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Legislative Record House of Representatives One Hundred and Twenty-Third Legislature State of Maine

Volume III

First Special Session

April 1, 2008 - April 18, 2008

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House Legislative Sentiments
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Pages 1358-2163

Representative **CEBRA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how did we get to this critical place? How is it that we find ourselves in a horrendous when it comes to our infrastructure, our bridge infrastructure throughout the whole state?

First, I would like to say how thrilled I am that the Chief Executive has put forward this piece of legislation. I welcome him to the fight, to the future of our bridge safety, but I am equally thrilled to read through the some 29 cosponsors on this piece of legislation. They have decided to stand in the gap for the safety of the people of the State of Maine. I am going to outline, briefly, how we got to this point.

First, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is outline the efforts that have been made in this 123rd Legislature to strengthen the financial position of the Highway Fund that protect our bridges. First, back in November, as a response to the crisis in Minneapolis, the Chief Executive ordered a study to be done on all our bridges, and that report came out and the members of this body received that report. From that report stemmed a list of extraordinary bridges that needed to be repaired immediately, and that is where this stems from. Our committee, the Transportation Committee, we have worked on trying to get more money into the Capital Work Plan, more money into the Highway Fund so that we could work on these projects, and this is our attempt, now at the end of the session, to do that. We tried at the beginning of the session; actually, it was in the First Session of the 123rd, to set aside a portion of the sales tax on vehicles and that didn't garner enough support. We attempted to set aside a portion of the motor vehicle excise tax and that didn't garner support. This bill is the latest attempt here to do that. We tried, in the First Session of the 123rd, to pass motor vehicle fee increases, not unlike these being proposed. We discussed attempts at proposed restructuring of the state aid highway Europe programs, and that did not receive enough support. We looked at a study of the feasibility of tolling I-295 to try to fund that project; that didn't receive a sufficient amount of support for passage. And we attempted a conversion of a part of the motor vehicle fuel excise tax to a sales tax to help the Highway Fund; that didn't receive support. So what we have here, Mr. Speaker is an attempt to fund a problem in the state that, if we don't do it today, if we don't address this problem, is only going to get worse. This bill is reasonable. It is important for our economic future in this state. It will add greatly needed dollars to a thinly stretched bridge program, the fee increases are minor and keep within the New England averages, and it will go a long way towards keeping our bridges safe, which was the name of that report that we received back in November. It will keep our bridges safe, not just for today, but for tomorrow and it will get us closer to being ahead of that curve where our crumbling infrastructure, which needs to become a priority in this state government. It will get us closer to keeping our bridges safe, not just for today but for tomorrow, it is the right bill for the right time, and Mr. Speaker, I ask for a roll call when the vote is taken.

Representative CEBRA of Naples **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

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

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

ROLL CALL NO. 415

YEA - Adams, Annis, Austin, Ayotte, Babbidge, Barstow, Beaudette, Beaudoin, Beaulieu, Berry, Blanchard, Bliss, Boland,

Brautigam, Briggs, Browne W, Bryant, Burns, Cain, Campbell, Canavan, Carey, Carter, Casavant, Cebra, Chase, Clark, Cleary, Connor, Craven, Cray, Crockett, Curtis, Dill, Driscoll, Duchesne, Dunn, Eaton, Eberle, Edgecomb, Faircloth, Farrington, Finch, Finley, Fischer, Fisher, Fitts, Fletcher, Flood, Gerzofsky, Giles. Gould, Greeley, Grose, Hanley S, Harlow, Haskell, Hayes, Hill, Hinck, Hogan, Jacobsen, Jones, Kaenrath, Koffman, Lundeen, MacDonald, Makas, Marean, Marley, Mazurek, McFadden, McKane, Miller, Mills, Miramant, Muse, Nass, Norton, Patrick, Pendleton, Peoples, Percy, Perry, Pieh, Pilon, Pingree, Piotti, Pratt, Prescott, Priest, Rand, Rector, Richardson D, Richardson W., Robinson, Rosen, Samson, Sarty, Savage, Silsby, Schatz, Simpson, Sirois, Strang Burgess, Sutherland, Sykes, Tardy, Theriault, Treat, Trinward, Tuttle, Valentino, Wagner, Walker, Watson, Webster, Weddell, Wheeler, Woodbury, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Cotta, Crosthwaite, Duprey, Gifford, Hamper, Jackson, Johnson, Joy, Knight, Lansley, Lewin, McDonough, McLeod, Pinkham, Plummer, Thibodeau, Thomas, Tibbetts, Vaughan, Weaver.

