

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
JOURNAL OF THE SENATE**

In Senate Chamber
Thursday
March 21, 2024

Senate called to order by President Pro Tem Richard A. Bennett of Oxford County.

Prayer by Pastor Travis Armstrong of Hope Baptist Church in Manchester.

PASTOR TRAVIS ARMSTRONG: Please join me in prayer. Father God, we thank you, creator of all things, the infinite and all-powerful God, that you are attentive to, interested in, and actively involved in what goes on in our lives and in our world. There's no greater example of that than what we will celebrate next week on Easter Sunday. We come to you today asking for your clear direction for our representatives of the Maine Senate. We thank you for the calling that they have on their lives to serve our state and to make decisions which will directly affect our way of life. We pray that you might direct them as they direct us. We pray that you would use them as your instruments to bring about the end result that you want in each and every issue that comes across their desks. God, we pray that you would remind them of the importance of the task that is before them, that their judgments would be based on truth, compassion, and mercy. May their decisions be based on what is morally right, not on what is socially popular. We pray that today, especially as this body gathers to discuss many important topics, that you would help them to put aside whatever might cause disunity, petty arguments, past disagreements, or anything that would hinder them from what you would have accomplished in their decision making. We pray as well for unity between the men and women of this room, to those who are in the House, and the Office of the Governor. God, we pray that you might be glorified today in this building. We pray that you would bless these Senators for their service, we pray that you would build up and bless this great state of Maine, that we might turn to you as the ultimate authority in our lives and in our towns and in our state, and ultimately in our country. And we pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Senator Teresa S. Pierce of Cumberland County.

Reading of the Journal of Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

Medical Provider of the Day, Sheila Foley, PA-C of Poland.

Off Record Remarks

The Following Communication: S.C. 1035

**STATE OF MAINE
131st LEGISLATURE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
AUGUSTA, MAINE**

March 20, 2024

Honorable Darek M. Grant
Secretary of the Senate
3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Secretary Grant:

Pursuant to my authority under Senate Rule 201.3, please be advised that I appoint the Senator from Oxford, Senator Bennett, to serve as President Pro Tem to convene the Senate on Thursday, March 21, 2024.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

S/Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, on motion by Senator **VITELLI** of Sagadahoc, the following Joint Order: S.P. 989

Ordered, the House concurring, that when the Senate and House adjourn, they do so until Monday, March 25, 2024, at 10:00 in the morning, or until the call of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, respectively.

READ and PASSED.

Ordered sent down forthwith for concurrence.

PAPERS FROM THE HOUSE

Joint Resolution

The following Joint Resolution:
H.P. 1460

**JOINT RESOLUTION
RECOGNIZING MARCH 2024 AS ARTS EDUCATION MONTH**

WHEREAS, Arts Education Month celebrates and amplifies the innovative work of arts educators in service of students and families in communities across the State; and

WHEREAS, the State recognizes arts learning, including dance, music, theater, visual arts and media arts taught by certified arts educators in partnership with community providers as an essential element and core content of a complete and balanced education for all students; and

WHEREAS, arts learning includes engagement with literary arts, folk and traditional arts and service-oriented projects and involves many interdisciplinary connections; and

WHEREAS, arts education provides substantial educational benefits to all elementary, middle and secondary school students; and

WHEREAS, arts education develops students' creative potential and supports collaboration, communication, problem-solving and critical thinking skills that are essential for our workforce in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, arts education has the power to change students' lives; and

WHEREAS, students, families and community members benefit most from arts learning opportunities that are designed to be accessible to all and to make connections to the lived experience of students across the State; and

WHEREAS, arts education helps nurture healthy, inclusive communities where all points of view are respected; and

WHEREAS, while arts learning supports academic growth in a variety of content areas, each arts discipline has tremendous value as stand-alone academic content; and

WHEREAS, equitable access to arts education opportunities is sustained by a wide range of partners, including school leadership, educators, families, teaching artists, arts organizations, local and statewide organizations and government agencies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to designate March 2024 as Arts Education Month and to recognize the professional expertise of arts educators and advocates around the State, invite community leaders to continue to strengthen and increase access to arts education for every student regardless of geographic location and give our full support for quality school arts programs for Maine's youth.

Comes from the House, **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

The Joint Resolution was **READ**.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator

from York, Senator Rafferty.

Senator **RAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. I rise today to speak to the resolution regarding arts education. As we've all heard, March is Arts Education Month, which includes visual and performing arts. Fortunately, we often witness numerous forms of art in this very Chamber regularly. Students stand before us at the start of the day, some singing the National Anthem, while others are playing in their school band and displaying their talents using a wide variety of instruments. Recently, we recognized members of the Portland Symphony Orchestra as they celebrate their 100th year in existence. Throughout these buildings, there are paintings, drawings, sketches, and sculptures, all demonstrating a variety of talents of our citizens, young and old. Needless to say, all are impressive, and it is evident that Maine is rich in talent. Studies indicate that art programs build self-confidence and allow for self-expression. They ignite students' imagination while fostering creativity. The arts help to build perseverance and a good work ethic, while helping develop real-world skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. Students in performing arts learn concentration and focus while sharpening memorization skills, all of which can lead to higher grades and better overall academic achievement. I commend the Legislature and the good people from Maine for their continued support of our art and cultural affairs programs and events throughout our state, as well as the artists for sharing their many talents and making Maine a better place for all of us. Thank you very much.

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

Senator **BRAKEY:** Thank you, Mr. President. I also wanted to add my voice in support of this resolution. As I see it on the calendar today, I just think about, you know, if it wasn't for access to the performing arts, if it wasn't for access to amazing theater programs that I had access to in public high school, I don't know where I would be today. I know so many students with access to the performing arts who, you know, math and science, of course, are incredibly important, but access to the performing arts, I think, really helps, you know, round a person out as an individual and learn so much about the world and how to express themselves in it. So, I thank the Good Senator for sponsoring this resolution and I'm glad to support it today.

The Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED**, in concurrence.

Off Record Remarks

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

ORDERS

Joint Orders

Expression of Legislative Sentiment recognizing:

The Brunswick High School Girls Basketball Team, which won the Class A State Championship. This is the team's first state title. We extend our congratulations and best wishes;
SLS 1603

Sponsored by Senator DAUGHTRY of Cumberland
Cosponsored by Representatives ANKELES of Brunswick,
ARFORD of Brunswick, GOLEK of Harpswell.

The Joint Order was **READ**.

