

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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

Daily Edition

Second Regular Session

beginning January 8, 2014

beginning page H-1301

Kinney, Knight, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Kusiak, Lajoie, Libby A, Libby N, Lockman, Long, Longstaff, Luchini, MacDonald S, MacDonald W, Maker, Malaby, Marean, Marks, Mason, Mastraccio, McCabe, McClellan, McElwee, McGowan, Monaghan-Derrig, Moonen, Moriarty, Morrison, Nadeau A, Nadeau C, Nelson, Newendyke, Nutting, Parry, Pease, Peavey Haskell, Peoples, Peterson, Plante, Pouliot, Powers, Priest, Pringle, Rankin, Reed, Rochelo, Rotundo, Rykerson, Sanborn, Sanderson, Saucier, Saxton, Schneck, Shaw, Short, Sirocki, Stanley, Stuckey, Theriault, Timberlake, Tipping-Spitz, Treat, Turner, Tyler, Verow, Villa, Volk, Wallace, Weaver, Welsh, Werts, Willette, Wilson, Winchenbach, Winsor, Wood, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Russell.

ABSENT - Cotta, Johnson D, McLean, Noon.

Yes, 146; No, 1; Absent, 4; Excused, 0.

146 having voted in the affirmative and 1 voted in the negative, with 4 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** in concurrence.

Eleven Members of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-508)** on Bill "An Act To Establish a Process for the Implementation of Universal Voluntary Prekindergarten Education"

(S.P. 577) (L.D. 1530)

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

KORNFELD of Bangor

NELSON of Falmouth

POULIOT of Augusta

RANKIN of Hiram

One Member of the same Committee reports in Report "B" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-509)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representative:

MAKER of Calais

One Member of the same Committee reports in Report "C" **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

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)**.

Came from the Senate with Report "A" **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-508) AS AMENDED BY SENATE AMENDMENT "A" (S-518)** thereto.

READ.

Representative MacDONALD of Boothbay moved that the House **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

Representative FREDETTE of Newport **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

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 Limington, Representative Kinney.

Representative **KINNEY**: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I rise in opposition to the pending motion. I do so not against the bill itself. I am objecting to the funding source. The Maine National Guard operates a vehicle repair facility known as the Maine Military Authority at the Loring Commerce Centre in Limestone, Maine. The MMA is hurting for work and presently has laid off Maine State Employees due to the lack of funding and due to the lack of vehicle repair work. The MMA rebuilds, among other vehicles, school busses. This bill is reducing the funding for school bus refurbishing by \$69,877. As for the Majority Report, this must be a good bill. And, if, in fact, it is, there should be a funding source available that does not take desperately needed funding and work from the Maine Military Authority and our citizens of Aroostook County, Maine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Raymond, Representative McClellan.

Representative **McCLELLAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I rise in opposition to LD 1530 for a few reasons and I'll just speak for a moment about them, sir. The title of this bill is "An Act To Establish a Process for the Implementation of Universal Voluntary Prekindergarten Education" and my first point, Mr. Speaker, would be that we already have that. Local schools already can do this and I believe during the testimony we were given, I couldn't find it when I looked last night, but we were given a list of many school systems that actually already do this. I know my wife is an administrator in Auburn. They already do this. So, we don't need to make a law to do it.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, is that, at this point, at age seven, a child is expected to go to school. You can go a little bit earlier, but you are expected by seven. And there are people in the community that are concerned that even though this does not mandate kids going to school at this point, that is a step towards more institutionalization of our kids getting into school and actually making the age for kids to go to school. We had a superintendent speak during, this summer, we had a group of panel discussions on this, which actually were very good, good discussions, and one of the superintendents, actually from a local area around here stated, "Don't be kidded, we want your kids at zero." So, I think there is some kind of a thought about getting kids into schools as soon as possible.

Now, I was just reading, Mr. Speaker, about Head Start and I didn't know this. Head Start began in 1965 and apparently, it spent about \$1.85 trillion since then. And a study in 2010 by the Obama Administration in Washington, the Department of Health and Human Services says that there's no lasting academic advantage to this work to this point. And so there's a chart we were given today, an orange chart, that says different to that. So I guess I would ask everybody to hop on your computers and start reading what's on the internet. I actually was on this morning. I was actually surprised how much negativity there was towards Head Start and Pre-K.

