

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Now out of respect for this process, which many of you have been directly involved with and have worked very hard and there are many wonderful, wonderful programs and important services to the citizens of Maine that are funded and in fact have been cut in this supplemental budget; therefore, out of respect for those programs that have been cut and for the hard work of this body, I am not going to be asking that this amendment be brought forward. However, I thought it was an important opportunity. I am sort of like the bride: I have been to the altar and I have been jilted; however, I will be back and you will hear more about this very, very important cause in the coming months as we work on a biennium budget. I appreciate your attention in understanding and appreciation of this very important matter that affects just about everybody here, and if it doesn't today, I hope that it never does but it is a very small state out here. Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity.

Subsequently, **Committee Amendment "A" (H-2)** was **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-2)** and sent for concurrence. **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH**.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Sanford, Representative Tuttle, who wishes to address the House on the record.

Representative **TUTTLE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I wanted to give everybody a heads up on the new unemployment numbers that have been released today. In December, unemployment rate rose to 7 percent, up from 6.3 percent in November. We have every indication that this will be a much harder recession than average in Maine.

At twelve months, the current downturn has eclipsed the twelve month average of the nine national recessions since 1950. The 2.1 percentage point rise in unemployment rate, through twelve months, was larger than in three of the last four recessions. The number of unemployed people increased 44 percent to 50,000. The four sectors in retail trade was down 4,100 jobs, construction 3,200 jobs, accommodations and food service 2,100 jobs, and manufacturing of 1,200 jobs accounted for the 91 percent of the net job loss.

One piece of good news is that our high unemployment rate will likely trigger 13 additional weeks of unemployment benefits through February. The Unemployment Trust Fund also has plenty of reserves to pay for benefits, thanks upon the legislation we passed a number of years ago. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The following item was taken up out of order by unanimous consent:

ENACTORS
Emergency Measure

An Act To Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government and To Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009

(H.P. 40) (L.D. 45)
(C. "A" H-2)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Waterford, Representative Millett.

Representative **MILLETT**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I would like to make four very brief points in support of the decision we are about to make.

Very quickly and first, I would like to echo the words of our good House Chair, the Representative from Orono, Representative Cain, this morning in thanking the policy committees for your studiousness and thoughtfulness in making our job at Appropriations much more easier as we dealt with some very difficult issues. I would like to briefly expand that thank you to the hospital subcommittee that worked on our behalf on two very difficult chores, specifically, Representatives Nutting, Miller, and Carey for addressing a problem that we knew was going to be difficult, and they came out with a set of proposals which I think helped the process immensely.

Picking up on that point, I want to say that I feel, and our side of the aisle, I think, feels very good about the language we were able to come to agreement on with respect to the hospital issues, particularly that language that commits us to honoring our obligations of the hospital and addressing their cash flow problems by committing to addressing two years of unpaid settlements that date back to Fiscal Year '05. This is extremely important to our folks back home who are running on very difficult cash flow margins, and I think that you can go back home and talk with your folks who run your hospitals and show them that we made a good faith effort to honor our debts and to be so in a current fashion. It is a very good use of one time money, I believe as well, and we will have this discussion many times before we finish our work.

Thirdly, I just want to say that this may be and hopefully will be our last FY '09 supplemental before we tackle the more difficult job of the biennial budget. It is hopeful, I think, for all of us to assume that maybe our forecasting has been on the mark, but I don't think any of us can be assured of that. I note in the publication from NCSL that is before us, that was in our mailboxes this morning, the very lead paragraph under the article of "Grim Forecasts" saying that the fiscal crisis facing states is the worst in 50 years, and I think that is something to think about as we work our way into the winter and spring.

Finally, I would just like to say that that biennial budget will be the appropriate place for all of us to roll up our sleeves in a more deliberative fashion, wrestle with the priorities that we could and should be setting, as we try to work our way through this economic downturn in a much more thoughtful way that we have been able to do in the last three weeks. We've really not had to, or had the opportunity and time to set real priorities and to think about what we can do in a sustainable fashion going into the future. The biennial budget will certainly afford us that opportunity, I hope the same bipartisan spirit, the same roll up the sleeves attitude in the policy committees prevails, and that we can get to work on that early in February. I encourage your support of what, I think, is the best product we would have come up with in the timeframe that we've had. I urge your support of Enactment.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Orono, Representative Cain.

Representative **CAIN**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Men and Women of the House. It is hard to believe that one month ago today, on December 27th, most of us were still recovering from big holiday meals and making plans to celebrate New Years Eve with family and friends. Our committee

assignments were days old, and our new members, more than 40 in this body alone, were still wondering what a revisor does, where the bathrooms are, and what in the world cloture is.

In this past month alone, so much has changed: Gas prices dropped and are now rising; the stock market continues to go up and down, up and down, and up and down and down; some banks are now zombie backs, while others still fight to survive and lend responsibly; we have a new President, who faces both great promise and problems on all sides; and in the past two weeks alone, we have had daily updates on federal stimulus funds that will come, but we don't know when and we don't know for what and we don't know exactly how much, and somehow in the middle of that, we were supposed to pass a budget. And we did, or we are about to anyway. When I say we, I mean we, all of us.