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

Senator **DAUGHTRY:** Thank you, Mr. President, Women and Men of the Senate. Today I am happy to welcome from my hometown, the Brunswick High School Girls Basketball Team, coached by Sam Farrell, to the Maine State Senate. These student athletes made history this month when they defeated Cony High School - sorry, Senator Pouliot - in the Class A Girls Basketball Championship with a score of 54-30, the largest margin of victory in a Class A final since 2017. And with this, snatching their first-ever state championship title and finishing their revenge tour with a bang. The Dragons were led by senior Dakota Shipley, who made 21 points and rounded up ten rebounds for a double-double. Lexi Morin put down 12 points and six assists, and Ava Harvie also threw six assists. The Dragons overwhelmed Cony High School and came back from an eight-point deficit in the first two minutes of the game to scoring the next 13 points after. The Dragons also used their height with six-foot-tall Shipley and 5'10" Werner to move through the Rams with ease and get to the basket for layups. I know that many in this Chamber did watch this game, and I also do want to give a shoutout to the amazing Rams at Cony High School. It was an incredible game, and so many of us in this Chamber were watching, and I was cheering you all on. As a proud Brunswick High School graduate, and as an avid basketball fan, I am personally over the moon and so, so, so, so proud of this team. These women have inspired our entire town. And as a girl who grew up playing basketball, I can only imagine what an inspiration they would've been to me when I was little, considering what an inspiration they are to me today. Further, I have to add we also had the Bowdoin College Women's Basketball Team has been on a winning spree as well, and when I was meeting with the Brunswick fourth graders two weeks ago, who were excitedly telling me about how they got to meet this incredible team, I had one young boy come up to me and ask if boys can play basketball, too. Today, I am so proud to acknowledge not only my hometown and our high school girls basketball team by presenting a legislative sentiment to recognize your hard work, dedication and talent, I'm so proud of you all, so proud of the Dragons, and I wish you all the best as you finish this school year and your future endeavors, and I am very excited for next season. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Kennebec, Senator Pouliot.

Senator **POULIOT:** Thank you, Mr. President. As the Senator from Augusta, I want to say congratulations to the Dragons for beating out Cony. I'm also filling out my men's NCAA tournament bracket. The games start today at 12, and I have Gonzaga as the

winner and I'm curious if you could weigh in and help me out to see if this is a good choice, since you are the champions.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Senator has asked an unanswerable question through the Chair to anyone who may respond. Seeing none.

The Joint Order was **PASSED**.

Sent down for concurrence.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair is pleased to recognize in the rear of the chamber the Brunswick High School girls state championship basketball team from the town of Brunswick, including: Sam Farrell, head coach, Abrielle St. Pierre, Emily Doring, Madeline Werner, Dakota Shipley, Alexis Morin, Brooke Choate, Kyra Fortier, Maya Koerber-Marx, Eva Harvie, Nataleigh Cantrell, Brooke Chaput, Autumn Sanford, Cheyenne Shipley, Julianna Morin, and Addison Wintle. They are the guests today of the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Daughtry. Would the guests please rise and accept the greetings of the Maine Senate.

Senator **MOORE** of Washington requested and received leave of the Senate that members and staff be allowed to remove their jackets for the remainder of this Legislative Day.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: S.C. 1028

STATE OF MAINE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business has had under consideration the nomination of Andrew T. Mueller, M.D. of Cumberland, for appointment to the Finance Authority of Maine.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

LEGISLATIVE RECORD - SENATE, THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

YEAS	Senators	3	Curry, C. of Waldo, Guerin, S. of Penobscot, Rafferty, J. of York
	Representatives	8	Roberts, T. of South Berwick, Collamore, A. of Pittsfield, Lanigan, L. of Sanford, LaRochelle, R. of Augusta, Ness, C. of Fryeburg, Sayre, D. of Kennebunk, Walker, M. of Naples, White, B. of Waterville

NAYS	0	
ABSENT	2	Rep. Crockett, E. of Portland, Rep. Smith, K. of Palermo

Eleven members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the nomination of Andrew T. Mueller, M.D. of Cumberland, for appointment to the Finance Authority of Maine be confirmed.

Signed,

S/Chip Curry
Senate Chair

S/Tiffany Danielle Roberts
House Chair

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following:
"Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** be overridden?"

The Chair noted the absence of the Senator from Cumberland, Senator **CHIPMAN**, the Senator from Kennebec, Senator **LAFOUNTAIN**, and the Senator from York, Senator **LAWRENCE**, and further excused the same Senators from today's Roll Call votes.

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158, and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#606)

YEAS: Senators: None

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER,
BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY,
CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, FARRIN,
GROHOSKI, GUERIN, HARRINGTON,
HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, JACKSON,
KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE,
NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT,
RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO,
STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING,
VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM
BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: CHIPMAN, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 32 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **Andrew T. Mueller**, M.D. of Cumberland for appointment to the Finance Authority of Maine was **CONFIRMED**.

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Following Communication: S.C. 1029

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT,
ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS**

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business has had under consideration the nomination of James P. Gardner, Jr. of Easton, for appointment to the Loring Development Authority of Maine.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

LEGISLATIVE RECORD - SENATE, THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

YEAS	Senators	3	Curry, C. of Waldo, Guerin, S. of Penobscot, Rafferty, J. of York
	Representatives	8	Roberts, T. of South Berwick, Collamore, A. of Pittsfield, Lanigan, L. of Sanford, LaRochelle, R. of Augusta, Ness, C. of Fryeburg, Sayre, D. of Kennebunk, Walker, M. of Naples, White, B. of Waterville

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 33 Senators having voted in the negative, with 2 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **James P. Gardner, Jr.** of Easton for appointment to the Loring Development Authority of Maine was **CONFIRMED**.

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

NAYS	0
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Off Record Remarks

ABSENT	2	Rep. Crockett, E. of Portland, Rep. Smith, K. of Palermo
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The Following Communication: S.C. 1030

Eleven members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the nomination of James P. Gardner, Jr. of Easton, for appointment to the Loring Development Authority of Maine be confirmed.

Signed,

S/Chip Curry S/Tiffany Danielle Roberts
Senate Chair House Chair

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business has had under consideration the nomination of Lee Jay Feldman of Lisbon, for reappointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following:
"Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** be overridden?"

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158 and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#607)

YEAS: Senators: None

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER,
BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY,
CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY,
DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN,
HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN,
JACKSON, KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD,
MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT,
RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO,
STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING,
VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM
BENNETT

YEAS	Senators	3	Curry, C. of Waldo, Guerin, S. of Penobscot, Rafferty, J. of York
	Representatives	8	Roberts, T. of South Berwick, Collamore, A. of Pittsfield, Lanigan, L. of Sanford, LaRochelle, R. of Augusta, Ness, C. of Fryeburg, Sayre, D. of Kennebunk, Walker, M. of Naples, White, B. of Waterville

EXCUSED: Senators: LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

NAYS	0
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ABSENT 2 Rep. Crockett, E. of Portland,
Rep. Smith, K. of Palermo

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Eleven members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the nomination of Lee Jay Feldman of Lisbon, for reappointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority be confirmed.

Off Record Remarks

Signed,

S/Chip Curry
Senate Chair

S/Tiffany Danielle Roberts
House Chair

The Following Communication: S.C. 1031

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT,
ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS**

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following:
"Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** be overridden?"

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

The Chair noted the absence of the Senator from Aroostook, Senator **JACKSON**, and further excused the same Senator from today's Roll Call votes.

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158 and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business has had under consideration the nomination of Laura S. Burden of Portland, for reappointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#608)

YEAS: Senators: None

YEAS	Senators	3	Curry, C. of Waldo, Guerin, S. of Penobscot, Rafferty, J. of York
	Representatives	8	Roberts, T. of South Berwick, Collamore, A. of Pittsfield, Lanigan, L. of Sanford, LaRochelle, R. of Augusta, Ness, C. of Fryeburg, Sayre, D. of Kennebunk, Walker, M. of Naples, White, B. of Waterville

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN, HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING, VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: JACKSON, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

NAYS 0

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 32 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **Lee Jay Feldman** of Lisbon for reappointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority was **CONFIRMED**.