To continue with that, there are a lot of studies that actually I've read recently that show that children that are enrolled in Pre-

K programs actually become behavior problems. I was surprised to read this and seeing that bullying is on the rise in our schools, I wondered if there was a connection to that, although that's certainly not a scientific thought there.

Another thought, Mr. Speaker, is we're already not fully funding education and I hear all the time people stand up and say we can't do this because we're not fully funding education. Well, this is going add another program to our education system that we're not fully funding as it is.

As I begin to close, Mr. Speaker, I would say that I think many people here believe that spending is equated with success. And I think people might believe, you know, in the schools earlier is going to equate with success. And I would just say that that's not an absolute truth. Neither one of those statements is an absolute truth. And I guess my final thing, I kind of stole this from the internet today, and we talked about it in our caucus, Mr. Speaker, is that Pre-K, this Pre-K bill, I think there's some good things in it, perhaps, and for some people there are, but again I'll go back to say schools can do this already, Mr. Speaker. They don't need a law to do this. They can do it now. But, perhaps the biggest thing that this thing doesn't address is that I think our problem with our school system is parental involvement and not what our teachers are doing. It's the parental involvement and this bill doesn't do anything. In fact, it probably makes it more all right for parents to check out. So, there's a lot there, Mr. Speaker, and I would respectfully ask you all to join me in voting against LD 1530. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ROLL CALL NO. 695

YEA - Beaudoin, Beaulieu, Beavers, Beck, Berry, Boland, Bolduc, Briggs, Brooks, Campbell J, Carey, Casavant, Cassidy, Chapman, Chenette, Chipman, Cooper, Crockett, Daughtry, DeChant, Devin, Dickerson, Dill, Dion, Doak, Dorney, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Fowle, Frey, Gattine, Gideon, Gilbert, Goode, Graham, Grant, Hamann, Harlow, Hayes, Herbig, Hickman, Hobbins, Hubbell, Johnson P, Jones, Jorgensen, Kaenrath, Kent, Knight, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiaga, Kusiak, Lajoie, Libby N, Longstaff, Luchini, MacDonald S, MacDonald W, Maker, Marean, Marks, Mason, Mastraccio, McCabe, McElwee, Monaghan-Derrig, Moonen, Moriarty, Morrison, Nadeau C, Nelson, Peoples, Peterson, Plante, Pouliot, Powers, Priest, Pringle, Rankin, Rochelo, Rotundo, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Saucier, Saxton, Schneck, Shaw, Short, Stanley, Stuckey, Theriault, Tipping-Spitz, Treat, Verow, Villa, Volk, Welsh, Werts, Wilson, Winchenbach, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Bennett, Black, Campbell R, Chase, Clark, Crafts, Cray, Davis, Dunphy, Duprey, Espling, Fitzpatrick, Fredette, Gifford, Gillway, Guerin, Harvell, Jackson, Keschl, Kinney, Libby A, Lockman, Long, Malaby, McClellan, McGowan, Nadeau A, Newendyke, Nutting, Parry, Pease, Peavey Haskell, Reed, Sanderson, Sirocki, Timberlake, Turner, Tyler, Wallace, Weaver, Willette, Winsor, Wood.

ABSENT - Ayotte, Cotta, Johnson D, McLean, Noon.

Yes, 103; No, 43; Absent, 5; Excused, 0.

103 having voted in the affirmative and 43 voted in the negative, with 5 being absent, and accordingly Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended was ACCEPTED.**

The Bill was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) was READ** by the Clerk.

Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) to Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) was READ by the Clerk and **ADOPTED.**

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

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Bowdoinham, Representative Berry.

Representative **BERRY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I rise in support of Passage to be Engrossed of this bill and I do so because I believe that this bill has the potential, Mr. Speaker, to be the most important thing, the most important thing that this Legislature does. Why the potential? Why is it not simply the most important thing? Mr. Speaker, because, as amended today by Senate Amendment "A", there's a mechanism in place that we, that all of us in the future, that you, because I'm term limited, will need to protect. You will need to protect the paltry \$4,000,000 per year that is provided by this bill and make sure that it is there for implementation of universal voluntary Pre-K. You all will need to protect the statutory commitment to universal voluntary Pre-K so that it can be in place for all of our young people, for all of us, by 2018. Those of you who come back will need to see this through.

