

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Legislative Record
One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Legislature
State of Maine

Daily Edition

Second Regular Session
January 4, 2012 to May 31, 2012

Pages 1594 - 2357

Act

An Act To Limit the Bonding Authority of the Maine Governmental Facilities Authority to Court Facility Projects

H.P. 603 L.D. 807
(C "A" H-958)

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

Ordered sent down forthwith.

All matters thus acted upon were ordered sent down forthwith 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:

Bond Issue

An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Invest in Transportation Infrastructure To Meet the Needs of the Business Sector and To Create Jobs

S.P. 282 L.D. 894
(S "A" S-590 to C "A" S-568)

This being a Bond Authorization Act, in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of Article IX of the Constitution, having received the affirmative vote of 32 Members of the Senate, with 3 Senators having voted in the negative, and 32 being more than two-thirds of the Members present and voting, was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED** and having been signed by the President, was presented by the Secretary to the Governor for his approval.

Senate at Ease.

Senate called to order by the President.

Off Record Remarks

THE PRESIDENT: I would now like to take prerogative as Presiding Officer, as we are nearing the moment when the gavel falls for the final time on the 125th Maine Senate, to share some thoughts. For some of us, myself included, this will mark the end of our final session in the Senate. With your indulgence, I want to take a few minutes to share some parting thoughts. To be

honest, it is hard for me to believe that nearly eight years have passed since I arrived in this Chamber in December 2004. As I reflect back on my time here, my heart is filled with gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve in the Maine Senate. It has been an amazing life experience to represent the people of Senate District 29 and to work under this Dome with extraordinary people on both sides of the aisle and on both the partisan and non-partisan staffs. I will always be grateful to each of you for the confidence you bestowed in allowing me to serve as President of the Senate. When I was sworn in 17 months ago and stood before you for the first time as Presiding Officer, I said that, while headlines may shout about our disagreements, most of what we would do would be done in bi-partisan harmony and that where principled differences divide us that disagreement need not be characterized by bitter recriminations and verbal bombs because, despite our different views, each person who serves here is motivated to do so by a love of this state and the sincere desire to make it a better place. I think we saw that, as Senator Diamond noted in yesterday's high level of debate on the Supplemental Budget. As we convened that opening day in December 2010 we faced many daunting challenges including, at that time, an \$804 million shortfall and a business climate weakened by burdensome and confusing arrays of regulations as well as high taxes and healthcare premiums significantly higher than our neighbors to the south and rising by double digits year after year. There was a precipitous drop in education funding and no plan to pay our hospitals to preserve the jobs and secure access to quality healthcare across the state. We faced a dangerously unfunded liability in the Maine State Retirement System. As I predicted on that opening day, we met those challenges together, head on, with determination, focus, thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and Maine common sense. We made the responsible decisions that will make Maine a stronger state in the long run. We crafted budgets, five of them bi-partisan and just one along party lines, that established thoughtful priorities, and maintained a commitment to education and to the most vulnerable among us, including our low income elderly, those with disabilities, and low income children.

We leave here with that \$804 million short fall eliminated with the bi-partisan passage of regulatory reform with L.D. 1. We put Maine on a stronger foundation for the future by taking steps to improve our business climate so Maine's young people and working families will be able to carve out a bright future and successful careers without pulling up stakes and leaving Maine. We took a careful look at how the Legislature itself does business and we led by example, saving \$9.4 million in the Legislative Budget, including the Senate President's Office, the Secretary's Office, and both partisan offices. With the bi-partisan passage of LURC reform, the new market's tax credit, and revisions to the EPS school funding formula we took important steps to heal the divisions that have existed in this state by demonstrating sensitivity to the concerns of parts of the state that had felt left behind. Together we struck a thoughtful balance between preserving vital services and achieving a smaller, more efficient government; balanced between preserving our cherished environment and preserving jobs, and balanced between the needs of our workforce and the ability of employers to continue providing jobs. Together we have helped change the culture of state government and have made important progress towards a Maine state government that is caring and responsible, efficient and affordable, and transparent and effective.