I would like to thank the members of the Appropriations Committee, who showed up ready to work hard, pay attention to details and get the job done. We have quite a team down in Room 228 and each member brings their own perspective and priorities to our negotiations, and their own experience to our task of understanding complex problems. I would especially like to thank my Senate Co-Chair, who displayed a generous willingness to trust me and all of the members of our committee and work as a team from day one. I also need to thank my colleague, the Representative from Waterford, whose experience and knowledge extend well beyond my years, but whose patience and wisdom he openly shares with our committee, and especially with me, on a daily basis.

Our team has great support also in the Office of Fiscal and Program Review, who worked as diligently and as quickly as we did, to dot the i's and cross the t's and to get a balanced budget. And of course, I would like to thank the Revisor's Office, because they worked very hard to draft that bill and move it up here as quickly as possible so we can have this discussion today.

This budget negotiation was not easy, but in many ways it was a warm-up act for the biennial budget just around the corner. The leadership on all corners and the presiding officers are to be commended for the respectful, direct and honest negotiation that equally considered all sides, and came to mutual agreements on very tough issues. This work sets the stage for what is next, and I can proudly say that we have definitely gotten off on the right foot this time around.

Three major issues dominated our discussions over the past several weeks: hospitals, corrections, and K-12 funding. But the pain in this budget goes well beyond the hot topics that received the most press or generate the most e-mails. But for now, this supplemental budget responsibly lays the groundwork for our work ahead, and I am proud of how we did our work, and I am proud of the final product. I pledge to all of you now that as we move forward to the biennial budget, there will be more time, there will be more opportunity at all stages to put more issues on the table and tackle the many, tough policy and fiscal choices that we have ahead of us. So now, let's move on to what is next. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I request a roll call.

Representative CAIN of Orono **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

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

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Harrison, Representative Sykes.

Representative SYKES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This certainly has been an interesting and difficult budget balancing act. We have had a search to find efficiencies, we have saved money, we have eliminated some jobs, we have worked together

and I am proud of that, we have looked under every stone. However, as was just mentioned, the supplemental budget before us today is a junior varsity game. The main event, the varsity, is yet to come with the biennial budget.

If we had a look under every stone to find money, we need to begin looking at ourselves. Including this morning's session, we have had five sessions of the Legislature. The average time is 46 minutes. It costs us \$13,160 a day to bring us to work here. If you multiply that times five, so far we have spent \$65, 800 on an average of 46 minutes per day.

The supplement budget which we are about to vote on has many issues, and one of those is a cut to the National Alliance of Mental Illness of \$10,000. Specifically, that cut is for crisis intervention training for police officers to help them deal with persons suffering with mental health issues. I wonder in my own mind and maybe you will also, whether or not, if we didn't come one day and save \$13,160, that we could have spent that in a better way, maybe to save that crisis intervention training. I, quite frankly, am embarrassed that we come up for 44, 45 or 46 minutes, much of which is ceremonial time, for that amount of money and spend that of the people's money. We are going to pass the supplemental budget, we are going to go on to the biennial budget and we are going to look for more efficiencies, it is going to be even more difficult. I hope as we proceed in the future that we take a good hard look at how we invest our time here in Augusta. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Enacted. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken.

ROLL CALL NO. 2

YEA - Beaudoin, Beaulieu, Beck, Berry, Bickford, Blodgett, Boland, Bolduc, Briggs, Browne W, Bryant, Burns, Butterfield, Cain, Campbell, Carey, Casavant, Celli, Clark H, Clark T, Cleary, Cohen, Connor, Cornell du Houx, Crafts, Cray, Crockett J, Crockett P, Curtis, Cushing, Davis, Dill, Dostie, Driscoll, Duchesne, Eaton, Eberle, Edgecomb, Eves, Finch, Flaherty, Flemings, Flood, Fossel, Gilbert, Giles, Goode, Hanley, Haskell, Hayes, Hill, Hinck, Hogan, Hunt, Innes, Johnson, Jones, Kaenrath, Kent, Knapp, Knight, Kruger, Lajoie, Legg, MacDonald, Magnan, Martin JR, Martin JL, Mazurek, McCabe, Miller, Millett, Morrison, Nass, Nelson, Nutting, O'Brien, Pendleton, Peoples, Perry, Peterson, Pieh, Pilon, Pinkham, Piotti, Plummer, Priest, Rankin, Richardson D, Robinson, Rosen, Rotundo, Russell, Sanborn, Sarty, Saviello, Schatz, Shaw, Stevens, Strang Burgess, Stuckey, Sutherland, Sykes, Tardy, Theriault, Tilton, Treat, Trinward, Tuttle, Valentino, Van Wie, Wagner J, Wagner R, Watson, Webster, Welsh, Wheeler, Willette, Wright, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Austin, Ayotte, Cebra, Chase, Cotta, Fitts, Fletcher, Gifford, Hamper, Harlow, Joy, Langley, Lewin, Lovejoy, McFadden, McKane, Prescott, Richardson W, Thibodeau, Thomas, Weaver.

ABSENT - Beaudette, Blanchard, Greeley, McLeod, Percy, Pratt, Sirois, Smith.

Yes, 120; No, 22; Absent, 8; Vacant, 1; Excused, 0.

120 having voted in the affirmative and 22 voted in the negative, 1 vacancy with 8 being absent, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate. **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH**.