the motion by Senator **RAFFERTY** of York to **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report, **PREVAILED**.

Sent down for concurrence.

All matters thus acted upon, with the exception of those matters being held, were ordered sent down forthwith for concurrence.

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **JUDICIARY** on RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy
S.P. 339 L.D. 780

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-617)**.

Signed:

Senators:
CARNEY of Cumberland
BAILEY of York

Representatives:
MOONEN of Portland
KUHN of Falmouth
LEE of Auburn
MORIARTY of Cumberland
SHEEHAN of Biddeford

The Minority of the same Committee on the same subject reported that the same **Ought Not To Pass**.

Signed:

Senator:
BRAKEY of Androscoggin

Representatives:
ANDREWS of Paris
HAGGAN of Hampden
HENDERSON of Rumford
POIRIER of Skowhegan

(Representative DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe - of the House - supports the Minority **Ought Not To Pass** Report.)

Reports **READ**.

Senator **CARNEY** of Cumberland moved the Senate **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report.

On motion by Senator **STEWART** of Aroostook, supported by a Division of one-fifth of the members present and voting, a Roll Call was ordered.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Carney.

Senator **CARNEY**: Thank you, Mr. President, Colleagues of the Senate. I rise to speak in favor of the pending motion. The 131st Legislature convened just months after the United States Supreme Court reversed nearly 50 years of legal precedent that safeguarded federal protections for abortion. For decades, decisions surrounding reproductive healthcare were made by women and, if they so chose, in consultation with their families, healthcare providers, and support networks. The Dobbs decision took away a fundamental right for half the population and left it up to the states to protect or eviscerate abortion care. I am proud that in the 131st Legislature, we responded to the loss of federal constitutional rights by passing laws to protect access to abortion and related care. We did this because we know that all Mainers deserve access to essential reproductive healthcare, and we needed to ensure that access to healthcare remains safe and legal. In fact, we should all be proud of the work we've done in the last four years to make sure that Mainers and their families have access to reproductive care, including improved access to birth control, postpartum coverage under private insurance and MaineCare, insurance coverage for fertility treatment, and wider access to the children's health insurance program, which provides prenatal care, infant and childcare, young adult care, and postpartum care to thousands of Mainers. A constitutional amendment will support the strong framework we've built together. Maine's laws are built in science and rooted in the understanding that deeply personal, complex medical decisions should not be made by legislators. But access to legal protected created in statute can be attacked. Attorneys General in anti-abortion states have tried to extend their laws beyond their own borders. And within Maine, we've seen hurtful proposals to impose unnecessary and expensive requirements on people who have miscarriages or abortions. As protective as our current laws are, the truth is that reproductive rights remain vulnerable. Indeed, our counterparts in more than 20 states have opted to ban or severely restrict access to abortion, with some going so far as to impose criminal penalties on providers patients, and their support networks while awarding large sums of money to those who intrude on the privacy of doctor-patient and family relationships. And this is only the start. Lawmakers in other states have proposed restrictions on contraception, and the State Supreme Court in Alabama has imperiled the future of assistive reproduction by ruling that embryos are the legal equivalent of children. Congressional and Presidential candidates are campaigning on dangerous federal abortion bans. Look no further than the letter sent by Attorneys General from states that have banned abortion just a few weeks ago. It is clear that Mainers' basic rights to make personal, private healthcare decisions are in jeopardy. It is both remarkable and extremely concerning that these Attorneys General sought to weigh in not on our existing policies and practices, but instead sought to impede our legislative process and challenge the autonomy of Maine's legislative bodies and our state sovereignty. This should be unacceptable to every single elected leader in this Chamber, and it is for that very reason that the protections of a constitutional amendment are so timely and so necessary. A vote in favor of LD 780 says no to out-of-state Attorneys General who want to impose their laws on Maine women. It says no to out-of-state legislators who want to put themselves between Maine doctors