I believe we have also shown the way to reducing the partisan rancor that seems to dominate so much of modern day political discourse, not by abandoning principles but by listening and seeking common ground, all the while remembering to treat each other with kindness, respect, and common courtesy. Along the way I have had an opportunity to work with the Leadership Team on both sides of the aisle, whom I count as friends as I prepare to leave this place. Senator Alfond, it has been a pleasure to get to know you better during the 125th Legislature. I have enjoyed our debates and our discussions and I particularly value our shared roots in Eastport. You are a passionate defender of your district and your beliefs and I respect you for that very much. Senator Hobbins, I will always treasure our Thursday evening dinners with Speaker Nutting and Representative Cain and the friendship that we have forged over the past eight years, and especially these past two years as leaders of our respective parties in this Body. I love your stories from the Maine Legislature of the 1970's and 1980's. I almost said 1870's and 1880's, sorry. I look forward to someday looking back with you to these days in that same spirit. Senator Plowman, what can I say about a working relationship and friendship that goes back 25 years? I can still remember the non-political Deb who I hired to work in then-Congresswoman Snowe's office in Bangor and later entrusting to you one of our Springer Spaniel puppies. Little could I have imagined then that we would be colleagues in this Body, an experience that has strengthened our friendship and deepened my respect for you. Senator Courtney, when we arrived in the Senate eight years ago we didn't even know each other. Over the course of our service and work together I have come to have the greatest respect for your leadership, your insights, and your grasp of issues. We have become not just allies but true friends. I know that friendship will continue for the rest of our lives, wherever our lives may take us. When I first arrived in this Chamber as a freshman Senator in the first row, my seatmate to the right, not surprisingly, was Senator Plowman. To my left was the Senator from Oxford, Senator Hastings, another colleague who has distinguished himself in this Body as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee and whom I know is another friend for life. Likewise the others who will be terming out with Senators Courtney, Plowman, Hobbins, and Hastings with me this year are Senator Rosen, who's masterful, patient, thoughtful, and deliberative leadership of the Appropriations Committee will stand as an example for others to follow for years to come; Senator Diamond whom I admire so much for his devotion to public service, his long service in this Capital, his dedication to building consensus, and to fighting the scourge of child sexual abuse; Senator Sullivan whose passion for education is something we all respect and whose notes of encouragement and willingness to work across the aisle I will miss; Senator Brannigan whose sense of humor and impeccable timing, sometimes inappropriate timing, has endeared him to all of us and who has had a long and distinguished career in this building; Senator Bartlett who can always be counted on to give eloquent voice to the core principles of his party; and last but certainly not least, Senator Schneider whose energy and passion on the issues she cares about are eclipsed only by a heart that has enough room for all of us and uplifts us and whose amazing culinary skills has made us all bigger for having known her. I could go on to speak about each and every one in this Chamber. Those of you who are in your first terms, your second terms, and your third terms, each of you have a very special place in my heart.

I want to particularly pay a special tribute to the staff, those talented, hardworking, dedicated people without whom we could not do our work. I want to begin with two officers of the Senate; our superb Secretary Joe Carleton and the very able Assistant Secretary Dave Madore and their stellar staff, both in the Chamber and in the office, Tabetta Peters, Ben Kelleher, Maureen Cyr, Barbara Thayer, Jeanette Rowell, and Tyler LeClair. Sergeant-at-Arms Sean Paulhus, John Seed, Heather Macklin, Nathan Sanborn, and Melissa Wright, and not so long ago Ben Grant. The Majority Office, the staff there with whom I worked very closely, both as Republican Leader and later as Senate President; Diane Johanson, John Bott, Mark Ellis, Meagan Russo, Dawn Croteau, Jay Damon, Keith Herrick, and Krysta Lilly-Brown; all excellent, talented, dedicated, and hardworking people. My own staff in the President's Office: my Chief of Staff and fount of wisdom from her own 24 years of service in both Bodies, the Honorable Mary Small; Rob Caverly, my Senior Policy Advisor, a young man who is thoroughly devoted to public service and the people of Maine and whose work has been invaluable to me; my Special Assistant, Chris Cote, likewise an enormously hard working, thorough, and capable public servant; and Scott Fish, my Communications Director, whose experience and energy and enthusiasm and abilities are invaluable; and last but certainly not least, the inestimable Rose Smith, the only person in America who has worked for 24 years for three Governors of different parties. She could write a book. For some reason she agreed to come and work in my office, where she has graced us all with her institutional knowledge, her sunny disposition, her good humor, and her undying loyalty. Each one of you has become my friend and I thank you for being part of this incredible experience we have shared. Finally, I want to thank my wife and my life partner, Karen, who keeps her nose to the grindstone, literally, to keep the business going and without whose love and support, and I can't even begin to tell you how much support she has given me that has made these past eight years possible, I could not have done it without her. From the bottom of my heart, I thank each and every one of you for this opportunity. I thank you for your friendship. In the immortal words of the late great Bob Hope, thanks for the memories. May God bless each and every one of you and may God always bless the Maine Senate.

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

Senator **HOBBS**: Thank you very much Mr. President. Men and women of the Senate, let me just say that your comments are very hard to follow because I know how sincere you are with this Body and the relationships you have gained and how you contributed as a public servant, Mr. President. I have been involved in politics for a while now and appreciate the highs and lows that come with the political process and the political game. This last term, I think, showcased a brand new ballgame in Maine politics. Let me say, to the good Senator from Kennebec, Senator Katz, some of members of my team are not going to be happy with me for using a baseball analogy because we've heard many from you over the past couple of years. I'm going to dare to use a baseball analogy and a sports analogy in my last comments. You know with a Republican controlled Executive Branch of the Legislature and the results of the November