

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

Senate Legislative Record
One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Legislature

State of Maine

Daily Edition

Second Regular Session
beginning January 8, 2014

beginning at Page 1544

Representatives:

DION of Portland
CASAVANT of Biddeford
KAENRATH of South Portland
LAJOIE of Lewiston
MARKS of Pittston
PEASE of Morrill
PLANTE of Berwick
TYLER of Windham

One member of the same Committee on the same subject reported in Report "B" that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-512).**

Signed:

Representative:

WILSON of Augusta

One member of the same Committee on the same subject reported in Report "C" that the same **Ought Not to Pass.**

Signed:

Representative:

LONG of Sherman

Reports **READ.**

Senator **GERZOFSKY** of Cumberland moved the Senate **ACCEPT** Report "A", **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-511).**

On motion by Senator **KATZ** of Kennebec, **TABLED** until Later in Today's Session, pending the motion by Senator **GERZOFSKY** of Cumberland to **ACCEPT** Report "A", **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-511).**

Divided Report

Eleven members of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** on Bill "An Act To Establish a Process for the Implementation of Universal Voluntary Prekindergarten Education"

S.P. 577 L.D. 1530

Reported in Report "A" that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-508).**

Signed:

Senators:

MILLETT of Cumberland
JOHNSON of Lincoln
LANGLEY of Hancock

Representatives:

MacDONALD of Boothbay
DAUGHTRY of Brunswick
HUBBELL of Bar Harbor

JOHNSON of Greenville
KORNFIELD of Bangor
NELSON of Falmouth
POULIOT of Augusta
RANKIN of Hiram

One member of the same Committee on the same subject reported in Report "B" that the same **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-509).**

Signed:

Representative:

MAKER of Calais

One member of the same Committee on the same subject reported in Report "C" that the same **Ought Not to Pass.**

Signed:

Representative:

McCLELLAN of Raymond

(Representative SOCTOMAH of the Passamaquoddy Tribe - of the House - supports Report "A", **Ought To Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-508).**)

Reports **READ.**

On motion by Senator **MILLETT** of Cumberland, Report "A", **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-508)** Report **ACCEPTED.**

READ ONCE.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) **READ.**

On motion by Senator **KATZ** of Kennebec, **TABLED** until Later in Today's Session, pending **ADOPTION** of Committee Amendment "A" (S-508).

Senate at Ease.

Senate called to order by the President.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Chair laid before the Senate the following Tabled and Later Today Assigned matter:

Bill "An Act To Establish a Process for the Implementation of Universal Voluntary Prekindergarten Education"
S.P. 577 L.D. 1530

Tabled - April 10, 2014, by Senator **KATZ** of Kennebec

Pending - **ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-508)**

(In Senate, April 10, 2014, Reports **READ**. On motion by Senator **MILLETT** of Cumberland, Report "A", **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-508)** Report **ACCEPTED. READ ONCE**. Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) **READ**.)

On motion by Senator **MILLETT** of Cumberland, Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) **READ**.

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: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Millett.

Senator **MILLETT**: Thank you Mr. President. Women and men of the Senate, I rise in support of L.D. 1530. It is in the earliest years of a child's life that he or she builds the foundation upon which learning is built and developed. Advances in neuroscience, molecular biology, and genomics now gives us an improved understanding of how early experiences are built into our bodies and brains. As reported by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, the quality of a child's early environment and the availability of appropriate experiences at the right states of development are crucial in determining the strength or weaknesses of the brain's architecture, which in turn determines how well he or she will be able to think and to regulate emotions. These capabilities strongly influence their chances of becoming healthy and productive members of our society. Public Pre-K is an important approach to providing our children these critical experiences. This bill before us, as amended by the Senate Amendment, helps more of our schools offer voluntary Pre-K programs by making available start-up funds to interested districts. Currently, Maine funds public Pre-K programs through the Essential Programs and Services Funding Formula, but after students enroll it takes two years for a district's state subsidy to fully catch up. Because many districts cannot afford to fund 100% of the first two years costs, they forego this important early learning program. We heard testimony in the Education Committee from Major General Earl Adams of Mission Readiness, United Way Senior Vice-President Dan Coyne, and Colonel Mark Westrum, Correctional Administrator of Two Bridges Regional Correctional Authority and Fight Crime - Invest in Kids, urging us to invest in high quality early learning programs as an important crime reduction strategy, as a down payment on a future productive workforce, and, in the words of Major General Adams, as essential to the future of our country. In addition, early childhood programs are smart investments. Elevate Maine, which is a partnership between Maine Early Investment Group, a group of business leaders, and Educare Central Maine, makes the following case statement, "Human capital is, and always will be, one of Maine's greatest natural resources. Wise investments in human capital development increases workforce capacity, raises productivity and social cohesion to assure Maine's economic competitiveness in a global economy. Specifically, return on investment in early care and education yields a range between \$7 and \$16 for every dollar invested." Our education, social service, law enforcement, military, and business leaders are urging us to make this important investment. Our schools are ready. Our

teachers are ready. The Department of Education is ready. Now is the time for action. I urge you to join me in supporting L.D. 1530. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Hancock, Senator Langley.