ABSENT 2 Rep. Crockett, E. of Portland,
Rep. Smith, K. of Palermo

Eleven members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the nomination of Laura S. Burden of Portland, for reappointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority be confirmed.

Signed,

S/Chip Curry
Senate Chair

S/Tiffany Danielle Roberts
House Chair

131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Dear Mr. President:

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following:
"Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** be overridden?"

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158 and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#609)

YEAS: Senators: None

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN, HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING, VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: JACKSON, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 32 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **Laura S. Burden** of Portland for reappointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority was **CONFIRMED**.

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Following Communication: S.C. 1032

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HOUSING**

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing has had under consideration the nomination of Nathan Burnett of Hiram, for appointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

YEAS	Senators	1	Tipping, M. of Penobscot
	Representatives	6	Roeder, A. of Bangor, Bradstreet, D. of Vassalboro, Drinkwater, G. of Milford, Geiger, V. of Rockland, Russell, R. of Verona Island, Soboleski, M. of Phillips
NAYS		0	
ABSENT		6	Sen. Daughtry, M. of Cumberland, Sen. Pouliot, M. of Kennebec, Rep. Galletta, J. of Durham, Rep. Gere, T. of Kennebunkport, Rep. Malon, M. of Biddeford, Rep. Skold, C. of Portland

Seven members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the nomination of Nathan Burnett of Hiram, for appointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees be confirmed.

Signed,

S/Michael Tipping
Senate Chair

S/Amy Jean Roeder
House Chair

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following:
"Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** be overridden?"

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158 and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#610)

YEAS: Senators: None

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN, HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING, VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: JACKSON, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 32 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **Nathan Burnett** of Hiram for appointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees was **CONFIRMED**.

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Following Communication: S.C. 1033

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HOUSING**

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing has had under consideration the nomination of Kirk Duplessis of Gardiner, for appointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

YEAS	Senators	1	Tipping, M. of Penobscot
	Representatives	6	Roeder, A. of Bangor, Bradstreet, D. of Vassalboro, Drinkwater, G. of Milford, Geiger, V. of Rockland, Russell, R. of Verona Island, Soboleski, M. of Phillips
NAYS		0	
ABSENT		6	Sen. Daughtry, M. of Cumberland, Sen. Pouliot, M. of Kennebec, Rep. Galletta, J. of Durham, Rep. Gere, T. of Kennebunkport, Rep. Malon, M. of Biddeford, Rep. Skold, C. of Portland

Seven members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the nomination of Kirk Duplessis of Gardiner, for appointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees be confirmed.

Signed,

S/Michael Tipping
Senate Chair

S/Amy Jean Roeder
House Chair

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following: "Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** be overridden?"

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158 and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#611)

YEAS: Senators: None

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN, HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING, VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: JACKSON, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 32 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **Kirk Duplessis** of Gardiner for appointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees was **CONFIRMED**.

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Following Communication: S.C. 1034

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HOUSING**

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Troy Dale Jackson
President of the Senate of Maine
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Section 157, and with Joint Rule 505 of the Maine Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing has had under consideration the nomination of Brian H. Noyes of South Freeport, for reappointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees.

After public hearing and discussion on this nomination, the Committee proceeded to vote on the motion to recommend to the Senate that this nomination be confirmed. The Committee Clerk called the roll with the following result:

YEAS	Senators	2	Tipping, M. of Penobscot, Pouliot, M. of Kennebec
	Representatives	6	Roeder, A. of Bangor, Bradstreet, D. of Vassalboro, Drinkwater, G. of Milford, Geiger, V. of Rockland, Russell, R. of Verona Island, Soboleski, M. of Phillips
NAYS		0	
ABSENT		5	Sen. Daughtry, M. of Cumberland, Rep. Galletta, J. of Durham, Rep. Gere, T. of Kennebunkport, Rep. Malon, M. of Biddeford, Rep. Skold, C. of Portland

Eight members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative and zero in the negative, it was the vote of the Committee that the

nomination of Brian H. Noyes of South Freeport, for reappointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees be confirmed.

Signed,

S/Michael Tipping
Senate Chair House Chair

S/Amy Jean Roeder

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The President Pro Tem laid before the Senate the following:
"Shall the recommendation of the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** be overridden?"

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A., Chapter 6, Section 158 and with Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Legislature, the vote was taken by the Yeas and Nays.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#612)

YEAS: Senators: None

NAYS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER,
BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY,
CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY,
DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN,
HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN,
KEIM, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE,
NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT,
RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO,
STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING,
VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM
BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: JACKSON, LAFOUNTAIN, LAWRENCE

No Senator having voted in the affirmative and 32 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, and none being less than two-thirds of the Membership present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the Committee's recommendation be **ACCEPTED** and the nomination of **Brian H. Noyes** of South Freeport for reappointment to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees was **CONFIRMED**.

The Secretary has so informed the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Following Communication: S.C. 1026

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

March 18, 2024

Honorable Troy Dale Jackson, Senate President
Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House
131st Maine State Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, we are writing to notify you that we have approved the request by the bill sponsor Sen. Chipman of Cumberland, to report the following bill Leave to Withdraw:

L.D. 875 An Act to Allow Mini-trucks to Be Operated on Roads in the State

Sincerely,

S/Sen. Ben Chipman
Senate Chair

S/Rep. Lydia Crafts
House Chair

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

The Following Communication: S.C. 1036

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

March 19, 2024

Honorable Troy Dale Jackson, President of the Senate
Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House
131st Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, we are writing to notify you that the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services has voted unanimously to report the following bill(s) out "Ought Not to Pass":

L.D. 1575 An Act to Promote Quality and Innovation in Nursing and Residential Care Facilities

L.D. 2200 Resolve, to Attract and Retain Behavioral Health Clinicians

L.D. 2223 Resolve, to Direct the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Rules and Establish a Study Group Related to Funding and Reimbursement for Mental Health Crisis Resolution Services

This is notification of the Committee's action.

Sincerely,

S/Sen. Joseph M. Baldacci
Senate Chair

S/Rep. Michele Meyer
House Chair

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

The Following Communication: S.C. 1027

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIRST LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

March 19, 2024

Honorable Troy Dale Jackson, President of the Senate
Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House
131st Legislature
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, we are writing to notify you that the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs has voted unanimously to report the following bill(s) out "Ought Not to Pass":

L.D. 48 An Act to Clarify Provisions of the Cannabis Legalization Act Regarding Labels, Packaging and Testing

L.D. 2232 An Act to Limit Contributions to Political Action Committees That Make Independent Expenditures

This is notification of the Committee's action.

Sincerely,

S/Sen. Craig V. Hickman
Senate Chair

S/Rep. Laura Supica
House Chair

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

SENATE PAPERS

Bill "An Act to Ensure That Rules Regarding the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Are Major Substantive Rules"
S.P. 991 L.D. 2275

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

On motion by Senator **RENY** of Lincoln, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **MARINE RESOURCES** and ordered printed.