But today, Mr. Speaker, we take a first step. It's one small step for the 126th Legislature, but it is, potentially, one giant leap for Maine. We will, in the future, also need to look into the even earlier years. We need to better support parents in those earliest and most vulnerable and most powerful years when the foundation of the brain is built, the foundation of all other learning that will build on.

Why is it the most important that this Legislature may do? I think all of us here know the research. We've seen it. So I want to speak to it on a more personal level. I've had the great good fortune, Mr. Speaker, thanks to you, of serving as the House Chair of the Maine Workforce and Economic Future Committee. We've had an incredible bipartisan experience. We listened to business leaders and economic development specialists around the state. We heard from higher-ed leaders and we heard powerful ideas. And fortunately we were able to put many of them in place. Focused on business. Focused on return on investment. Focused on higher education. I don't believe that any of those things are as important as this bill.

I've had the good fortune in my eight years here as serving as the lead on the Taxation Committee and of serving on the Energy and Utilities Committee. Incredible, important ideas were advanced in those committees that were transformative for Maine and Maine's economy. But I have heard nothing in my almost eight years here that is as important, as powerful, as transformative as early education. And, specifically, steps that we can take like the bill before us. This bill is transformative.

As a teacher for 20 years, I was very fortunate and I received awards and thanks and credit I did not deserve. It was the early educators and those who helped them who made the real difference in the lives of my students for 20 years. So, I was proud of the work I did. But I also know that the success of the students that I did have, many of them who could read at an advanced level coming into fourth grade was due to the early educators. And there were others who had a foundation that was not solidly built, and was much harder to build upon.

Mr. Speaker, there are 34 children a day born in Maine. We can do this. We can take this first step today together, and this first giant leap for Maine together. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a roll call.

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee**

Amendment "A" (S-508) as Amended by Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) thereto.

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 Boothbay, Representative MacDonald.

Representative **MacDONALD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Men and Women of the House, I rise to echo the sentiments just expressed by the good Representative Berry on this topic and would just point out to the members, as many of you may know, there's a growing body of scientific evidence that supports the idea that we need to help the development of children's brains in their earliest years. And there's also a growing body of evidence that programs that intervene and help in children's lives when they are not going well. When there are toxic events that happen in children's lives, there's a growing body of evidence that good programs can help reverse the potential for bad outcomes in children's lives. One of the things that this bill does is puts a priority on funding early childhood programs of public Pre-K programs in communities that have a preponderance of disadvantaged kids, and I think this will work greatly to their advantage. The program that this bill puts into place is one of those kinds of quality programs that will make a difference in our kids' lives. It offers a voluntary Pre-K program by making available startup funds to interested districts. Currently, Maine funds public Pre-Kindergarten through the EPS school funding formula, but for students who enroll in it, it takes two years for district state subsidy to fully catch up. Because of this gap, there are systems that forgo the development of these early childhood programs.

In committee, we heard wonderful, and to me in some ways startling, testimony from both law enforcement and the military. We're used to hearing testimony from education stakeholders, but in front of us came retired General Earl Adams who spoke on behalf of Mission Readiness, and you've got a summary of his comments that have come around to your desk. And that was signed by 20 admirals and generals here in the State of Maine talking about the need to provide military readiness, and they said early childhood, Pre-Kindergarten, public pre-school was important to ensuring that we have military readiness in our country. Then we had Sherriff Mark Westrum come from the organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids who told us that this was the most important thing that our committee and this Legislature could do to help lower and keep the crime rate in Maine low. So, we had this amazing testimony in front of the committee. I urge you to join with those who testified in support of this in committee to vote for this bill, now at this moment, when it's ready to be engrossed and would only summarize to say that early childhood programs are indeed smart investments. We know that we've learned that for every dollar that is invested in Pre-K, it's been shown to have a return of \$17 for every dollar spent. In summary Mr. Speaker, I ask you to support this bill and I thank you all for your earlier supportive vote and look forward to more of the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Greenville, Representative Johnson.

Representative **JOHNSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. I am strongly in favor of this. Had you asked me to support this bill as little as five years ago, I don't think I would have. I would have said that this is a parent's responsibility. And I still believe that it is a parent's responsibility, but the fact of the situation is today, in our society, is that we have a significant number of families that cannot, or will not, meet that responsibility. Therefore, I think this is essential. We have

had testimony after testimony after testimony that this is a good thing to do.

