

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Legislative Record

One Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Legislature

State of Maine

Daily Edition

First Regular Session
beginning December 3, 2014

beginning at Page 1

On motion by Senator **HAMPER** of Oxford, the Senate removed from the **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TABLE** the following:

An Act To Attract Entrepreneurs to the State
S.P. 481 L.D. 1332
(S "A" S-250 to C "A" S-228)

Placed on the Special Appropriations Table - June 23, 2015, by Senator **HAMPER** of Oxford

Pending - **ENACTMENT**, in concurrence

(In Senate, June 22, 2015, **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-228) AS AMENDED BY SENATE AMENDMENT "A" (S-250)** thereto, in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.)

(In House, June 22, 2015, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**.)

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

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

The President Pro Tempore requested the Sergeant-At-Arms escort the Senator from Waldo, Senator **THIBODEAU**, to the rostrum where he resumed his duties as President.

The Sergeant-At-Arms escorted the Senator from Androscoggin, Senator **MASON**, to his seat on the floor.

Senate called to order by the President.

Out of order and under suspension of the Rules, the Senate considered the following:

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: H.C. 322

**STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0001**

June 29, 2015

The 127th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, Maine

Dear Honorable Members of the 127th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby executing a veto of LD 1019, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2015, June 30, 2016 and June 30, 2017."

The Maine people made it quite clear in November they want tax relief and welfare reform. As soon as legislators returned to Augusta, they got busy ignoring the wishes of the Maine people. They dilly-dallied for five months, then patched together a business-as-usual budget at the last minute. Secretive, late-night decisions made under the cover of darkness and behind locked doors resulted in a budget based on the best interests of a handful of politicians, not what is best for the 1.3 million people of Maine.

In contrast, the Governor's comprehensive budget was prepared by dozens of people over several months, analyzed by experts and put out for public scrutiny.

Politicians used the false threat of a government shutdown as an excuse to push through a poorly constructed budget that is largely devoid of reform. Their scare tactics were not only morally indefensible, they were completely unnecessary. We submitted a Governor's bill to keep government open during budget negotiations. The bill, LD 1450, "An Act To Enact an Interim Budget," is now awaiting action from the Legislature.

If the House and Senate really want to craft a budget to benefit the Maine people, they can approve this bill to keep government open. They can keep working until they negotiate a truly meaningful budget.

While Mainers want to reduce the size of government, this budget grows state government by \$300 million. Despite a strong desire by the Maine people to continue with welfare reform, this budget actually expands the welfare system. It is driving us backward down the wrong road.

Although we have increased education funding every year, liberal politicians complain the state does not provide enough money for education. Then they killed a bill to fund an important initiative that would provide zero to low-interest loans to Maine students in the STEM fields.

The Portland school system received so much extra state aid for education, liberals diverted the city's share of school funding to give welfare to illegal aliens and undocumented immigrants. This kind of shell game with the taxpayers' money will be challenged by the Executive Branch.

Even worse, this budget will quite literally be paid for with the lives of Mainers. The drug epidemic continues to ravage our streets—nearly 1,000 babies are born each year addicted to drugs and 208 Mainers died of drug overdoses in 2014.

Rather than fund an adequate number of MDEA agents to hunt down the ruthless out-of-state drug traffickers that are infiltrating our communities and killing our children, Augusta politicians chose to expand welfare to able-bodied people and to de-fund services for our elderly and disabled.

Elderly and disabled Mainers are rightfully entitled to healthcare, but they are left sitting for years on waitlists without basic services. Politicians provided only \$6 million toward the waitlist, when the true need is another \$40 million—which I allocated in my original budget.

Choosing to protect drug traffickers and allowing more babies to be born drug-addicted, instead of providing our most vulnerable

with the services they need and deserve, is simply unconscionable.

Politicians in Augusta also rejected my plan to overhaul the state's General Assistance program, which encouraged cities like Portland to spend more of local taxpayers' money so they could get even more funding from the state. They watered down General Assistance reform to reward cities that insist on giving local taxpayers' money to illegal aliens.