Sent down for concurrence.

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

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

Joint Resolutions

Joint Resolutions in Memoriam:

WHEREAS, the Legislature has learned with deep regret of the death of:

Robert Jackson, of Presque Isle. Mr. Jackson was a member of the final graduating class at Mapleton High School in 1963. In addition to working in the automotive industry, he served 44 years with the Presque Isle Fire Department, beginning in 1967 as a volunteer. He was widely recognized as a remarkable fire instructor and was honored for his distinguished career and lifelong commitment. Mr. Jackson will be long remembered and sadly missed by his wife of 50 years, Vicki, his family and friends and all those whose lives he touched;
SLS 1602

Sponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook.
Cosponsored by Representative UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle.

The Joint Resolution was **READ**.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Aroostook, Senator Stewart.

Senator **STEWART:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. It's with a heavy heart today that I rise to just share a few words about Robert Dean Jackson, better known as Bob. As you heard in the reading of the sentiment, the way that I like to characterize Bob is he was a true county boy. Grew up there, was a part of the last class from Mapleton, which no longer has a high school, and gave so much of his life to the people of the county through his time, his effort, his deeds, and his heart. And I got to share a bit of that myself. He retired from

the fire department, as you heard, 44 years with the Presque Isle Fire Department, and he retired in 2011, and I joined in 2012. And so, but just because he retired did not at all mean that he was no longer there, he was there quite a bit, actually, and shared a lot of camaraderie and fellowship and brotherhood with the guys that we served with there, and some women, too, on the volunteer side. He was very passionate, as I'll remember, about training and making sure that we were doing the right things because that was how you made it home. That was how you got back to your family. If you trained properly, you were going to work properly and stay safe in that job, and so he was very committed to that effort. And I know I speak on behalf of the entire department when I say thank you for the time that he gave in that effort. He was also very involved in the Northern Maine Fair, another substantial undertaking and event that is a very big deal in Aroostook County. The Northern Maine Fair, it's a huge family affair, as they refer to it, and indeed, so many members of Bob's family remain heavily invested in the Northern Maine Fair. And I thank them for that and the legacy of giving back and community engagement that Bob is leaving behind. He was also very involved in his church community, and I know that many there will miss him as well. I have to give condolences to his wife, Vicki, of 50 years, as well as to his children, a few of which I know - Laurie, Shelly, Rob, who unfortunately passed away recently, and then Sharmin, Chris, and Jamie, who I've had the pleasure to know and get to know over the years. They're all incredible people and, more importantly than that, they have incredible children as well who are all carrying on Bob's legacy and the compassion that he passed down from one generation to another and that civic mindedness, it all lives on strong in Bob's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. And I know that he will be very missed, and I would be remiss if I did not share personal sympathies as well to Chris, who's with us in the Chamber today as well, and our heart goes out to you and we'll be praying for you and with you during this challenging time, along with your whole family. Thank you, Mr. President.

The Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED**.

Sent down for concurrence.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair is pleased to recognize in the rear of the chamber Chris Jackson, and please know your entire family has our sympathies. Thank you.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

House

Ought to Pass Pursuant to Public Law

The Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** on Bill "An Act Related to Airboats and Airboat Noise Limits" (EMERGENCY)
H.P. 1461 L.D. 2272

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass**, pursuant to Public Law 2021, chapter 585, section 2.

Comes from the House with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**, in concurrence.

Under suspension of the Rules, **READ TWICE** and **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**, in concurrence.

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **TAXATION** on Bill "An Act to Provide Property Tax Relief by Increasing the Availability of the Property Tax Fairness Credit"

H.P. 1368 L.D. 2144

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-839)**.

Signed:

Senators:

GROHOSKI of Hancock
CHIPMAN of Cumberland

Representatives:

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

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

Signed:

Representatives:

QUINT of Hodgdon
RUDNICKI of Fairfield

Comes from the House with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-839)** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-839)**.

Reports **READ**.

Senator **GROHOSKI** of Hancock moved the Senate **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report, in concurrence.

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

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Hancock, Senator Grohoski.

Senator **GROHOSKI**: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I just wanted to give members a quick overview of what this bill does and why I hope you'll join me in supporting it. As you probably know, we have a property tax fairness credit which is accessible for folks who file their income taxes, and this is a great opportunity to remind everyone to please remind your constituents that whether they owe money or not, they should file their income taxes because there are a lot of opportunities available when you do so. So, that's my PSA for you all this morning to pass on to the public. But the property tax fairness credit for folks over 65 allows that people who make -- who spend more than 4% of their income on property taxes can get up to \$2,000 back to help pay for those property taxes. This is available to people who rent or to people who own. We also have a similar program for people under 65, but that's not the program that we're looking to amend today. So, what this bill does is it says that if you are a person who's making under \$36,000 a year, instead of that threshold needing to be 4% of your income, if your property taxes are greater than 3% of your income, you would qualify for this benefit. I think that this is a really important measure because although the benefit is not huge, the amount of money that people that are in this sort of lower income level, people who have worked their entire lives, people who are on Social Security making \$22,000 a year, that is the average in the State of Maine, would get a benefit that I think will help them stay in their homes. We know that when people go into nursing homes, for instance, MaineCare pays roughly \$36,000 a year for them to be in a nursing home, and I would just point out that's if you live in an area that has a nursing home - unfortunately, Hancock County is the first county in Maine to have lost all of its nursing homes, a problem that we do need to solve - but I think this bill, which has a modest cost, could save the State a lot of money. For every person that we're able to keep out of a nursing home for a couple months, six months, a year, we save ten times as much as what we paid through this program to try and help them stay in their homes. So, I think this is a great opportunity to help seniors, help people who work their whole lives but don't have enough money coming back to them through Social Security to meet the increasing costs of property taxes, and I do think it will be an investment that saves the state money in the long term. So, I hope you'll join me in supporting it.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The pending question for 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 (#613)

YEAS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BLACK, BRAKEY, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, FARRIN, GROHOSKI, GUERIN, HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, JACKSON, KEIM, LAWRENCE, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, POULIOT, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, TIPPING, VITELLI, PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

NAYS: Senators: None

EXCUSED: Senator: LAFOUNTAIN

34 Senators having voted in the affirmative and no Senators having voted in the negative, with 1 Senator being excused, the motion by Senator **GROHOSKI** of Hancock to **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report, in concurrence, **PREVAILED**.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-839) **READ** and **ADOPTED**, in concurrence.

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

Senate at Ease.

The Senate was called to order by
President Pro Tem **RICHARD A. BENNETT** of Oxford County.

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

House

Ought to Pass As Amended

The Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** on Bill "An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources"
H.P. 1437 L.D. 2237

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-840)**.

Comes from the House with the Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-840)**.

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**, in concurrence.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-840) **READ** and **ADOPTED**, in concurrence.

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

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

Senate

Pursuant to Joint Rule - Referred

From the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** on Bill "An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission and to Reestablish the Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study Commission" (EMERGENCY) S.P. 990 L.D. 2274

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on March 20, 2024 pursuant to Joint Rule 353, subsection 8

READ and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**.