Now, to be clear, this really doesn't establish mandatory pre-school programs. It still leaves it up to those parents that can take on that responsibility by themselves. But it does provide a capability for people who cannot or will not and that is purely voluntary. It doesn't require any school district to do anything that they don't get funding to do. I think one of the key moments in my change of thought came about three years ago when I was talking to our superintendent about a pre-school program, and we have kind of a token one now. It's not really effective because of finances. And she said to me, she said, "I'm going to take this on because it's important for us to do." And she is a superintendent of a minimum receiving town that has a school population of about 55 percent free and reduced lunch. So, this is a really serious issue. This is a modest step forward and I would ask everyone to follow my light. Thank you.

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

Representative **MAKER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, this bill is now what I would have liked to have seen in the first place. But it got there. My concern right now is the same as mentioned right now. I thought the funding, any funding, would come from excess money from the casino. I am very disappointed that this money, the 69,000, is now coming from the bus refurbishing. That bothers me to a great extent because that isn't what we've been told from the beginning. And if there was a way to get rid of the 69, I probably would stay with my vote. But we certainly need to do something about this whole problem. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Falmouth, Representative Nelson.

Representative **NELSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I don't very often rise on bills but this is an issue that I feel very, very strongly about. All of the evidence, all of the testimony and all of the support that I have heard for so many years reemphasized the importance of early learning. And the programs that allow our children to succeed in school, children who arrive at school unready to learn, not ready to learn, are at a disadvantage from the get-go and they never catch up. So, I think that to put in place as a state policy something that will indeed give every child in the State of Maine access to programs that will help them enter school ready and be able to succeed. It will now only, you've heard the reports of what the return on that investment is, but it also means that throughout their school career they will need less in ways of special education, less in special tutoring and we hope that they will indeed do great honor to our state. There's a reason why sheriffs, law enforcement, military, security people and businesses throughout the state support this. And I urge you to support this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Scarborough, Representative Sirocki.

Representative **SIROCKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I recently attended a Scarborough Board of Education meeting and one of the Board members expressed a concern I hadn't thought of. And that is that, in our community anyway, we have many fine and affordable, effective, a variety of different sizes, range of private-sector pre-schools. And there was some concern about how this would affect those private industries that are providing jobs, pay taxes. With it being provided by the schools system, would that put them out of business? And I would also like to say that as someone who struggled with the cost of pre-school, I was, for a time, involved with a mother's co-op preschool. And we all

pitched in and worked together and provided a co-op preschool for a number of children together on a rotating schedule. And that worked out really well and I am in opposition to this bill. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wells, Representative Chase.

Representative **CHASE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, it reminds me of a quote that "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions." Well, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House and Mr. Speaker, this is a freeway. Once again, the government is reaching into our families and trying to get our children at even a younger age. I don't agree with this particular bill at all for that reason. If there are parents out there who are not capable of taking care of their children, or wanting to, then we should be addressing that group and not putting a right now, voluntary, but you want to bet in the next two years it will be mandated to have younger children going to school. Those children, from birth to kindergarten, right now, need to be with their mothers and fathers and their families and getting that bonding done. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Raymond, Representative McClellan.

Representative **McCLELLAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, just a couple of other things that I'll point out just from listening to the conversation. As I mentioned earlier this summer, we came together. I think this bill was actually was a two-year, it was a carry-over bill, so we did come together as a committee, the Education Committee, last summer and had a panel of I think 10 speakers. All were proponents of the bill and some people who were against the bill wanted to get involved and weren't allowed. So that was part of my initial reluctance on this bill. And when you ask a panel member, a non-profit that works with kids, "Do you want more kids, do you want more funding" and they say, "Yes," I'm not quite sure that's really a panel discussion. That's kind of obvious.

I heard a few minutes ago someone spoke and said there's a return on this work of \$17 for every dollar. Well, we heard a couple, I think a couple of people mentioned that \$1.85 trillion has been spent on Head Start kind of programs since 1965. And would anybody sit here and argue that there's been a \$17 per dollar return on that work? Is our education system better because of that work? And I'll just finally say people are standing up and saying all the evidence, all the studies, that is not true. If you Google "Pre-K, good or bad" you'll see a mix of studies that say it's the best thing ever and you'll see other studies that are concerned about it. So I again say vote this down and this should be a local issue, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Freedom, Representative Jones.