Senator **LANGLEY**: Thank you Mr. President. Men and women of the Senate, I have a question, actually, for the President. Mr. President, when your first child came home from the hospital, how terrified were you, that you were going to be able to do this job? I know I was extremely terrified when our first child came home, that I would know anything about how to raise children. I thank God that my wife had much more of a clue than I did, and one of those was making sure that our children went to the Sunshine Nursery School and what I saw happens there. My wife has a degree in education from the University of Maine and read to them every single night and all the kinds of things that parents do. I give credit to where my kids have ended up today because of the Sunshine Nursery School in Ellsworth. What a great start to life that they had; guided play, making friends, learning how to socially interact. It's the kind of thing that I'd like to see that all of our children in Maine have that access to, regardless of their income levels. The good Senator, our Chair, gave you a long list of the facts and all the research, but a couple of things that really hit home to me in our testimonies that have really kind of stuck, and I won't talk long. The simple issue of vocabulary. Students who enter school from low income families have heard roughly about four million words when they enter school. Students who went to school from middle class families have heard roughly about twenty-six million words. Those students who come from high income families with high education have heard about forty-three million words when they enter school. It's that kind of a disparity that you're trying to mitigate and try to help with. For those reasons, and a whole host of other reasons, I'm supporting this piece of legislation. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Sagadahoc, Senator Vitelli.

Senator **VITELLI**: Thank you Mr. President. Men and women of the Senate, I rise also in support of L.D. 1530. It is no secret, I was a pre-school teacher with the Head Start Program in my early years and spent my days among eager, energetic 4 and 5 year olds. It was a great learning experience for me, as well. I learned a lot about poverty in rural Maine, but I also learned patience, persistence, and what is now referred to as grit for success in the face of adversity. In describing the benefits of my pre-school experience, I've often borrowed the phrase from a popular book title some of you may remember, Everything I Need to Know in Life I Learned in Pre-Kindergarten. Not long after I began working with grown-ups I was reminded of the truth of this statement. I was at a meeting with a colleague and a friend who let us know, as we sat down to design a program to support entrepreneurs, that she expected that we would all get along, share our toys, and play well together, and for the most part we did. What we learn in our lives early contributes directly to our abilities as adults, shapes our opportunities, and influences our later success. The science is there. We've heard some of that from the Chair of the committee, Senator Millett.

The bill before us today establishes a goal of ensuring that every 4 year old in Maine has the opportunity to attend a quality

public pre-school program. It uses revenues that provide start-up grants to districts not currently operating a pre-school, especially those districts serving high percentages of low income children. It was mentioned already, only 60% of school districts in Maine currently offer some form of Pre-K, and less than one-third of our 4 year olds are enrolled in a public Pre-K program. It established a stakeholder group to develop quality standards, best practices, and common assessments. In submitting plans for pre-school programs, districts are encouraged to collaborate with public and private community resources, such as Head Start, in order to best serve the needs of children and parents. It provides funding for a position in the Department of Education to oversee early childhood education programs.

Universal Pre-K does cost money, but as Mark Westrum, the former Sagadahoc Sheriff and current Administrator at Two Rivers Jail, explained, we are already spending that money. We are just spending it on the other end; on prisons, public assistance, remedial education, and other social costs. In a recent national survey of police chiefs, over 80% ranked investing in early childhood education as the top strategy for reducing crime. The lifelong benefits in investing in early education are significant. According to the University of Southern Maine Professor Philip Trostel, early childhood education leads to a measurable increase in academic achievement, educational attainment, employment and health. Early education works. I've seen it in my own community, where the Choices Program, a partnership between RSU 1 and local community providers, offers access to quality developmentally appropriate pre-school programs to all 4 year olds in the community. Since 2006 this public/private partnership has had an impact on our community. About 80% of 4 year olds are enrolled and they are exceeding expectations. A February 2012 assessment found that Choices students performed at or above expectations in every category. It has been said, and I'll say it again, investing in quality early education is an investment in our state's future and our children's future. We are stronger as a community and a state when we give every child a greater opportunity to succeed. I'll end by quoting Dana Connors and his partner in the Bangor Daily News today, "Investment in early childhood is real economic development. It is not just a social and moral imperative, it is an economic imperative." Pre-K is a strong step in that direction. I urge your support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Washington, Senator Burns.

Senator **BURNS:** Thank you Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, I rise with some trepidation to be a naysayer on this particular bill. I do appreciate all the work that has gone into this and I don't diminish the value of early education, but I think this bill, Mr. President, is wrongly focused. I think we need to focus more attention upon the responsibilities of families. I don't think that we're going to accomplish what we want to accomplish and I would have to somewhat take issue with some of the things that were said. I don't think we're going to solve our institutional problems, as far as corrections are concerned, by focusing on this end of the spectrum in the way that it's being proposed here. I have seen first-hand the results of good input, early education, done by parents. Not only didn't attend pre-school but they were homeschooled throughout most of their primary and secondary education. They were well-rounded, well educated, and all these aspects that we proclaim

and to go on to achieve today. I just don't think that by taking more and more responsibility away from Moms and Dads, and putting it in the hands of the community and the state, is the right way to go. I will be voting against this. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Gerzofsky.