Ought to Pass

Senator RAFFERTY for the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** on Bill "An Act to Allow School Administrative District No. 52 to Issue Temporary Notes for a Wastewater Treatment Project" (EMERGENCY) S.P. 974 L.D. 2257

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass**.

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

Under suspension of the Rules, **READ TWICE** and **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED**.

Sent down for concurrence.

Ought to Pass As Amended

Senator CURRY for the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** on Bill "An Act to Implement Critical Reforms to the Department of Environmental Protection Outlined in the State COVID-19 Reopening Plan"

S.P. 822 L.D. 1997

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-594).**

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-594) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

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

Sent down for concurrence.

Senator NANGLE for the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** on Bill "An Act Regarding the Approval for the Placement of Portable Toilets"
S.P. 938 L.D. 2201

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-586).**

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-586) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

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

Sent down for concurrence.

Senator GROHOSKI for the Committee on **TAXATION** on Bill "An Act to Exempt Certain Prescribed Home Medical Supplies from Sales Tax"
S.P. 480 L.D. 1184

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-593).**

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-593) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

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

Sent down for concurrence.

Senator CHIPMAN for the Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** on Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in the Town of Mechanic Falls the Bill Dunlop Memorial Bridge

S.P. 959 L.D. 2239

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-584).**

Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

Resolve **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-584) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

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

Sent down for concurrence.

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

ENACTORS

The Committee on **Engrossed Bills** reported as truly and strictly engrossed the following:

Emergency Measure

An Act to Establish the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services and Establish Public Defender Offices for Aroostook, Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties
S.P. 270 L.D. 653
(C "A" S-579)

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

Senator **CARNEY:** Thank you, Mr. President, Colleagues of the Senate. I rise briefly because I don't want this moment to pass without us acknowledging the incredible contributions that Senator Keim has had in the work that we've done as a state to strengthen the way we protect Mainers' Sixth Amendment rights. LD 653 was originally offered by Senator Keim in the First Session, and she's worked tirelessly not just during this Legislature but for many years, she's been dedicated to protecting Mainers' Sixth Amendment rights. She's been an outstanding leader on this issue. And with this legislation as amended, we will accomplish a great step forward. And we're going to change the name of the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services, which frankly a lot of people have a hard time understanding what it refers to, to a name that accurately reflects the new role that this organization has in protecting Mainers' Sixth Amendment rights. It will become the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services. The legislation also establishes a number of crucial positions to build out Maine's system of public defender offices, which generally match our district attorney offices. The changes include transferring MCILS funds from an all-other to personal services account to allow the hiring of additional public defenders. It includes an emergency preamble that will allow the commission to proceed immediately with building out our public defense system. A yes vote will add an Aroostook and a Penobscot-Piscataquis office to our current

system within the next several months. This legislation is truly an emergency due to the lack of attorneys available for court appointments, 500 adults lack attorneys, and 150 of those are currently in jail right now. And I would just conclude again by acknowledging the contributions of Senator Keim in this really important area and ask that you all support the enactment of this legislation on an emergency basis.

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

Senator **BRAKEY:** Thank you, Mr. President. I'm pleased to have an opportunity to rise in agreement with my colleague from Cumberland County, Senator Carney. This was a unanimous report out of the committee addressing something I think members of this body is aware is a constitutional crisis in our state, which is the lack of availability of attorneys for those who cannot afford them and yet face charges. Our Constitution does obligate us to provide legal representation to those who are being charged under the laws that we pass in this state, and we are not meeting that obligation right now. I believe, Mr. President, I think you assessed it very well in a recent joint meeting of the Appropriations Committee and the Judiciary Committee that what we're seeing right now with Indigent Legal Services is a slow-moving train wreck. And this legislation before us is the best proposal that I've seen for helping to get us on a path to meeting our constitutional obligations there. So, I'm really glad that we've found consensus around opening these public defender offices. I believe there will be additional public defender offices that may appear in the supplemental budget, but these are a good start from where we are right now. I will say as far as the name change goes, I suppose it's -- I suppose it's an improvement. So, it would be the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services. I wonder what the acronym will be like McPDS will be a wonderful organization to refer to. We had some debate in committee about what the acronym would be, but I suppose this will be all right. So, anyway, thank you, Mr. President, and I am proud to stand with all my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee in encouraging the passage of this measure right now.

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

Senator **KEIM:** Thank you, Mr. President Pro Tem. First, so much gratitude for my colleague from Cumberland, Senator Carney, for those kind words. When I first joined this august body, the very first thing that was thrown at my table -- on my table was the idea that Indigent Legal Services was a mess in need of serious reform. And I was sitting at my desk, leading Judiciary Committee as the Chair, and I was googling Indigent Legal Services. And I thought how do I fix this? Google doesn't even know what it is. And so, from that moment on, you know, I realized, of course, what a crisis actually has only escalated really with our Sixth Amendment rights and in -- and so began my deep dive into learning about it and trying to really educate my colleagues around the crisis that we were facing and just advocating it for so many years. So, actually, this is a pretty momentous time to just have the name changed so that, you know, in the future, some poor chair of Judiciary who is not at all involved in the legal community doesn't have to, you know, Google what they're trying to fix, but instead will just understand because generally people understand what public defense is. So,

I'm very pleased that there is a name change, we don't even have to use an acronym, we can just call it public defense and people are going to understand. And more importantly, the people of Maine, when we advocate for this, they'll know what their money is going to, and that's why I thought it was so important to change the name. They should understand because they will get behind it when they understand what it is, and it is a crisis, and so I'm so pleased to see this expansion of government, which I'm generally very opposed to, but in this area, it's so needed, and it has been building slowly to this point. And every step along the way has only gotten -- made our services better and so this isn't a rash decision, it has been building for years to this point. So, it's a culmination of so many hours of conversations about what to do. So, it is, again, a momentous time. Thank you.

The Chair noted the absence of the Senator from Aroostook, Senator **JACKSON**, and further excused the same Senator from today's Roll Call votes.

This being an Emergency Measure and having received the affirmative vote of 33 Members of the Senate, with no Senators having voted in the negative, and 33 being more than two-thirds of the entire elected Membership of the Senate, was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED** and having been signed by the President Pro Tem, was presented by the Secretary to the Governor for approval.

Ordered sent down forthwith.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Senate

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** on Bill "An Act to Make Long-term Disability Insurance Coverage Available to Public Employees"
S.P. 479 L.D. 1152

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-592).**

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, supported by a Division of one-fifth of the members present and voting, a Roll Call was ordered.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from York, Senator Ingwersen.