Representative **JONES**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Men and Women of the House, I rise to address the concerns raised by good Representative from Wells. I think we all agree that a child born in the State of Maine is a citizen of the State of Maine and that we all share responsibility for his or her upbringing, including parents. I would ask the good Representative from Wells if it is indeed the parents responsibility for this early childhood upbringing, what programs do we currently have in place or are currently being proposed in this house that have the demonstrated efficacy of improving children's long-term learning that can possibly compete with universal early childhood education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Buckfield, Representative Hayes.

Representative **HAYES**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Men and Women of the House, I will make this brief. I come from a

community that has had a publicly funded voluntary pre-school program for 23 years. Some of you have met my son Harry. He was in the first class when he was four years old. It has been a wonderful program. It started as a grant. We ran it for three years on grant money. We adopted it and then funded it through the public school budget ever since then.

It significantly improves cognitive ability of those students. It makes them ready for Kindergarten. We've seen our graduation rates improve as a result. And it really involves parents because the parents whose children take advantage of these programs often are not with their children during the day, not because they're bad parents, but because they're working so that they can afford to support their families and we don't have to do it. So this is an opportunity for those children to have a structured curriculum that will help prepare them for Kindergarten and help them be successful. We don't need it because we have bad parents in Maine, ladies and gentlemen. We don't have bad parents in Maine. We have parents who are working, who are supporting their families, and this is a better opportunity for their children in many instances. It's a voluntary program. It's been a wonderful experience in my community and I highly recommend it to the rest of you. I think we will find, whatever the data is, that it does pay back more than it costs in the long run. That has been our experience locally. And again, I would stress that the opportunity to participate for children, it is those children whose parents are, in fact, out earning a living in order to better provide for them, who will most benefit from this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Burlington, Representative Turner.

Representative **TURNER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I rise today in opposition of this bill not because I'm against education. I support education 100 percent. However, if local control, back home they want to do this, they can do this. So, we don't need a bill that dictates this. And if they want to get grants, they can get grants. So, I say we don't need a bill to legislate this. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Belgrade, Representative Keschl.

Representative **KESCHL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, may I pose a question to anyone that cares to answer?

The SPEAKER: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **KESCHL**: First, we had Head Start. Now, we have a proposal for Pre-K. When will we have a proposal for Pre-Pre-K? Thank you.

Representative **DAUGHTRY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise in favor of the pending motion. I've heard a lot of conversation today about we don't need to do this. Local communities can already do this. This is about providing money to help local communities create such programs. I've heard folks saying that we have private programs, why would we introduce a piece of legislation that would take away from these very successful private programs? Well, it doesn't. One of the key parts of this bill that we discussed in committee was insuring that part of the language around the grant is that these communities who apply from these funds have to prove that they've been looking at collaborations with private establishments. That way there's no one program taking away from each other. It's a collaborative partnership to do what's best for our kids. We've also heard that children this young shouldn't be in school. Well, I harken back to a poster that I've seen many times. I think we have one actually in our committee chair's room, and I've seen it in many schools. It says, "Everything I need to learn in life, I learned in Kindergarten or Pre-K." And

folks, that's right. What we're hearing from employers these days is that Maine graduates don't have soft skills. What are soft skills? The ability to share, look someone in the eye, speak eloquently, pick up after yourself, look someone in the eye when you're shaking your hand. Basic skills that you learn in, oh, that's right, pre-school.

We need to do this. There is overwhelming evidence. And yes, parents should be an active participant in a child's education at this point. But they can be partners. And for many kids in Maine, they don't have parents who are home. They have parents that are working three to four jobs. In my community alone, I have three children that are homeless at this age and only have the care of their siblings. So, one size doesn't fit all and having a public voluntary pre-school program will create an option for those children. I've also heard mention of the funding that would be taken away from the bus refurbishing area up in Limestone. I felt the need to rise and mention that was made at the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education Jim Rier. So, I think everyone needed to know that that came from the Department of Education and it wasn't something that was slipped in at the last moment. So, I urge you to stand and take a strong stand for our children. Make sure that all of Maine kids have the access to pre-school. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Boothbay, Representative MacDonald.