ABSENT - Berube, Blanchette, Conover, Emery, Moore, Pineau, Rines.

Yes, 124; No, 20; Absent, 7; Excused, 0.

124 having voted in the affirmative and 20 voted in the negative, with 7 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. Committee Amendment "A" (H-1017) was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

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

Under further suspension of the rules, the Bill was PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-1017) and sent for concurrence. ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 525)
STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0001

April 15, 2008

To the Honorable Members of the 123rd Maine Legislature: I am enclosing L.D. 701, "An Act to Authorize the Operation of Slot Machines on Indian Island in Old Town," which I am vetoing pursuant to Art. IV, Part III, Section 2 of the State Constitution. My opposition to the expansion of gambling in Maine is welldocumented and unwavering. In my view, such expansions must gain the approval of Maine's voters via the signature-gathering and referendum processes set forth in Art. IV, Part III, Section 18 of the Maine Constitution. That is how expansions of gaming have traditionally been brought forward. While I recognize that L.D. 701 proposes a more modest expansion than prior proposals have, that should not alter the process. Gambling expansions of any size and scope so alter the fabric of the State that all of its citizens, not just the elected members of the Legislative and Executive branches, deserve an opportunity to be Creating some sort of de minimis exception to this principle sends Maine down a perilous path, fraught with risk of unfair, arbitrary treatment among future gaming proposals.

I encourage the supporters of L.D. 701 to follow the examples from the past and give all of Maine's citizens the opportunity to decide whether this expansion of gambling is in the best interests of the State.

With these concerns and commitments, I hereby veto L.D. 701 and respectfully urge you to sustain it.

Sincerely,

S/John E. Baldacci

Governor

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE**.

The accompanying Bill "An Act To Authorize the Operation of Slot Machines on Indian Island in Old Town"

(H.P. 532) (L.D. 701)

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rumford, Representative Patrick.

Representative PATRICK: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I am going to stand here today and ask you for our support to override the Chief Executive's veto. To me, this is probably an extremely important issue, not just for myself, but for the people of the State of Maine. Too long have we gone and turned our backs on the tribal nations from the standpoint of helping them economically. There have been debates whether or not the help we have given them has been the right type of help, and whether they have done the best with what they have had. Well, I really don't care about that, that is the past. In my eight years here in the Legislature, we have really done nothing, from my standpoint, at helping them out. I have supported them in every way I possibly can and, what this is, LD 701, this is a compromise that is not giving them anything, in reality, more than trying to get them to a point where their income is brought back from the devastation that we did to them through the referendum allowing racinos in the State of Maine.

I know the Chief Executive has been consistent in his vetoing all legislation that doesn't go to referendum, but this is one time we can stand together and say we are willing to do something for the tribes. It isn't whether or not, one hundred percent, whether you are against gambling or not; it is are you in favor of fairness. The minimum amount that we are asking for them, if anything, will barely help them to get to a breakeven point. We have restricted them so much with the number and the 26 days to have their high stakes bingo. I am actually semi-embarrassed for the compromise that we did come to, but I believe that the compromise we did reach with the good Representative from Old Town, Representative Blanchard, was the only way that you would be able to pass the straight-faced test and say, yes, you do believe that they have been adversely affected. Their finances bear out easily that they have been affected and one thing we did was their \$50,000 fee to have high stakes bingo, we reduced it to \$25,000, which really doesn't even help them out hardly at all. So Ladies and Gentlemen, out of fairness to the tribes, to those in Indian Island, to the social programs that are suffering, to the inequities that we perpetrated on them, please, I ask you to vote with me and override the Chief Executive's veto. Thank you.

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

Representative **BLANCHARD**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I am not going to reiterate what the good Representative Patrick has stated. All I am asking you to do is to reach way back into your mind and think, when you push your button, about what little bit of good it is going to do compared to what harm it would do if you voted negative. I ask you to follow my light, and let's give these poor people a little bit back what they had lost a few years ago.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bethel, Representative Carter.