and Maine patients or force their opinions on Maine families when it comes to private, deeply complex, and personal medical decisions. A vote in favor of LD 780 says yes to Mainers, women and girls, families, and men and boys who face complex and private reproductive medical issues. It says yes, especially, to giving Maine voters the opportunity to express their view on a proposed right to reproductive autonomy. Maine has always been a state that values freedom, autonomy, and individual liberties. LD 780 is about all of those things. Consider what message a no vote would send to the people of Maine. We would be telling them we trust you to elect us to the Senate, but we don't trust you to vote on your own right to reproductive autonomy. As an elected official, I owe my constituents more than that. I will be voting Ought to Pass as Amended, and I urge you to do the same. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Penobscot, Senator Guerin.

Senator **GUERIN**: Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, and fellow citizens of the State of Maine. Today, I rise to address a matter that strikes to the core of our values and principles - the protection of innocent life. As a representative of this great state, I am deeply concerned about the proposed expansion of abortion in Maine. Every life is precious. It is our duty as legislators to safeguard the most vulnerable amongst us. The expansion of abortion without reasonable restrictions would undermine this fundamentally responsible -- responsibility and disregard the inherent dignity of every human being, regardless of their stage of development. Unborn children are human. They deserve basic human rights. We must recognize that abortion is not merely a medical procedure, it is a decision that carries profound moral and ethical implications. It is a decision that ends a human life, extinguishing the potential and the possibilities of an innocent child. Abortion is also torture for millions of murdered children. In abortion procedures, children are routinely subjected to the worst acts of violence imaginable. A dilation and evacuation, or D&E, abortion is the most common abortion procedure used for the second trimester abortion committed on babies ages 14 weeks through 22 weeks. In a D&E abortion, the abortionist inserts a large suction catheter into the uterus and turns it on, emptying the amniotic fluid. After the amniotic fluid has been removed, the abortionist uses a sulfur clamp, a grasping instrument with sharp teeth, to grasp and pull one by one the living, moving baby's arms and legs, ripping their limbs from the child's body. The abortionist continues to grasp the child's intestines, spine, heart, lungs, and other parts. The most difficult part of the procedure for the abortionist is usually finding and grasping and crushing the baby's head. You see, many abortions are not just killing, a D&E abortion is excruciating, torturous killing of a baby, who feels every second of his or her live dismemberment. Abortion at its core is a contradiction of every human right, for if human rights are not for all, then they are for none. If human rights do not apply to human life in the womb, then they apply to no one. If our youngest child is not considered worthy of these rights, then why do these rights matter to anyone? Or, as Mother Theresa said prophetically, her words echoing long after her passing, in a nation where a mother can kill her own child, what is left for you or for I to kill one another? We must do better. This civilization defining problem can only be addressed by telling the truth and confronting the truth with solutions. The truth is rejecting this dangerous bill. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the impact of abortion on women and families. Rather than promoting abortion as a solution, we should be investing in support services that empower women facing unplanned pregnancies, providing them with resources and the assistance they need to choose life. These issues transcend our partisan politics. It is about protecting the sanctity of human life and upholding our shared values of compassion and respect. Regardless of where we stand on other issues, we must unite in the defense of the most vulnerable members of our society. Furthermore, I firmly believe that abortion should not be enshrined in our State Constitution. Our Constitution is a sacred document that should reflect our highest ideals and values. The inclusion of abortion would undermine its integrity. Constitutional amendments should be reserved for principles that are fundamental to our democracy and unite us as a society. Abortion is a deeply divisive issue and embedding it in our constitution would only serve to deepen those divisions. Instead, let us engage in open and respectful dialogue, guided by compassion and reason, as we seek to address this complex issue through legislation that respects the sanctity of human life and protects the rights of all individuals. In conclusion, I urge my fellow legislators to reject the expansion of abortion in Maine. Let us instead work towards solutions that promote life, support women in crisis, and uphold the dignity of every human individual. The truth of the value of a human child is written in our souls. We have to struggle to suppress it. It's unnatural to kill a child. It is natural to love and protect a child. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Oxford, Senator Keim.