Representative **MacDONALD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apologies for rising a second time. I just wanted to comment on a couple of things that have been said here. First of all, this is not a mandate. It enshrines local control. Local communities will have the opportunity to write grant proposals to the Department of Education in order to receive the funding that will come under this bill. And those grant proposals, by the way, in response to Representative Sirocki's concern about the existence of other private sector Pre-K programs, one of the priorities of these grants will be that the public school program show coordination and collaboration as broadly as possible with other existing Pre-K programs in the community. So, it's locally controlled. It's a voluntary program on the part of parents and it's going to, I think, pave the way for quality programs in the State of Maine. Representative, McClellan, the good Representative from Raymond, has suggested that there are studies out there that show that these programs don't have lasting effect. I would only say that there are a variety of studies that are out there. What I think they show is that good programs do have lasting effects. There are programs that have not had lasting effects. What we are proposing here in Maine is quality programs, good programs that will have lasting effect on our economy and on the wellbeing of our citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from New Gloucester, Representative Espling.

Representative **ESPLING**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I heard it said that parents are active participants and I don't believe, as a parent, that I want to be only an active participant in my child's life. I think that our focus is so off. Parents are in charge of their children. Parents are in charge of their children and they, as parents, and we, as parents, allow the schools, the schools to be the active participants in our child's lives. We have it backwards and that's what my fear is with legislation like this, is that we keep pulling from the parents and saying that they're not the ones in charge, but that we should be. That government should be in charge because we know better. And sure, there are some bad parents out there, but we shouldn't make something possibly mandatory, at some point, because I do read literature and understand there is a movement to try to make this mandatory for younger and

younger children. Parents are in charge. We allow schools to be the active participants in our children's lives. We need to try to remember that. That's my underlying philosophy. I know others might not agree with me, but please, understand who's really in charge and that the schools are the active participants, not the parents. Thank you.

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

Representative **STUCKEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just remind folks that good early childhood education teacher training has at its basic premise that parents are a child's first and most important teacher and any pre-school program that doesn't understand that certainly does not reflect what I would consider good early childhood education, including Head Start. The Head Start mantra is that parents are their children's first and best educators and the Head Start program and good early childhood programs understand that and develop programming that supports parents in their roles as the primary caregivers and educators of their children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from North Yarmouth, Representative Graham.

Representative **GRAHAM**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I stand in strong support of this bill. I started to understand what this bill was all about in the early 2000s as we looked at early care and education. As a pediatric nurse practitioner, I was working as a childcare health consultant and then started working in pediatric neurology. This makes a huge difference in the development of children's brains. The former Attorney General Steve Rowe was a staunch advocate for this type of work, how we need to invest in our kids now. Invest in our kids prenatally, quite honestly. But this is a very important way that we invest now. In the early 2000s, for every dollar we spent a \$7 dollar return. Much, much better than Wall Street. And I would venture to say that now that's double. So I strongly urge you to support this. It makes an enormous amount of sense for the betterment for all our children and all our families. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Fort Kent, Representative Nadeau.

Representative **NADEAU**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, just a short note as a reminder. This is again jobs in northern Maine. Again, would the vote be the same if the same amount of money was taken from every county. I wonder if the vote would be the same. Most recently, you already know how many times I stood up and talked about the jobs and you can take the money from northern Maine and you can continue to fund all kinds of things that you want to fund. I contend that then money that's taken from Northern Maine does not take into account that the number of people that it's going to educate are not going to be as many in Aroostook County as all over the State. So, I contend that there's a problem with this bill.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Fairfield, Representative Kusiak.

Representative **KUSIAK**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Briefly, before we vote, in this body, we've been concerned about the cost of health care, and we've talked about that often. As I was listening to floor speeches today, I was reminded of a study that I heard about. I think I was riding in the car and heard it on the radio. It was a study that was published in the *Journal of Science*, published within the last few months that showed how high-quality pre-school prevents chronic diseases. It was a longitudinal study of students in the south over several decades. Particularly, there is reduction in obesity and heart disease. So, this is a good bill. There are a number of good reasons to support it. Thank you.