Representative **CARTER**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise to second

what the Representative from Rumford said, and I realize I can't say it as eloquently as he can. This is the only gambling bill that I have ever voted for or probably ever will vote for. I am not as consistent as the Chief Executive in that point, so I would ask you to vote for it because I think it is very important, and it is the only one that I will ever vote for.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Farmington, Representative Mills.

Representative **MILLS**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I respect all of the previous speakers and their sincere support for this bill and support for the override of the Chief Executive's veto. I must stand up and protest and suggest that to override the Chief Executive's veto, in this instance, would defy the will of the people.

Many, many times, the people have spoken on this issue: In 1980, the bill to ban slot machines was upheld in a people's veto. In the year 2000, the proposal for slot machines at Scarborough Downs was defeated, roundly. In the year 2003, the proposal for the casino in Sanford was defeated. The proposal for slot machines at the two racetracks was approved, kind of under the radar screen, when the casino in Sanford took all the heat and all the debate was centered on that issue. In 2007, the proposal for a racetrack casino in Washington County was defeated. The point is that these issues have often gone before the voters and, I guess, we will have another one before the voters this fall, most likely, regarding Oxford County. These issues should come from the voters by initiative, and they should come from the voters, like the Oxford County proposal has done, go through the process and then go out to the voters. It should not come from this body. Whether you are for gambling or against gambling, whether you are for slot machines or against slot machines, it matters not, the issue is that the people have spoken repeatedly and pretty firmly, they want a say in these issues. These issues, the availability and the increased availability of slot machines is an issue that should come from the people and be voted on by the people at large, not dictated to them by this Legislature. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Woolwich, Representative Grose.

Representative **GROSE**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise to veto the Chief Executive's veto. I find it very ironic that we have a Chief Executive that claims to not want gambling in the State of Maine, when we have lottery tickets, scratch tickets. I have stood in line watching people scratch tickets for fifteen minutes, yet our Chief Executive says there is no gambling in the State of Maine. I just find this really ironic, and I take great pleasure in vetoing his veto.

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

Representative **HILL**: Mr. Speaker, may I pose a question through the Chair?

The SPEAKER: The Representative may pose her question.

Representative **HILL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not a gambler so I don't know much about it, and I don't know where the locations are other than what I have heard of Hollywood Slots. I wonder if someone can educate me where the various places in Maine that people can gamble, in some fashion, and how did they get permission to do that, what was the basis for that.

The SPEAKER: The Representative from York, Representative Hill has posed a question through the Chair to anyone who may care to respond. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Farmington, Representative Mills.

Representative **MILLS**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. In an attempt to

answer the previous speaker's question, gambling takes a lot of different forms. This sort of low level gambling, like buying scratch tickets, and then there is, in our state, slot machines. The only slot machines existing in the State of Maine were those approved by the voters in the year 2003 referendum, and they were approved to exist in two different locations and only following approval by the voters of those towns, on or before, I think it is 2003 or 2004. If you recall, the town surrounding Scarborough Downs Raceway voted unanimously against having slots in their communities, Bangor is the only one to approve of slots, and that was all part of the referendum language that the people voted on. There are no other locations authorized by the people by referendum.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bethel, Representative Carter.

Representative **CARTER**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I just rise to point out that this does not increase the number of slot machines in the State of Maine, it simply transfers some back to Indian Island which they lost before. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Lewiston, Representative Carey.

Representative **CAREY**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This is also to answer Representative Hill's question. In addition to the slot machines that Representative Mills addressed and the scratch tickets and the card games that we have addressed in earlier bills in this session, there is a high stakes bingo game that exists at one place in the state, that is on Indian Island. It existed for a period of time; there were actually slots in that facility. There were around 100 slots in that facility that the state took away as part of a broader effort to decrease gambling in the state, and that is what I would add to Representative Mills. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Calais, Representative Perry.

Representative **PERRY**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Again, to answer the question about gambling, I do believe that we also have off-track betting and, at one point, had another high stakes bingo on Indian Township. I would say that there are different forms of gambling throughout the state, whether it be done by nonprofits, whether it be done by the Tribe, to whether it be done with horseracing, so I think that it is hard to separate that.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rumford, Representative Patrick.