Clearly, the health and public safety of Mainers is not a priority of the 127th Legislature. Instead, Augusta politicians snuck in a \$4 million "Christmas tree" adorned with piggy projects for legislators, such as buying federal land in Kittery, buying an unneeded "Frances Perkins Homestead," paying for a commission disguised as initiative to end hunger and creating entirely new projects.

Maine taxpayers deserve to know how every dollar of their money is being spent, but this "Christmas tree" with gifts for certain legislators was presented with no public notice or input. This is exactly the kind of back-room politics the people of Maine sent me here in record numbers to prevent.

Too many elected politicians are willing to disenfranchise the Maine people in exchange for feeding off the public trough, even at the expense of our most vulnerable and needy citizens.

The days of pork-barrel spending—and Christmas in June—must end. At the very least, I will bring these politicians' actions to light for all Mainers to see.

My administration has been working for five years to create an efficient government, but that is an oxymoron to the 127th Legislature. They must set aside their self-serving political agendas and put the hard-working people of Maine first.

Mainers should have a say in how the money they have earned is being spent, and they should be included in the budgeting process. I took my budget directly to the people of Maine, holding 10 public town hall meetings up and down the state.

But legislators failed to embrace transparency in a budget that affects the 1.3 million people they claim to represent. They shut Mainers out of their budget process, and they refused to let them vote on whether the income tax should be eliminated. Mainers deserve to have the debate over whether the income tax should be phased out.

The future of our state depends on our ability to be competitive with the nation and the world. We must work aggressively each year to cut back the income tax until it is gone—then ensure it never comes back. We need younger people to move to Maine.

I will continue to insist that each bill get a two-thirds vote until the Legislature shows it is willing to give the Maine people the democracy they deserve by allowing them to vote on a Constitutional amendment to get rid of the income tax.

My budget proposal was widely acknowledged as a bold and comprehensive plan to modernize, reform and restructure how Maine does business. Unfortunately, it proved too big a concept for some of the small minds in the Legislature to grasp.

In exchange for political expediency, they submitted a budget that fails to provide meaningful tax relief, rolls back welfare reforms and endangers the health and safety of our children, our elderly and our most vulnerable citizens.

Therefore, I am vetoing the 127th Legislature's budget. I ask each one of you to stand up for the Maine people and support this veto.

Sincerely,

S/Paul R. LePage
Governor

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The accompanying Bill:

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2015, June 30, 2016 and June 30, 2017 (EMERGENCY)

H.P. 702 L.D. 1019

Comes from the House, 109 members having voted in the affirmative and 37 in the negative, the veto of the Governor was Overridden and it was the vote of the House that the Bill become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor.

The President laid before the Senate the following: "Shall this Bill become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor? In accordance with Article IV, Part Third, Section 2, of the Constitution, the vote will be taken by the Yeas and Nays. A vote of yes will be in favor of the Bill. A vote of no will be in favor of sustaining the veto of the Governor."

The Doorkeepers secured the Chamber.

The Secretary opened the vote.

ROLL CALL (#373)

YEAS: Senators: ALFOND, BREEN, BURNS, COLLINS, CUSHING, CYRWAY, DIAMOND, DILL, DUTREMBLE, GERZOFSKY, GRATWICK, HAMPER, HILL, JOHNSON, KATZ, LANGLEY, LIBBY, MILLETT, MIRAMANT, PATRICK, SAVIELLO, VALENTINO, WHITTEMORE, WOODSOME, THE PRESIDENT - MICHAEL D. THIBODEAU

NAYS: Senators: BAKER, BRAKEY, DAVIS, EDGECOMB, HASKELL, MASON, MCCORMICK, ROSEN, VOLK, WILLETTE

25 Senators having voted in the affirmative and 10 Senators having voted in the negative, and 25 being more than two-thirds of the members present and voting, it was the vote of the Senate that the veto of the Governor be **OVERRIDDEN** and the Bill become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor.

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