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

Representative **VILLA**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise in support of this bill. Education can offer a way out of poverty and that begins with educational opportunities for every child starting at birth. There is growing awareness that the early years are the most important learning years. Most brain development occurs before a child turns five and research shows early educational experience can set the course for all future learning. This is about the future of Maine. We need to think about what Maine will look like in 10 to 15 years. Educated students will contribute to Maine's future and our economic growth. We can ignore science and the importance of early childhood development, but in doing so, we cut off our nose to spite our face. The facts are there. We can ignore them or we can act proactively to set the stage for future generations of Mainers by giving them the best opportunity to succeed. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Engrossed as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) as Amended by Senate Amendment "A" (S-518) thereto. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 696

YEA - Beaudoin, Beaulieu, Beavers, Beck, Berry, Boland, Bolduc, Briggs, Brooks, Campbell J, Carey, Casavant, Cassidy, Chenette, Chipman, Cooper, Crockett, Daughtry, DeChant, Devin, Dickerson, Dill, Dion, Doak, Dorney, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Fowle, Frey, Gattine, Gideon, Gilbert, Goode, Graham, Grant, Hamann, Harlow, Hayes, Herbig, Hickman, Hobbins, Hubbell, Johnson P, Jones, Jorgensen, Kaenrath, Kent, Knight, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Kusiak, Lajoie, Libby N, Longstaff, Luchini, MacDonald W, Maker, Marean, Marks, Mason, Mastraccio, McCabe, McElwee, McGowan, Monaghan-Derrig, Moonen, Moriarty, Morrison, Nadeau C, Nelson, Peoples, Peterson, Plante, Pouliot, Powers, Priest, Pringle, Rankin, Rochelo, Rotundo, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Saxton, Schneck, Shaw, Short, Stanley, Stuckey, Tipping-Spitz, Treat, Tyler, Verow, Villa, Volk, Welsh, Werts, Wilson, Winchenbach, Wood, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Ayotte, Bennett, Black, Campbell R, Chase, Clark, Cotta, Crafts, Cray, Davis, Dunphy, Duprey, Espling, Fitzpatrick, Fredette, Gifford, Gillway, Guerin, Harvell, Jackson, Keschl, Kinney, Libby A, Lockman, Long, MacDonald S, Malaby, McClellan, Nadeau A, Newendyke, Nutting, Parry, Pease, Peavey Haskell, Reed, Sanderson, Saucier, Sirocki, Theriault, Timberlake, Turner, Wallace, Weaver, Willette, Winsor.

ABSENT - Chapman, Johnson D, McLean, Noon.

Yes, 102; No, 45; Absent, 4; Excused, 0.

102 having voted in the affirmative and 45 voted in the negative, with 4 being absent, and accordingly under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-508) as Amended by Senate Amendment "A" (S-518)** thereto in concurrence.

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Report

Eleven Members of the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** report in Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-511)** on Bill "An

Act To Provide Additional Authority to the State Board of Corrections"

(S.P. 730) (L.D. 1824)

Signed:

Senators:

GERZOFISKY of Cumberland
DUTREMBLE of York
PLUMMER of Cumberland

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 reports in Report "B" **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (S-512)** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representative:

WILSON of Augusta

One Member of the same Committee reports in Report "C" **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Representative:

LONG of Sherman

Came from the Senate with Report "A" **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-511)**.
READ.

Representative DION of Portland moved that the House **ACCEPT** Report "A" **Ought to Pass as Amended**.

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

Representative **DION**: Mr. Speaker, this committee did a lot of work on this bill. Now, I'm going to work very hard because the last time that I rose as chair of the committee I had somewhat of a minor arrogance, presuming that a Majority Report should dictate the decision of this body. I took the critique from my colleague in the far corner and also private counsel from my good friend from Livermore Falls as to the political value of Majority and Minority Reports. So, I will try to behave in a more acceptable fashion today. I may struggle in my tendency to look left as I speak and my colleague from York has chastised me for that as well, Mr. Speaker. So, with all due respect, I will be staring at the window today. It's a nice window.

But, none the less, back to serious matters. A year ago, we began our work at examining the Board of Corrections and the relationship between the state and counties at how to manage correctional activities at the local level. The budget allocation for county jail system is \$82,000,000. The municipalities of Maine contribute \$62,000,000 and that's a capped contribution, and I just want you to bear that in mind for a moment. And at the time that we were assigned this task, the media reported that the jails were in crisis, both financially and operationally. And to those who were informed, we knew that there were serious misgivings about how the Board of Corrections functioned. As a result of the committee work, Mr. Speaker, you and the President of the other