Senator **KEIM**: Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. Just this legislative session, some in this Chamber passed LD 1619 and we still don't have any idea the full effect of that radical legislation. Abortion in Maine is now allowed without any real restriction up to the moment of live birth, and this is an incredibly divisive issue - with good reason. In addition to the immeasurable value of every child, unborn or born, we still have not authentically considered the basic respect for the rights of the unborn and at which day in their lives they deserve the protection of law, whether it is the day before they are born or the day after. Or if at some point prior to birth they also deserve the right to live. But this bill's language proposes so much more than abortion by using the phrase reproductive autonomy. According to the American Academy of Medical Ethics, reproductive autonomy is open ended, without any ethical restraints. In an attempt to cement a position of late-term abortions up to the moment of birth that is outside the mainstream and a position that majority of Mainers don't agree with, this proposal uses a legal term that has not yet been defined and there are real concerns at what this term could be argued to mean. What unintended issues may arise when this comes to be challenged in courts? My interpretation of this is that the reproductive freedom sought in the constitutional amendment would apply to men as well. Does that mean that a man can deny child support payments if they chose not to have the baby but a woman does? This threatens to upset our entire child support system. Does this mean that we will not be able to enact sensible protections for women in any medical procedures that have to do with reproduction? What impact would this have on reasonable restrictions that safeguard economically vulnerable young women who look to support themselves by selling their

wombs or their eggs? Amending the State Constitution to enshrine a right to abortion in the guise of reproductive rights may impede the State from enacting future commonsense protections for women and pre-born children. We cannot handcuff ourselves this way. There should be no provision in any constitution anywhere that limits or ends life, and this is not a sensible response to a woman's right to abortion, that legal consideration is already law. This would be opening Maine's Constitution up to unknown and potentially damaging law, and I believe that in this Body, we need to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Sagadahoc, Senator Vitelli.

Senator **VITELLI**: Thank you, Mr. President, Women and Men of the Senate. I rise as the proud sponsor of LD 780, a resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Maine to protect reproductive autonomy, and I urge your support. The ability to determine our reproductive health is a fundamental human right and it deserves the same level of protection as other constitutionally protected rights. The ability to control one's reproductive health is vital to being an equal member of our society and our economy. This includes the decisions of when, where -- whether and how to start a family. For 50 years, most of my lifetime, many believed that we had a guaranteed right to reproductive liberty. Maine's statutes in place today continue to protect access to reproductive healthcare. However, the 2022 Supreme Court decision that reversed Roe v. Wade served as a stark reminder that laws can change. LD 780, if approved by voters, would enshrine the right of individuals to access reproductive healthcare, including access to abortion, also birth control and fertility care in our constitution. The language of the title of the proposed referendum, reproductive autonomy, is simple, and I believe straightforward. Yet there have been questions about what this amendment really means. First, reproductive can be understood to cover the basic biology of human reproduction, meaning anything related to the menstrual cycle, conception, or the avoidance thereof, pregnancy, and birth. On the one hand, you see, there is sperm, and on the other, an egg. When these two join, they form what is called a zygote. When and if a zygote successfully implants in a uterus, it is called an embryo. If all goes well, the embryo develops into a fetus, taking nourishment from the womb. Again, if all goes well, over the course of roughly nine months, the fetus is delivered, and the child is born. Autonomy refers to the ability of an individual to decide what happens to their own body, including what medical treatment to pursue. Reproductive autonomy ensures that the person who produces the sperm or the egg and the individual who hosts the embryo in her womb is able to decide when and if and how to engage in reproduction. For instance, there are times when a person may decide to delay reproduction and thus seek birth control. In other instances, an individual may wish to prevent any future reproduction or may have other health reasons for avoiding reproduction, so a vasectomy or a hysterectomy may be in order. In yet other instances, an individual may need medical assistance in their desire to reproduce and IVF or other procedures may be called for. There are times, tragically, when a pregnancy may result from rape or incest or may threaten the health of the mother. In such circumstances, most of us understand the decision to terminate a pregnancy. There are other conditions, however, where the weighty decision to terminate the pregnancy would be considered by the individual with the womb to be in the best interest of that person, her family, or her future ability to bear a child. These medical decisions are highly personal and individual. These are all decisions a person, an autonomous being, makes and has the right to make with the support and care of loved ones and trusted medical providers. I have been pregnant twice in my life, and gratefully gave birth to two healthy sons who are now grown. But my own experience, and from witnessing many friends and family members experience of successful and some not successful pregnancies, I can say unequivocally that there is nothing else like it. As a friend of mine who is a doctor put it, pregnancy may be natural, but it is not normal. By which she meant that a pregnant person's body undergoes major biological changes. Some are clearly visible, but many are not. The reality of one's body giving of itself to form another body is felt in a myriad of ways. And while every pregnancy is different, it is in itself an experience unique among all others. Women and Men of the Senate, reproduction is serious business, and it is those who are engaged in reproduction, the sperm holder, the egg producer, or the individual with the womb, that should be making the decisions about the healthcare they need if and when and how they engage in reproduction. Not me, not you, or any other elected politician. For the good of each and every one of us, we need to get politics out of reproductive care and reproductive care out of politics. This proposed amendment, if approved by voters, would ensure just that - reproductive autonomy. I ask that you support this basic human right and send this measure out to the voters. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Androscoggin, Senator Brakey.