Senator **INGWERSEN:** Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill, LD 1152. Public employees in the Maine Public Employees Retirement System, or Maine PERS, have no long-term disability program currently, and every year, teachers, state employees, first responders, and others, are simply falling through the cracks. My commitment and interest to long-term disability began many years ago. It's personal, and I have a bit of a story to tell. My teaching colleague and good friend, Bob Sprankle, suffered unbearable nerve pain from a hernia operation in 2007 that went on for eight years. He applied for long-term disability to discover that it wasn't available to him. He used his sick days, he borrowed from a sick leave bank, he took a short leave of absence, he used every avenue available to him because long-term disability was not something that was currently available. When Bob's options ran out, he returned to work, full of painkillers that really did little on most days, and rested when he could not do much. He set up a cot in his classroom, and he would rest there between classes and then get up to teach when he had to or when he was able to. For over seven years, Bob dealt with this unbearable pain, chronic pain, all the while trying to work and fight with Maine PERS, and he finally had to stop working altogether. Maine PERS currently has a short-term disability program, and while this program provides some financial security during short-term disabilities, when individuals like my friend, Bob, had long-term disability, their disability just fell outside the current program. This is devastating for our public employees. Too sick to work, and yet no long-term disability program to help you stay afloat financially. The lack of long-term disability is another way that our public employees are disadvantaged compared to those paying into the Social Security System. Individuals in Social Security have access to both short-term and long-term disability. Since public employees do not pay into Social Security in our state, they are not eligible for disability benefits in the Social Security program. Maine PERS has a gap in coverage. Social Security does not have the same gap, and it's important to note here that teachers and state employees pay

7.65% of their salary to Maine PERS, whereas if they were in Social Security, they would be required to pay 6.2%. In 2021, the Legislature made significant changes to the short-disability program and those improvements have helped both the system and its members. As part of that effort, a taskforce was convened to investigate the options to provide a long-term disability plan to all Maine PERS participants. The taskforce, which was led by Maine PERS, worked together and developed a framework for implementing such a program. LD 1152 is the fruit of that report. The taskforce was very clear, the more individuals in the plan, the more we can reduce cost for everyone. LD 1152 attempts to fill this gap in long-term disability and will help make sure such future disabled public employees such as teachers and state employees do not fall through the cracks again. I hope you'll support this legislation, and thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: 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 Chair noted the absence of the Senator from Oxford, Senator **KEIM**, and further excused the same Senator from today's Roll Call votes.

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#614)

YEAS: Senators: BAILEY, BALDACCI, BEEBE-CENTER, BRENNER, CARNEY, CHIPMAN, CURRY, DAUGHTRY, DUSON, GROHOSKI, HARRINGTON, HICKMAN, INGWERSEN, LAWRENCE, MOORE, NANGLE, PIERCE, RAFFERTY, RENY, ROTUNDO, TIPPING, VITELLI

NAYS: Senators: BLACK, BRAKEY, FARRIN, GUERIN, LIBBY, LYFORD, POULIOT, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senator: JACKSON, KEIM, LAFOUNTAIN

22 Senators having voted in the affirmative and 10 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, the motion by Senator **TIPPING** of Penobscot to **ACCEPT** the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **PREVAILED**.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-592) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

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

Sent down for concurrence.

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **TAXATION** on Bill "An Act to Change Maine's Tax Laws"
S.P. 217 L.D. 499

Reported that the same **Ought Not to Pass**.

Signed:

Senators:

GROHOSKI of Hancock
LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

PERRY of Bangor
CARMICHAEL of Greenbush
CROCKETT of Portland
HASENFUS of Readfield
LIBBY of Auburn
MATLACK of St. George
QUINT of Hodgdon
RANA of Bangor
RUDNICKI of Fairfield

The Minority of the same Committee on the same subject reported that the same **Ought To Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-591)**.

Signed:

Senator:

CHIPMAN of Cumberland

Reports **READ**.

On motion by Senator **GROHOSKI** of Hancock, the Majority **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report **ACCEPTED**.

Sent down for concurrence.

Divided Report

The Majority of the Committee on **TAXATION** on Bill "An Act to Amend Certain State Tax Laws"
S.P. 856 L.D. 2028

Reported that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-595)**.

Signed:

Senator:

LIBBY of Cumberland

Representatives:

PERRY of Bangor
CARMICHAEL of Greenbush
LAVIGNE of Berwick
LIBBY of Auburn
QUINT of Hodgdon
RUDNICKI of Fairfield

The Minority of the same Committee on the same subject reported that the same **Ought To Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-596)**.

Signed:

Senators:

GROHOSKI of Hancock
CHIPMAN of Cumberland

Representatives:

CROCKETT of Portland
HASENFUS of Readfield
MATLACK of St. George
RANA of Bangor

Reports **READ**.

Senator **GROHOSKI** of Hancock moved the Senate **ACCEPT** the Minority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (S-596)** 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 PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Hancock, Senator Grohoski.

Senator **GROHOSKI**: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to give a brief update on this bill. In 2019, the Maine Legislature passed what was LD 1028, An Act to Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use with Adequate Funding and by Equalizing the Taxes on Tobacco Products and to Improve Public Health. This bill equalized taxes on all tobacco products to the rate of combustible cigarettes. Before the law passed, Maine was taxing other tobacco products at a much lower rate than cigarettes, which created a tax loophole for the tobacco industry to develop and market new products at a lower cost to attract new customers, many of whom become addicted to nicotine. This Legislature this Session, the Department of Administrative and Financial Services submitted LD 2028 as a department bill to correct technical issues in tax law. One portion of LD 2028 closes a loophole that inadvertently excluded certain synthetic nicotine products from being taxed correctly, in alignment with the law passed in 2019. Essentially, the 2019 law was drafted without the benefit of a crystal ball or the phrase including but not limited to. Let this be a lesson to everyone in their drafting. The Minority Report on LD 2028 attempts to align the policy debated and adopted previously by the Legislature and signed into law in 2019 to address youth nicotine addiction by taxing all products containing nicotine at the same rate. I support this bill because from a tax policy standpoint, the policy direction is clear, but the statute itself is lacking. This is a technical change which

addresses unfairness in our tax code. I also support the policy direction. The tobacco industry continues to innovate, and new products like nicotine pouches have high levels of nicotine and appeal to kids because they have a lower cost, thanks to this tax issue, and they are easy to conceal. The industry is spending millions of dollars marketing new smokeless products as less harmful, more convenient, and more socially acceptable alternatives to traditional cigarettes. The synthetic nicotine in these pouches is not recognized as a cessation product. If it were approved as such, it would be exempt from taxation in Maine. If you're not sure what a nicotine pouch is, I can give you one example, Zyn, which is spelled Z-Y-N. This is a tin that contains 15 small white rectangles that look a bit like those desiccant packages that are labeled do not eat that you get with your shoes and other things like that. Zyns are filled with nicotine and are meant to be placed under your lip like tobacco dip. No spitting is required, so nicotine pouches are even less visible than vaping. While Zyns are presented as a healthier, smoke-free alternative to cigarettes, they are still addictive, and we're already finding that dentists are reporting gum injuries for patients who use these pouches. In addition to changing brain chemistry, other health effect of nicotine use include increased blood sugar levels, increased heart rate and blood pressure, and increased risk of heart attack. Synthetic nicotine pouches are being marketed to kids as risk free and trendy, safe alternatives. The 2023 Maine Integrated Health Survey showed that 3.1% of Maine high school students are currently using chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products, which is twice the rate of national respondents using nicotine pouches. Our tax laws need to align with our public health policies, which recognize that nicotine, regardless of how it is consumed, is harmful to health. The department's proposal to close this loophole will help prevent these products from becoming the next vaping epidemic which we will soon be scrambling to protect our youth from if we do not act today. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Libby.

