

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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this chamber, regardless of party, wants these problems solved. In Senator Kevin Raye you will have a Senate President who will conduct the chamber's business in a manner that keeps us on track regardless of how hot the debate or how divisive the issue. Senator Raye's experience and temperament makes him uniquely suited for a position whose greatest responsibility is to bring people together to solve the very difficult problems that face our state. I'm honored to second the nomination of Kevin Raye for the position of President of the Senate.

On motion by Senator **PLOWMAN** of Penobscot, nominations ceased.

On further motion by same Senator, one ballot was cast, on the part of the Senate, in favor of Kevin L. Raye of Washington for the Office of President of the Senate for the 125th Legislature.

This being done, Senator **KEVIN L. RAYE** of Washington was duly elected President of the Senate of the 125th Legislature.

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

ORDERS

Senate Order

On motion by Senator **COURTNEY** of York, the following Senate Order:

S.O. 9

Ordered, that a message be sent to Governor John E. Baldacci, informing him that Senate President-elect Kevin L. Raye is present in the Senate Chamber, ready to take and subscribe to the oaths of office required by the Constitution to qualify him to enter upon the discharge of his official duties.

READ and PASSED.

The Chair appointed the Senator from Penobscot, Senator **PLOWMAN** to deliver the message to the Governor. The Senator was escorted to the Governor's Office.

Senate at Ease.

Senate called to order by the Assistant Secretary.

Subsequently, the Senator from Penobscot, Senator **PLOWMAN**, reported that she had delivered the message with which she was charged.

Subsequently, the Governor John E. Baldacci., Governor of the State of Maine, entered and addressed the Senate. (Amid applause, the Members rising.)

Senator **KEVIN L. RAYE** of Washington took and subscribed to the oaths of office required by the Constitution to qualify him to discharge his duties as President of the Senate, pursuant to the Rules of the Senate.

The Governor withdrew from the Senate Chamber. (Amid applause, the Members rising.)

THE PRESIDENT: Allow me to express my heartfelt thank you, colleagues, for the confidence you have placed in me to serve as the 114th President of the Maine Senate. I am deeply touched. It is both a tremendous honor and so very humbling to be entrusted to lead this Body as we prepare for the work that lays ahead over the next two years. Thank you especially to my friend, the Senator from York, the Majority Leader, for his gracious and generous words in nominating me. It has been a pleasure to work closely with the Senator from York, Senator Courtney, since we both arrived in the Senate six years ago, and particularly these last two years in leadership together. I have been impressed with the thoughtful approach that Senator Courtney employs. He brings to bear a passionate commitment to his principles combined with a respectful ability to listen and to seek common ground, traits that will make him an excellent Majority Leader. Likewise, I thank the Senator from York, the Minority Leader, for the spirit of bipartisanship embodied in his kind and generous seconding of my nomination. Senator Hobbins has a long history in the Legislature and has shown an ability to forge consensus in his work on the Judiciary and Utilities and Energy Committees. I know that he will bring that spirit to his work in his new post and with so much important and difficult work ahead the positive and constructive working relationship that we have forged over the years will serve this Body and this state well. With my longtime friend, the Senator from Penobscot, Senator Plowman, and the good Senator from Cumberland, Senator Alford, rounding out the new leadership teams we have strong and talented people in place to help guide the work of the Senate.

I want to extend a warm welcome to all of our family and friends who are gathered here with us on this very special day and in all of our lives. Your presence makes this day even more special for all of us. I know that this is a day of great pride for each of you as you see your loved ones assume office as Senators. For me, personally, it is wonderful to have members of my family here. My wife, Karen, without whose love and support I would not be here today. My mother, Francis Raye, a teacher whose 38 years of devotion to her students inspired my passion for education. My in-laws, Barbara and Stan Howard, who are like another mother and father to me. Two of my brothers and their wives. My sister-in-law and her husband. Many nieces and nephews and cousins and friends. Thanks to each of you for being here. I want to thank also my friend, former Senate President Rick Bennett, for being here and for gracing this Chamber with his stirring rendition of the National Anthem. Thank you, Mr. President, for your service in this Body and helping to make this day so memorable for all of us. I'd like to especially acknowledge my good friend, former Governor John R. McKernan Jr. Jock is here not only as our former Governor who provided strong and courageous leadership during difficult times but he is also representing his roommate, our Senior United States Senator, my dear friend, former boss, and long time mentor, Olympia Snowe who is unable to be here due to votes in the United States Senate. Governor, thank you so much for being here. We are all honored by your presence.