Senator **BRAKEY**: Thank you, Mr. President. Listening to the debate back and forth, and speaking as a member of the Judiciary Committee where this bill was referred out of, there's just a few points I wanted to make briefly. First, it's been mentioned the legislation last year in response to the overturning of Roe v. Wade that puts our State Statutes to where they are today on the matter of abortion, and I just want to note for the record that state law as changed by LD 1619 last year goes far beyond the Roe v. Wade standard, authorizing the killing of pre-born, post-viability babies in the third trimester for any reason. Any reason. And frankly, I am uncomfortable codifying that into our State Constitution. On the larger principle of bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom, you know, hey, adults should be free to make their own decisions in their own lives with their own bodies as long as they're not violating the rights of any other individual. I believe very much in that principle. But I suppose, as we've seen in discourse and debate in this body, there's a disagreement about when an individual is an individual. I personally think post-viability, I think it's pretty hard to argue that a human being who has brain activity, can feel pain, and can be born alive and survive and thrive in the world outside of their mother's womb, I think it's inarguable that at that point we're talking about a human being that has some basic human rights that need to be respected. And I would note in that respect, going through the Declaration of Rights in our Maine Constitution as I look through a lot of the other sections that are in there, I believe this would be the only item in our Declaration of Rights that authorizes the right of one person to violate the rights of another human being. So, in that regard, it would be very out of step with our Declaration of Rights. And then, I do also want to say

something that hasn't come up in debate and discourse on the floor today but did in the policy committee, the Judiciary Committee, you know, why not just vote this out and send it to the ballot and let the people decide, I will note that there have been many proposals for constitutional amendments that have come forward through various policy committees, through this Body, where on the other side, for example, we supported -- the Republican caucus in the Judiciary Committee last year a proposal on parental rights in education. The argument that that should be able to go out to voters wasn't an argument that held weight, you know, as is -- as is fair, right? We have to -- it goes to the Legislature for a specific purpose, so that we can exercise some judgment on behalf of our constituents first before we send things out to vote. So, those are the points I wanted to make. I'll be voting against the Majority Ought to Pass Report.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Brenner.