Representative PATRICK: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I would also like to clarify that there are at least 326 major nonprofits that have games of chance and bingo. There are probably at least 500 or 600 regular bingo parlors, ranging from small to large, and this body just passed a bill, the nonprofit bill, that took away the limits of all games of chance laws, so now every nonprofit in the State of Maine can now have unlimited gaming. You can have Texas Holdem tournaments with 5,000, with any amount that we pass from this body. So to answer the good Representative's point, you can have gaming of almost any sort of the State of Maine: roulette, you can have craps, you can have Texas Holdem, you can have anything if that bill gets enacted, so the possibility of the expansion of gaming is great in the State of Maine. I would ask you, too, in all seriousness, what is the real issue? Have the tribes been affected finically by the legalized gaming in Bangor? Yes, they have. Do they deserve to have a little bite of the apple? We are not asking them to have a whole racino, we are not asking them to have a whole casino. We are asking for the 100 machines on the limited 26 weekend basis that will help them, hopefully, get to a point where they can breakeven from where they were three or four years ago, help their social programs. Ladies and Gentlemen, let's please vote and vote to override the Chief Executive's second floor guys' veto.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Old Orchard Beach, Representative Hogan.

Representative **HOGAN**: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This is a very serious issue and make no mistake about it. This is a small amount of slot machines, but the issue is gambling. The financial construction of gambling, the way it exists now, is so wrong for the State of Maine, it is not even funny. When you think that you can give away 70 percent, roughly, of money right off the top to the license holder that heads on down the road, or does what they want to do with the money, when we have the needs in this state that exist, you name it-education, roads, bridges, elderly, prescription drugs, you name it. This is no way to proceed with these venues. If these venues change—and they are not going to change because one has succeeded, so the next guy does it the same way-if these venues did change, I would love to support the Indians, and I feel bad about having to stand up here and speak like this, but I am not sold on gambling It is wrong, there are needs in this state that I have just said that are so great and so much money is being spent, and not only is the 65 or 70 percent being given to the license holder, they say that 45 or 40 percent goes to the State of Maine. Well, what's that? Off-track betting, 2 percent; racetracks, 2 percent; sire stakes, 2 percent. That is the State of Maine; those are the needs that we really want to take care of. This is a serious issue. I will never ever vote for a gambling bill again as long as these issues are constructed the way they are, the financial issue, let me tell you that. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Frankfort, Representative Weddell.

Representative **WEDDELL**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I don't get up very often to say too much of anything. What we have done to our Native Americans is a tragedy. My wife is a Native American. I want to give these people an opportunity to make it, and I hope that you follow my good friend's light from Rumford, Representative Patrick, and I am going to vote to override this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Portland, Representative Harlow.

Representative **HARLOW**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Representative Mills is absolutely right about some times voting against the gambling from Scarborough Downs. I was one of the people who voted against it. I don't like gambling, I don't think it is necessarily that good, but it is a question of fairness to me. I think I would never vote against Old Town having gambling, having slots, as long as Bangor has them.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Blue Hill, Representative Schatz.

Representative **SCHATZ**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I look at this as a request from a sovereign nation, and I think that we should honor that request regardless of what happens on the second floor in the Executive Office.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Skowhegan, Representative Finley.

Representative **FINLEY**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I am not a gambler, or necessarily a proponent of the gambling, but I am a proponent for the Native Americans, and I feel that we gave the

horsemen permission to do this and at every turn we have denied the Native Americans their request. I think it is time for us to support them, and I don't often follow Representative Patrick's light, but I will today. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Mexico, Representative Briggs.

Representative **BRIGGS**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I visited the Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation in January and was very educated in their ways, their culture, their educational ways, their financial ways. I just couldn't believe it. When we came back, we made a public statement with Senate President Beth Edmonds that we would be there for them. I feel that they need us now, and what gives us the right to tell them no. Don't they have their own government? I, too, will support this veto and will follow Representative Patrick's light. Thank you.

After reconsideration, the House proceeded to vote on the question, 'Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor?' A roll call was taken.