Senator **LIBBY:** Thank you, Mr. President. We all know you want to be called Mr. President instead of Pro Tem. It's an inside joke. Thank you, Mr. President. Well, I'd like to see -- first of all, I want to thank the Good Senator from Hancock, Senator Grohoski, for her hard work on this bill, and I agree with many components of the bill. But I think, you know, when we're trying to correct technical parts of the law, one of the technical parts of the law that we really need to correct is the difference between nicotine and tobacco, and that is just not done here. We are talking here about products -- some nicotine products -- I mean, even in the form of gum and other products, right? And just from a personal standpoint, my mother was a smoker when I was young, and my brother and I, we ganged up on her and we said, you know, we really don't want you to smoke. And I still kind of feel pushy about that, by the way, but she agreed not to, but she needed help. And smoking cessation can -- can be aided by some of these products that we're talking about here and that is why we're speaking about a Minority Report here is because people were conflicted between some of the -- some of the effects of nicotine products that are negative, but then there are the effects that are positive. And it was a very difficult vote. This is one of those everything including the kitchen sink kind of bills, if you -- if you read it. But I think I'm on the compassionate side of the bill, I

honestly do, and that would be the majority amendment, not the one we're considering here, and the -- the products that we're specifically talking about are called modern oral nicotine products, and they come in those various forms, but they include pharmaceutical grade nicotine, not tobacco leaf. And at some point, if we're going to talk about the technical parts of the law, we've got to define that. We can't just lump it together. And unfortunately, the Minority Report still does that despite some great effort here. So, I hope that you'll join me in opposing this item so that we can get to the Majority Report, and I thank you very much for your time.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Kennebec, Senator Hickman.

Senator **HICKMAN:** Thank you, Mr. President. May I pose a question through the Chair?

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Senator may proceed.

Senator **HICKMAN:** In the sales of tobacco products statute, tobacco product means any product that is made from or derived from tobacco or that contains nicotine, and those words are being added to the sales tax for the tobacco tax definition? Is that correct?

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Hancock, Senator Grohoski.

Senator **GROHOSKI:** Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you for the question from the Senator from Kennebec. The change would say tobacco products means any products that are made from or derived from tobacco -- let me just -- I'm engrossing the two bills in my head right now -- or that contain nicotine, whether natural or artificial, including but not limited to. So, that's the change. There is this bizarre artifact that I don't really know the history of or understand, but the FDA itself defines tobacco products as things that contain nicotine because originally, that was the only place where we were getting nicotine, where it was being extracted from. Over time, due to the marvels of modern science, we have figured out how to synthesize nicotine. And so, the FDA is recognizing that that shift has happened, but they haven't gone all the way upstream to redefine tobacco separately from nicotine, they've lumped any kind of nicotine, whether it's artificial or -- excuse me -- synthetically derived or if it comes from a plant, under tobacco. So, we are -- it is a little bit awkward, but we are falling in line with how the federal government defines tobacco, which can include synthetic nicotine.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from York, Senator Harrington.

Senator **HARRINGTON:** Permission to ask a question through the Chair?

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Senator may proceed.

Senator **HARRINGTON:** I guess I'm just curious, can you give a rundown on which products this will raise the tax on, i.e. chewing tobacco, premium cigars, etcetera?

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator

from Hancock, Senator Grohoski.

Senator **GROHOSKI**: Thank you, Mr. President. If Members don't mind, I would read what's in the current statute that's currently taxed at this rate. So, it's tobacco products, cigars, including premium cigars, cheroots -- I don't even know how to say that, sorry -- stogies; electronic smoking devices and liquids used in electronic smoking devices, whether or not they contain nicotine; periques, granulated, plug cut, crimp cut, ready rubbed and other smoking tobacco; snuff; snuff flour, snus; cavendish; plug and twist tobacco; finecut and other chewing tobaccos; shorts; refuse scraps, clippings, cuttings and sweepings of tobacco; and other kinds and forms of tobacco, prepared in such manner as to be intended for human consumption or as is likely to be consumed, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled or ingested by any other means. So, all those things are currently taxed. What this adds is novel products such as the nicotine pouches, which don't fit into this very long list of things but do have parallels, for instance, with electronic smoking devices and liquids used in electronic smoking dissolved, whether or not they contain nicotine. So, I think that it is -- it's really just an issue where we tried to make a very comprehensive list a couple years ago and failed at anticipating what might be coming. And so, I hope this problem will be solved from henceforth by adding that but not limited to language because I think when we try to guess at what's coming ten or 15 years down the road, we just don't always get -- we don't have the full picture. So, the only thing that I'm aware of that's currently on the market that's not being taxed at this rate is the nicotine pouch.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Libby.

Senator **LIBBY**: Thank you. Just to follow up on the Good Senator's comments. My understanding is that we're also talking about other products such as -- it's mostly pouches, but other products such as gum, lozenges, and tablet form, those are all sold currently.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Hancock, Senator Grohoski.

Senator **GROHOSKI**: Thank you for allowing me to continue to answer questions, or to comment. So, if any of those items that Senator from Cumberland, Senator Libby, just mentioned are approved as FDA cessation devices, which I think a lot of gums, for instance, and patches are, then they are not taxed in the State of Maine. There may be products that I'm not aware of that are not approved devices but are those same delivery methods that I just might not be aware of.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The pending question before the Senate is Acceptance of the Majority Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-596) 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 (#615)

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

NAYS: Senators: BLACK, BRAKEY, FARRIN, HARRINGTON, LIBBY, LYFORD, MOORE, POULIOT, STEWART, TIMBERLAKE, , PRESIDENT PRO TEM BENNETT

EXCUSED: Senators: JACKSON, KEIM, LAFOUNTAIN

21 Senators having voted in the affirmative and 11 Senators having voted in the negative, with 3 Senators being excused, the motion by Senator **GROHOSKI** of Hancock to **ACCEPT** the Minority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (S-596)** Report **PREVAILED**.

Bill **READ ONCE**.

Committee Amendment "B" (S-596) **READ** and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the Rules, **READ A SECOND TIME** and **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "B" (S-596)** Report.

Sent down for concurrence.

ENACTORS

The Committee on **Engrossed Bills** reported as truly and strictly engrossed the following:

Act

An Act Regarding the Loring Job Increment Financing Fund
S.P. 810 L.D. 1981
(S "A" S-557 to C "A" S-544)

On motion by Senator **ROTUNDO** of Androscoggin, placed on the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE** pending **ENACTMENT**, in concurrence.

Senate at Ease.

The Senate was called to order by the President Pro Tem.

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

PAPERS FROM THE HOUSE

House Paper

Bill "An Act to Establish a State Minimum Hourly Wage for Agricultural Workers"
H.P. 1462 L.D. 2273

Comes from the House, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** and ordered printed.

On motion by Senator **TIPPING** of Penobscot, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** and ordered printed, in concurrence.

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

ENACTORS

The Committee on **Engrossed Bills** reported as truly and strictly engrossed the following:

Act

An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources
H.P. 1437 L.D. 2237
(C "A" H-840)

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Penobscot, Senator Baldacci.