Senator **BRENNER**: Mr. President and Colleagues of the Senate, I rise in full support of LD 780. One of the opposition's most convincing arguments engages in counterfactuals. That is the story of what didn't happen. They will introduce their son or daughter who stands there in their beloved glory because their mother chose not abort a fetus when she found herself surprised and engulfed in emotion, pregnant. It's a strong story, the counterfactual. No human being should ever be considered a mistake, a lapse in judgment, a life that should not have been. So, what I want to bring before you is my own counterfactual story, which is a story which -- of something that could have been but didn't. So, I've shared personal stories with this Body before, stories that have forced me to dig deep into my meager reserve of courage, but today, I'm going to get real and I'm going to ask for your grace. I'm going to speak, as always, for the men and the women who are not privileged to hold this seat and to speak. And I want to tell you a story. In the early 2000s, when I was a nurse midwife, I owned a practice with two other women. And we had a backup physician practice that would come in and support us when we had obstetrical emergencies or when we had consultations that we needed to make, and one of the exchanges for that service was, as the midwives, we would cover for them at certain times. So, one Saturday morning, I am called in to visit with a patient who is in the hospital for hypertension and she's close to term but it's important for her to come in and have a nonstress test, which is where you put the monitor onto the baby, and you check mom's blood pressure and a couple other clinical symptoms to determine fetal wellbeing as well as maternal wellbeing. So, this was the time when we had paper charts, so I had a paper record in my hand. I've done the basic cursory work of figuring out who this person is, what she's here for at the hospital, and what things I'm going to think about when I go into the room. So, I want into the room, the nurse has already put her on the monitor, and all my focus is, of course, always on mom. I look at the monitor, I see that we've got nice fetal wellbeing, we have a good heart rate, no contractions. I peek at mom's blood pressure readings for the last couple blood pressures that she's had, and everything looks good. And then I turn to the dad, and he looks familiar, he looks really familiar. And so, I start going through the chart because in the chart there's demographic information, and the demographic information, you can find out things like spouse name, so that's what I'm looking for, searching through, and there it is. It's exactly who I thought it was. And so, this is not about me in this situation, this is about this couple, and so he says to me do we know each other? And I said oh, I think we went to a concert once. And I finished the visit with the couple, send them on their way, and I walk out of the room and I sit down in the kitchen on the unit where we could collect ourselves and have lunch, get a snack, that kind of thing. And it all comes flooding back to me. This is a person that I dated. We met working in a summer program, it was a summer experience for me, in Washington DC, and it was a -- like a meals on wheels program for homebound AIDS patients. So, we would cook in the morning and then all afternoon, we would travel around the DC area, delivering these meals. And we connected on multiple levels, and we fell in love and we got pregnant and chose to have an abortion. Fast-forward a couple years later, after that situation in the hospital, I get a pink slip on my desk and the pink slip is how we would communicate messages, phone messages, back and forth. And it's from him and it takes me a few days to call because I had to gather my thoughts. And he says my wife and I are pregnant and rather than go back to the physician practice, we would like for you to be our midwife. I was honored. And I called him and was suspicious about what was going to come from the call, and this was the best thing I could've ever imagined. And I said well, there's one question I have, which is does your wife know about our history? And he said oh, yes, she knows quite well, she was my college sweetheart. What I want you to know about this story is that when I saw this bill on the calendar, I had all these remarks about reproductive autonomy, healthcare, but I wanted to tell you a story about how abortion affects men and women and families and outcomes. So, I called him on Friday, and I said this bill's on the calendar, what do you think if I tell our story? And at first, he was very supportive and I said just think about it for the weekend because it's our story, you should have buy-in, and I want you to feel good about it. And so, Sunday morning, I got a call from him, and he said I have had a wild 36 hours thinking about this, and I called my children, who are 19 and 21, because I wanted them to know, and I am proud to have you tell our story. So, for me, this is a story about what might've been, a path not taken. Today, I don't have a son or a daughter that's 33 years old, and neither does he. How would life have been different for me and for Jeremy? You see, a counterfactual story is supposed to conjure up regret, remorsefulness, repentance. People will judge me for my actions and my beliefs, but my higher power, Mr. President, that I believe in, chooses love and acceptance instead because life is complicated, it's full of hard decisions, and I don't believe that my life -- I'm not going to live it in a state of regret. I don't accept the judgment of people whether they judge me from the pulpit or from the seat of government, Mr. President. This bill before you is not about judgment, but you think it is from how partisans act, but what we are called here today is not to judge but to decide who gets to make a choice. Reproductive healthcare should not be legislated. It is a woman's right to choose for herself. I admit these are not easy decisions. Life is complicated and messy, but it is a woman's choice, and I will add that in my personal story, I was not alone, I had friends who did not judge me, and critically, I had the support of a man, who is also part of the story. He is kind and still is. Men's lives are also deeply affected by these hard decisions and he, just as much as me, wants to preserve and protect and enshrine reproductive autonomy. I am here with just your average abortion story. I'm your average girl who had a pretty average early love affair with an average guy and my average birth control failed. My decision to have an abortion was