The SPEAKER: The pending question before the House is 'Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor?' All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 416V

YEA - Annis, Austin, Ayotte, Barstow, Beaudoin, Beaulieu, Berry, Blanchard, Brautigam, Briggs, Browne W, Bryant, Burns, Canavan, Carey, Carter, Casavant, Cebra, Chase, Clark, Cleary, Connor, Cotta, Cray, Crockett, Crosthwaite, Duchesne, Eaton, Eberle, Edgecomb, Farrington, Finley, Fitts, Fletcher, Giles, Gould, Grose, Hamper, Harlow, Haskell, Hayes, Hill, Hinck, Jackson, Jacobsen, Johnson, Jones, Joy, Lansley, Lewin, Lundeen, MacDonald, Makas, Marley, Mazurek, McFadden, McLeod, Miller, Millett, Muse, Nass, Patrick, Pendleton, Peoples, Perry, Pieh, Pinkham, Piotti, Plummer, Pratt, Prescott, Priest, Rector, Richardson D, Richardson W, Rines, Robinson, Rosen, Samson, Sarty, Savage, Saviello, Schatz, Sirois, Sykes, Tardy, Theriault, Tibbetts, Treat, Trinward, Tuttle, Vaughan, Watson, Weddell.

NAY - Adams, Babbidge, Beaudette, Bliss, Boland, Cain, Campbell, Craven, Curtis, Dill, Driscoll, Dunn, Duprey, Faircloth, Finch, Fischer, Fisher, Flood, Gerzofsky, Gifford, Greeley, Hanley S, Hogan, Kaenrath, Knight, Koffman, Marean, McDonough, McKane, Mills, Miramant, Norton, Percy, Pilon, Pingree, Rand, Silsby, Strang Burgess, Sutherland, Thibodeau, Thomas, Valentino, Wagner, Walker, Weaver, Webster, Wheeler, Woodbury, Mr. Speaker.

ABSENT - Berube, Blanchette, Conover, Emery, Moore, Pineau, Simpson, Smith N.

Yes, 94; No, 49; Absent, 8; Excused, 0.

94 having voted in the affirmative and 49 voted in the negative, with 8 being absent, and accordingly the Veto was sustained.

ENACTORS Emergency Measure

An Act To Reduce the Cost of Prescription Drugs Purchased by the State and Counties by Using Section 340B of the Federal Public Health Service Act

(H.P. 1591) (L.D. 2231) (C. "A" H-1011)

Reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 133 voted in favor of the same and

4 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH** with the exception of matters being held.

The Chair laid before the House the following item which was **TABLED** earlier in today's session:

An Act To Amend the Axle Weight Laws for Trucks Transporting Unprocessed Agricultural Products and Forest Products

> (H.P. 1576) (L.D. 2209) (H. "A" H-888 to C. "B" H-872)

Which was **TABLED** by Representative MARLEY of Portland pending **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

Subsequently, the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

The following items were taken up out of order by unanimous consent:

BILLS RECALLED FROM GOVERNOR

(Pursuant to Joint Order - House Paper 1682)

An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Working Group To Study the Effectiveness and Timeliness of Early Identification and Intervention for Children with Hearing Loss in Maine

(H.P. 1655) (L.D. 2295)

- In House, PASSED TO BE ENACTED on April 9, 2008.
- In Senate, PASSED TO BE ENACTED on April 9, 2008.

On motion of Representative PERRY of Calais, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House RECONSIDERED its action whereby the Bill was PASSED TO BE ENACTED.

On further motion of the same Representative, the rules were **SUSPENDED** for the purpose of **FURTHER RECONSIDERATION**.

On further motion of the same Representative, the House RECONSIDERED its action whereby the Bill was PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED.

The same Representative **PRESENTED House Amendment** "A" (H-1019) which was **READ** by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Calais, Representative Perry.

Representative **PERRY**: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I do want to explain why we are bringing this back: In going through the bill, the discovery was with the word "again", the way we had placed it, we made it impossible for action to occur the way it happened. So we brought it back to actually clarify it and make it workable and doable and that is what this amendment does.

House Amendment "A" (H-1019) was ADOPTED.

The Bill was PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by House Amendment "A" (H-1019) in NON-CONCURRENCE and sent for concurrence.

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH** with the exception of matters being held.