Senator **BALDACCI:** Thank you, Mr. President. I just briefly wanted to take note of this bill. This is the Speaker's bill on mental health services, and it provides a number of important features that I think all of us want and have championed for a long time, including significantly additional money for 24-7 mental health services all over the state. In addition to the million dollars that's been set aside in the governor's budget for Lewiston to have a crisis receiving center and the money that we're annually funding in Portland for Preble Street, it will create two additional mental health crisis receiving centers, one in Penobscot County and one in Aroostook County, which will help greatly expand the services available for people and also to give law enforcement and others an alternative in terms of jail as an option in terms of treatment. So, there's a number of important things in this bill, including creating an Office of Violence Prevention and also budgeting additional \$6 million for medication management and to cut the waiting list. So, I just wanted people to take note, this is a very important bill, it was passed unanimously in the committee, and I appreciate your support.

On motion by Senator **ROTUNDO** of Androscoggin, placed on the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE** pending **ENACTMENT**, in concurrence.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

On motion by Senator **ROTUNDO** of Androscoggin, the Senate removed from the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE** the following:

An Act to Require Certain School Identification Cards to Include the Telephone Number of a Suicide and Crisis Hotline
H.P. 811 L.D. 1263
(C "A" H-645)

Placed on Special Appropriations Table - July 21, 2023, by Senator **ROTUNDO** of Androscoggin

Pending - **ENACTMENT**, in concurrence

(In Senate, June 21, 2023, **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-645)**, in concurrence.

(In House, June 21, 2023, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED.**)

PASSED TO BE ENACTED and, having been signed by the President Pro Tem, was presented by the Secretary to the Governor for approval.

On motion by Senator **ROTUNDO** of Androscoggin, the Senate removed from the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE** the following:

An Act to Increase the Cap on Bonds Issued by the Maine State Housing Authority to Reflect Current Housing Production Needs in the State
H.P. 1416 L.D. 2209
(C "A" H-788)

Placed on Special Appropriations Table - March 12, 2024, by Senator **ROTUNDO** of Androscoggin

Pending - **ENACTMENT**, in concurrence

(In Senate, March 7, 2024, **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-788)**, in concurrence.)

(In House, March 12, 2024, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED.**)

PASSED TO BE ENACTED and, having been signed by the President Pro Tem, was presented by the Secretary to the Governor for approval.

Off Record Remarks

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Libby.

Senator **LIBBY:** Thank you. A comment that I made earlier that I wanted to clarify. Senator Bennett is actually a very good parliamentarian, one of the best that I've ever met, and so we've been having this debate in our caucus as to whether or not a President Pro Tem should actually be referred to as Mr. President. And there is some debate among academic circles and in government as to whether it should be Pro Tem or President. So, earlier, in jest, and kind of poking one of the best parliamentarians that I think I've ever met, that -- it was the reason for some of my comments. I just want to make those clear. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair thanks the member and would just add that Mr. President is in order, as is Madam President, as the circumstance may call.

All matters thus acted upon were ordered sent down forthwith for concurrence.

Off Record Remarks

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Pierce.

Senator **PIERCE:** Thank you. Women and men of the Senate, as we continue celebrating Women's History Month, I am proud to recognize Eliza Lothrop Homans, a trailblazer whose pioneering work in conservation helped shape her era and generations to come. Eliza was born in 1832 in Dover, New Hampshire. She spent her childhood in Boston and married Charles Dudley Homans in 1856. They lived in Boston but spent summers from the 1870s and onward at their cottage near Schooner Head Overlook, just a few miles from Bar Harbor. Mr. Homans died in 1886. In May of 1908, Eliza deeded 140 acres to the Hancock County Trustees of the Public Reservations, founded by George Dorr and Charles William Eliot, then President of Harvard. The goal of the Hancock County Trustees of the Public Reservations was to protect the stunning landscape around the 1,500 foot Cadillac Mountain. Eliza opted for the land transfer but asked that her name not be publicized. In her letter at the time of her gift, she said, 'I'm doing this because I've learned the lesson of conservation. I think that unless we do this Mount Desert Island is going to turn into an amusement park with possibly a merry-go-round.' This was the first land donation to the HCTPR that started the momentum for the subsequent land donations and purchases of what would become Acadia National Park. Her land transfer, which included part of Champlain Mountain, the Bowl, the Beehive, and Sand Beach, did have conditions, including the right to shoot, fish, boat, and keep a boathouse on the Bowl. The Beehive Mountain Aqueduct Company was also permitted to continue using the pond for public water supply. Eliza's land included what many hikers know now as the Beehive, a steep and challenging hike that offers breath taking views of Sand Beach

and into the Gulf of Maine. Eliza Homans died in 1914 in Bar Harbor. Between 1915 and 1916, the Homans Path was constructed in her name as a part of a trail network at and around Sieur de Monts, the area there. It's a steep trail consisting of granite steps, tight passages, and overhangs where hikers can continue on to the summit of Dorr Mountain. The pathway was lost in the 1940s but reopened in 2003 as a part of the Acadia Trails Forever Project. This path is dedicated to Eliza and serves as a reminder of her legacy and leadership in conservation. In addition to Eliza, many women have made great strides in Acadia history and conservation as whole. A few here include Beatrix Farrand, the landscape architect who is responsible for so much of the look Acadia's carriage roads. Ardra Tarbell worked in the Acadia National Park for 39 years, including being the first woman Chief Clerk and Administrative Officer under the first Superintendent and Park Founder, George Dorr. Florence Bascom, fondly called 'The Stone Lady,' was the first professional female geologist to survey Mount Desert Island, publishing 'The Geology of Mount Desert Island' in 1919. Margaret Stupka was a trained botanist, among the many park wives in the 1920s and '40s who serves the National Park Service without pay, working on trails and recording the botany of the land. And Roxanne Quimby, who carried on the inspiration from Eliza Homans by donating some more land to Acadia National Park and to the Katahdin Woods and Water National Monument. If you never had the opportunity to visit Acadia, hike the hundreds of trails that lead to the summit with extraordinary views to the west of our state and to the east of the scattering islands that lead to the open ocean, I encourage you to put it on your bucket list. You will not be disappointed. I am fortunate to have spent the last 30 years heading up to Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park. My husband and his family have been living and visiting the area for over a century. In fact, Charles William Eliot is my husband's great-great-grandfather. We have biked the carriage trails and hiked the Beehive, Champlain, Dorr, and countless other trails, but I am embarrassed to say I'd never heard of Eliza Homans until this moment when I needed to do something on the floor. That's a loss. That's too bad. This summer I will have the opportunity to travel there again with my family and friends. For as long as I can remember, at the end of each day we gather around the dinner table to tell our stories and adventures of our time in the park that day. I will share Eliza's story, for in truth had it not been for her foresight and generosity our day in Acadia and the days of millions of visitors who come every year to Acadia National Park would have never been made possible. I appreciate the opportunity to recognize - to share this recognition and honor the many outstanding women who have made the park possible. Thank you, Mr. President.

Off Record Remarks

On motion by Senator **STEWART** of Aroostook, **ADJOURNED** until Monday, March 25, 2024 at 10:00 in the morning in memory of and lasting tribute to Robert Jackson of Presque Isle.