clear but agonizing. In how many ways would our lives be different if Jeremy and I had decided to carry the pregnancy to term? No one here can say. But I hate to imagine what my life would be now if I had not had the right to choose. This might -- despite how much I believe in these rights, I also believe it is important that the people of Maine weigh in at the ballot box. We do a great deal of talking about what we believe our constituents want in this building, we argue that the people of Maine would or would not support this or that policy, but with 780, we don't have to argue. We don't have to pontificate. We actually, I believe, Mr. President, have an obligation, not just an opportunity, to let the people of Maine tell us directly what it is that they want. Reproductive healthcare is essential healthcare. Reproductive autonomy is about the right of patients to have control of their personal choices that they make about reproduction. Contraceptive methods are highly effective at preventing unintended pregnancies, but no method and no user is perfect, and now all of you, as well as all of Maine is aware that Jeremy and I certainly weren't perfect at using our birth control. 54% of all abortion patients report having used birth control. Protecting reproductive autonomy is essential for the public health and welfare of our state. As an elected leader, I know my constituents and all Mainers deserve a chance to make their voices heard on this issue. Thank you for your time, and I urge your support on the pending motion.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Daughtry.

Senator **DAUGHTRY**: Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. I rise to speak in favor of the pending motion. At its core, this amendment is about ensuring that the decision of when and how to start a family rests with the individual and not with politicians. And I want to highlight one part of reproductive health that this constitutional amendment would protect and one that is currently in jeopardy at the national level. Right now, the Supreme Court is considering a case that would limit access to mifepristone, a commonly used medication in reproductive care. Mifepristone is safe, effective, and legal. It is used in medication abortions but additionally it is a crucial medication in the treatment of miscarriages. Sadly, roughly 25% of pregnancies end in miscarriage, according to the National Library of Medicine. That means that tragically for many Mainers, one in four pregnancies end in a miscarriage. And this risk increases the older a woman gets when she gets pregnant. The rate could be even higher than reported. Mifepristone is part of a two-drug regime that can safely treat miscarriage without being invasive. The non-medication alternative, a D&C, is not only invasive but puts a woman's health at risk and can cause scarring that can make it impossible to get pregnant in the future. Women in states where this medication-based care has been banned or restricted have reported being denied safe treatments and there are heart wrenching stories of couples having to go through the dangerous process of having a miscarriage play out in a method that could rob them of their chance to ever get pregnant or have a family. Today, we've heard the debate focus on abortion. Research shows that in 2020, one in five pregnancies ended in abortion. That means the reality for as much as we discuss it here, the reality is that a pregnancy is much more likely to end in a miscarriage than abortion. I guarantee that all of us has watched a family member, a beloved friend, or a loved one have to go through the gut-wrenching and heartbreaking process of losing a pregnancy. While we debate abortion, why are we also putting women at risk when they are trying to start a family and potentially rob them of the ability to reach that dream? Access to fundamental healthcare services should not be subject to the whims of judges or politicians or the Supreme Court. It's frankly infuriating and terrifying to see attacks on crucial medications in our bodies continue, and I think women like the Good Senator from Sagadahoc County and the women and men whose shoulders we stand on who got us this reproductive freedom and justice that we are now having to take back and fight for again. Mifepristone has been legal and safe to use for two decades. Without access to it, many women will unnecessarily suffer and have their lives placed at risk while potentially losing their ability to have children in the future. Our courts and elected leaders, ourselves included, should not be ignoring sound science in order to push their own political beliefs on our bodies. Limiting access to safe legal abortion will endanger countless lives. History has shown us this time and time again. It's also shown us that these type of limitations disproportionately affect people who are already disadvantaged including low-income patients and those suffering from domestic abuse. And in a rural state where people already have to drive further than the national average to seek care, it puts Mainers at risk, especially if we think about what we want to see in our state with equal opportunities, we need to put this out to the voters. After all, people with money and power will still be able to get wherever care they want or need. I'm grateful that in Maine we're able to hold the line against rollbacks of abortion care and attacks on our bodies, but my heart aches for patients who live in states where this isn't the case. That's why I stand in strong support of the Maine Reproductive Rights Amendment. Access to healthcare, including reproductive care and treatment of miscarriages is a human right. As elected leaders, we need to do all we can to protect Mainers' access to reproductive healthcare, which includes fertility treatment, access to birth care, and compassionate abortion care. To protect the rights of Mainers now and for generations to come, we must enshrine this essential right in our Constitution. And most importantly, I think it's only fair that we should ask all of Maine if they also want to enshrine this in our Constitution. We need to make sure that these kinds of private, personal, medical decisions stay between a patient and their trusted health provider, and not up to all of us. I urge my fellow lawmakers to not just focus on abortion when you cast this vote today. Think about all the aspects that go with reproductive health, and remember, as other colleagues have said, it's not just about women, it's about families, it's about individuals, and it's about Mainers. Please follow my light.