Welcome to all of our Senators, both those who are returning for another term and those, more than one-third of this Chamber, who are beginning your first term today. For those of you who are just beginning your service in Augusta, you will find that while the headlines may shout about our disagreements most of what is done here in Augusta is done in bipartisan harmony. Where principle differences divide us, it need not be characterized by bitter recriminations and verbal bombs because, despite our different views, you will come to understand that each person who services here is motivated to do so by a love of this state and a sincere desire to make it a better place. Together, working with the other Body and with the new Chief Executive, we will face many challenges over the next two years. While recent projections suggest that the shortfall over the 2012-2013 biennium will be \$365 million less than previously estimated, the fact is we still face a very significant budget shortfall that will require hard decisions. We face a business climate weakened by a burdensome and confusing array of regulations as well as taxes, energy costs, and healthcare premiums significantly higher than our neighbors in New Hampshire. We face an embarrassing \$400 million debt to our hospitals that must be paid to preserve jobs and secure access to quality health care across the state. We face a precipitous drop in funding for education, exacerbated by a one-time infusion of federal funding that led many school districts to avoid more gradual spending reductions that could have provided a softer landing this year. We face unfunded liabilities, including the need for reform of the Maine State Retirement System. We face transportation needs that will require innovated new thinking and new approaches to squeeze more money out of existing resources because we cannot raise taxes on the hard working families of Maine. We possess important tools that will allow us to meet these challenges head on; determination, focus, thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and Downeast common sense. You know, Winston Churchill once said, 'A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.' We must face today's difficulties with optimism because we do have an opportunity to make the responsible decisions that will make Maine a stronger state in the long run. As we move forward together, I am looking forward to working with each of you as we craft a budget that establishes thoughtful priorities, maintains a commitment to education and to the most vulnerable among us, including our frail elderly and the severely disabled. We must work to put Maine on a stronger foundation for the future by improving our business climate. We must help make it possible for Maine's young people and working families to carve out a bright future and successful careers without pulling up stakes. That is why one of our first acts will be the creation of the Joint Select Committee on Regulatory Reform to consider L.D. 1, a measure to ease the regulatory burdens on Maine's job creators and signal that Maine is open for business. Soon after his inauguration our new Governor will be unveiling a proposal to provide a more detailed framework for the committee's work. In the wake of this historic election, we need to challenge the status quo, so the Joint Select Committee on Rules will be taking a careful look at how this Legislature does business and how we can work smarter and better. We must also share in the sacrifice that is required to secure a balanced budget without raising taxes. That is why I have already taken steps to ensure that the budget in the President's Office and in the Senate's partisan offices will be reduced from previous levels. The people of Maine will be watching us and we will lead by example. That also includes

taking steps to heal the divisions between the two Maines by demonstrating sensitivity to the concerns of parts of this state that have felt left behind by policies pursued here in Augusta. We must recognize that as long as any region of this great state does not share fully in prosperity and opportunity we are all diminished. We will strive for thoughtful balance, balance between preserving vital services and achieving a smaller and more efficient government, balance between rural and urban, balance between preserving our cherished environment and preserving jobs, and balance between the needs of our workforce and ability of employers to continue to provide jobs. Together we can help change the culture of state government. Together we can help create a Maine State Government that is caring and responsible, efficient and affordable, and transparent and effective. Thank you and God bless you. Enjoy this day with your families and friends.

Senator **COURTNEY** of York was granted unanimous consent to address the Senate on the Record.

Senator **COURTNEY**: Thank you Mr. President. Men and women of the Senate, I'd like to start out by congratulating my good friend from York, Senator Hobbins, and my good friend from Cumberland, Senator Alford, on their leadership positions. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with them in the past two years, and the past six years with the Senator from York, Senator Hobbins. I am looking forward to continuing that.

It's with great humility and a sense of duty that I stand before you today. Two years ago Senate Republicans committed to work together with a Democrat majority to solve some of the most difficult challenges of our lifetime. We knew that we could not simply look to the next election for if we did we would be doing a disservice to the people who sent us here. We choose a new direction. Together, with our caucus, we transformed our party from the party of no to one that offered common sense solutions. Instead of walking away from the table when times got tough we persevered and forced ourselves to find common ground. We did this not by compromising our principles but by working respectfully, even when we disagreed.

We've had a lot of time in the Minority to learn some very important lessons. We learned that even though you may have the votes it's better to work together because the other side might come up with an idea that's a better solution than either side thought possible and one should never dismiss an idea just because it comes from a Minority member. Under Senator Raye's leadership the bar for the loyal opposition has set very high. We have all been sent to govern and govern we shall. We will always endeavor to work together to put people before politics.

When I was in the other Body as a Freshman I got bumped from my seat. The Senator from York, Senator Collins, wanted his seat back, so I got bumped to the end of the line in the next to the last row. I was the last Republican actually. I got to sit next to an experienced Democratic legislator, someone who is in this Body today, the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Gerzofsky. He shared a lesson with me that I've tried to live by. Although the first lesson he taught me was how to vote. I knew if I voted opposite of him I would always vote right. Probably the lesson that has lasted with me to this day is that he told me to fight for my beliefs but not to take the debate personal. In some strange twist of faith, the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Gerzofsky,