Senator **GERZOFSKY:** Thank you Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, I never get up and debate on education issues, Mr. President. I usually try to keep it strictly in the confines of my committee and what we do. The one thing I've learned, if nothing else, whether I'm going to forums around the country or I'm right here in Maine, talking to law enforcement, talking to corrections, talking to juvenile justice, the one thing I've learned is a dollar spent in Pre-K saves me \$10 in an institution 20 years later. We can put our money up front and get a bang for it and really make a difference in people's lives or, Mr. President, we can do what we've done, what we've done and done and done, and put that money at the back end and try to fix what we should have fixed at the beginning. We'll be fixing broken people at the end but we could be saving lives at the beginning. Mr. President, I've learned, going around this country, I've learned in this state, I've learned in my committee the last 14 years, the best way to be able to deal with our budget problems in corrections is to get ahead of it in Pre-K. I don't care what town you come from in the state of Maine, I don't much care what part of the region, it's the same. Put the investment at the beginning of a life because it's so much cheaper and it's harder to do it at the end or in the middle. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that we're going to think about our future today and think about where we're going to put our limited resources and how we're going to do it and how we're going to encourage our schools and our towns and our communities and try to do it the right way. We've learned it all over the country. We should be doing what's right and that is what's right. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Lincoln, Senator Johnson.

Senator **JOHNSON:** Thank you Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, I wasn't planning on speaking on this because I know the abilities of other Senators who are planning to speak, but I feel I must respond to one point. This is not a bill that makes mandatory attendance in a Pre-K program. This is entirely optional. If parents can offer what they want to offer their child at home they are welcome to do so, but for parents who could use that help, for parents like those involved in the program in Waterville for Pre-K in which the program actually works with the teachers with parents, understanding how to best support their child's development at home, as well as in the Pre-K program, this is a vital aid to those parents, being the sort of parent they want to be. This is the sort of opportunity we should provide every family, to have such an agency for the child and that supports their development well and that strengthens their family, that strengthens their parent's knowledge and ability to support their own child's development in the way that they so desperately want to. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Kennebec, Senator Lachowicz.

Senator **LACHOWICZ**: Thank you Mr. President. Men and women of the Senate, I, like Senator Johnson, was not going to get up and speak because I knew my Senate colleagues were more than able to talk about this issue, but Senator Johnson did mention the Pre-K program in Waterville so I thought I'd get up and speak a little bit about that because Educare in Waterville actually wants to expand on account of what they've discovered and how they do their work working with parents beyond the walls of that facility. As the good Senator from Lincoln pointed out, there's nothing in this bill that says that someone is obligated to send their child to this, but it is an option for many families that are working many jobs, that don't have a lot of money, that they can bring resources into their family so that they can have the benefit of helping make their child the most successful they can be. I can't stress enough that that's really important in these times. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: The pending question before the Senate is the motion by the Senator from Cumberland, Senator Millett to Adopt Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-508). 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 (#567)

YEAS: Senators: BOYLE, CAIN, CLEVELAND, COLLINS, CRAVEN, DUTREMBLE, FLOOD, GERZOFKY, GRATWICK, HASKELL, HILL, JACKSON, JOHNSON, KATZ, LACHOWICZ, LANGLEY, MAZUREK, MILLETT, PATRICK, SAVIELLO, TUTTLE, VALENTINO, VITELLI, WOODBURY, YOUNGBLOOD, THE PRESIDENT - JUSTIN L. ALFOND

NAYS: Senators: BURNS, CUSHING, HAMPER, MASON, PLUMMER, SHERMAN, THIBODEAU, THOMAS, WHITTEMORE

26 Senators having voted in the affirmative and 9 Senators having voted in the negative, the motion by Senator **MILLETT** of Cumberland to **ADOPT** Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-508), **PREVAILED**.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) as Amended by Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) thereto, **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the Rules, **READ A SECOND TIME** and **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-508) AS AMENDED BY SENATE AMENDMENT "A" (S-518)** thereto.

Ordered sent down forthwith for concurrence.

Off Record Remarks

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

ENACTORS

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

Emergency Resolve

Resolve, To Establish the Commission To Strengthen the Adequacy and Equity of Certain Cost Components of the School Funding Formula

H.P. 1335 L.D. 1850
(S "B" S-504)

On motion by Senator **CAIN** of Penobscot, placed on the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE**, pending **FINAL PASSAGE**, in concurrence.

Acts

An Act To Implement Recommendations of the Right To Know Advisory Committee

H.P. 1311 L.D. 1821
(C "A" H-811)

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

An Act To Retain Call Centers in Maine

S.P. 676 L.D. 1710
(C "A" S-420; S "A" S-501)

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

Resolve

Resolve, Regarding Metallic Mineral Exploration, Advanced Exploration and Mining

H.P. 1270 L.D. 1772
(H "A" H-776 to C "A" H-769)

On motion by Senator **CAIN** of Penobscot, placed on the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE**, pending **FINAL PASSAGE**, in concurrence.