THE PRESIDENT: The pending question before the Senate is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended Report. A roll call has been ordered. Is the Senate ready for the question?

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#644)

YEAS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, GROHOSKI, HICKMAN, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE, NANGLE, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, TIPPING, VITELLI, PRESIDENT JACKSON

NAYS: Senators: BENNETT, BLACK, BRAKEY, FARRIN, GUERIN, HARRINGTON, KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, POULIOT, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE

EXCUSED: Senators: INGWERSEN, PIERCE

20 Senators having voted in the affirmative and 13 Senators having voted in the negative, with 2 Senators being excused, the motion by Senator **CARNEY** of Cumberland to **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report, in concurrence, **PREVAILED**.

Resolution **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-617) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the Rules, **READ A SECOND TIME** and **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED**.

Sent down forthwith for concurrence.

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** on Bill "An Act to Improve Labor Conditions for Maine Workers"
S.P. 180 L.D. 373

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-618)**.

Signed:

Senators:
TIPPING of Penobscot
DAUGHTRY of Cumberland

Representatives:
ROEDER of Bangor
GEIGER of Rockland
GERE of Kennebunkport
MALON of Biddeford
RUSSELL of Verona Island

The Minority of the same Committee on the same subject reported that the same **Ought Not To Pass**.

Signed:

Senator:
POULIOT of Kennebec

Representatives:
BRADSTREET of Vassalboro
DRINKWATER of Milford
SOBOLESKI of Phillips

Reports **READ**.

Senator **TIPPING** of Penobscot moved the Senate **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report.

On further motion by same Senator, **TABLED** until Later in Today's Session, pending the motion by same Senator to **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report.

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** on Bill "An Act to Prohibit State Contracts with Companies Owned or Operated by the Government of the People's Republic of China"
S.P. 374 L.D. 877

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-621)**.

Signed:

Senators:
NANGLE of Cumberland
LYFORD of Penobscot

Representatives:
STOVER of Boothbay
GREENWOOD of Wales
POMERLEAU of Standish
RISEMAN of Harrison
UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

The Minority of the same Committee on the same subject reported that the same **Ought Not To Pass**.

Signed:

Representatives:
COPELAND of Saco
SINCLAIR of Bath

Reports **READ**.

On motion by Senator **NANGLE** of Cumberland, **TABLED** until Later in Today's Session, pending **ACCEPTANCE OF EITHER REPORT**.