

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 electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)

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

Daily Edition

First Regular Session

beginning December 3, 2014

beginning at page H-1

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

HOUSE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (9) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)** - Minority (4) **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "B" (H-416)** - Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** on 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, 2016 and June 30, 2017"

(H.P. 702) (L.D. 1019)

Which was **TABLED** by Representative ROTUNDO of Lewiston pending her motion to **ACCEPT** the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report.

Representative ESPLING of New Gloucester **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. 268

YEA - Alley, Babbidge, Bates, Beavers, Beebe-Center, Bickford, Blume, Brooks, Bryant, Burstein, Campbell J, Campbell R, Chace, Chapman, Chenette, Chipman, Cooper, Corey, Daughtry, Davitt, DeChant, Devin, Dion, Doore, Duchesne, Dunphy M, Espling, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Fecteau, Fowle, Frey, Gattine, Gideon, Gilbert, Gillway, Ginzler, Golden, Goode, Grant, Grohman, Hamann, Harlow, Herbig, Herrick, Hickman, Hobart, Hobbins, Hogan, Hubbell, Hymanson, Jorgensen, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Lajoie, Longstaff, Luchini, Maker, Martin J, Martin R, Mastraccio, McCabe, McCreight, McLean, Melaragno, Monaghan, Moonen, Morrison, Nadeau, Noon, Nutting, Picchiotti, Pierce T, Pouliot, Powers, Rotundo, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Saucier, Sawicki, Schneck, Seavey, Shaw, Sherman, Short, Stanley, Stuckey, Sukeforth, Tepler, Theriault, Tipping-Spitz, Tucker, Tuell, Verow, Ward, Warren, Welsh, Winsor, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Austin, Battle, Black, Buckland, Crafts, Dillingham, Dunphy L, Edgcomb, Farrin, Foley, Fredette, Gerrish, Greenwood, Guerin, Hanington, Hanley, Hawke, Head, Higgins, Hilliard, Kinney J, Kinney M, Lockman, Long, Lyford, Malaby, McClellan, McElwee, O'Connor, Parry, Peterson, Pickett, Pierce J, Prescott, Reed, Sanderson, Sirocki, Stearns, Stetkis, Timberlake, Timmons, Turner, Vachon, Wadsworth, Wallace, White, Wood.

ABSENT - Beck, Marean, Skolfield.

Yes, 101; No, 47; Absent, 3; Excused, 0.

101 having voted in the affirmative and 47 voted in the negative, with 3 being absent, and accordingly the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)** was **READ** by the Clerk.

Representative McCABE of Skowhegan **PRESENTED** House **Amendment "B" (H-448)** to **Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

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

Representative **McCABE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I rise today to speak about the amendment that's before you attached to the budget. Here to say a budget is

really a compromise. I think one thing that's clear is it's a true compromise in the work that was done by the Appropriations Committee to build the foundation for what we have today.

I'm offering this amendment, offering this amendment recognizing the work, legislative leadership, building on that work of Appropriations, that bipartisan work. There was a lot of give. There was a lot of take. There's some benefits for both sides here. There's something in it for everybody. Everyone has had to be flexible, and that's for sure, Mr. Speaker. It's been a true compromise. It's been an example of how divided government can actually work.

I'd like to talk about some of the highlights in this amendment, some of the things that are in this budget for our caucus. It's a win in the area of property taxes. We all know that property taxes are one of the most regressive taxes out there. It hits a lot of young families, it hits seniors around the state, and it is brutal for those of us in rural Maine. We need to do what we can to help families to establish and build a life in Maine. We need to honor our elders around the state. We need to make sure that they can age in place and I know you know that, Mr. Speaker. That's why this budget doubles the Homestead Exemption for all families. So the exemption will go from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

It protects revenue sharing, which we've heard time and time again is so vital. Keeping it at the current level at \$62.5 million. We know this funds local communities and it's so important to people around the State of Maine. This will keep property taxes in check. It'll help pay for vital services like schools, police, firefighting, snow plowing, and so many more.

This budget is really about also recognizing our future. It recognizes, it targets, it makes smart investments that strengthen our economy, and it's essential to our prosperity. Mr. Speaker, I think of our children when I think about the investments that we are making in our children, our students, and our workforce. This budget puts money into Head Start, invests in K-12 education. It puts an additional \$80 million in K-12 education. It has funds in here for public universities, our community college systems, which everyone in this House knows how much I care about. As we move this forward, it puts more funding into job training so that Maine workers can stay competitive. I know everyone in the House agrees with that piece.

Before my caucus, I say, last but not least, this budget is a budget that rejects trickle-down economics. Instead of huge tax breaks for the wealthy, it's a tax cut that targets low- and middle-income families. These cuts won't blow a hole in future budgets, as they are fully paid for. Rather than 50 percent of the tax rate going to the top 10 percent, as we've seen proposed earlier in the session, this compromise sends 75 percent of the benefit to the bottom 90 percent. This is an income tax cut that's paid for of \$140 million, Mr. Speaker.

This compromised budget, based on some things that we heard, especially in our caucus, we received dozens of emails—some of us probably even close to hundreds. This compromised budget also protects the Home Mortgage Deduction. We know how important it is and what a bedrock of our party's platform it is to make sure that we grow homeownership in the State of Maine and around the country. It also recognizes the importance of the Earned Income Tax Credit to help low-wage workers. It helps hard working Mainers stay above the poverty line. This compromised budget makes the credit refundable for up to five percent.

This compromised budget also protects Maine's most vulnerable. It helps seniors pay for their medication and healthcare and increases funding for nursing homes. It supports Mainer's struggling with autism and mental illness. It reduces the waitlist for services for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Mr.

Speaker, this compromised budget also fixes the welfare cliff. It creates a system that alleviates the impact of the welfare cliff. We've heard so much about the welfare cliff, Mr. Speaker. We've put forward a proposal today that alleviates the welfare cliff, the sharp drop-off in benefits. It helps place people as recipients to work, and more, it helps their incomes increase. It's really a jobs initiative when you think about it, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot more in this budget and I could go on and on, whether it's the additional drug agents or whether it's the increase in the exemption for military pension, or whether it's the funding about the Cold Case Squad. Because, Mr. Speaker, in last two sessions, we've spent a lot of time talking about funding the Cold Case Squad. It's an issue that's received bipartisan support and it's about time we fund it. So, I could go on and on, as many folks in this chamber have heard me go on and on in the past, but I won't. I just look forward that when we vote this today, this amendment that's before us receives a strong bipartisan vote and I thank the Men and Women of the House, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank Republican leadership for their work on this compromise.

Subsequently, **House Amendment "B" (H-448) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)** was **ADOPTED**.

Representative DUCHESNE of Hudson **PRESENTED House Amendment "A" (H-439) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Hudson, Representative Duchesne.

Representative **DUCHESNE**: Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, Duchesne is not Acadian French. It's not even St. John Valley French. The Duchesne's on my father's side, the LaPlante's on my mother's side came down from somewhere around Montreal. They weren't Acadian fishermen. I'm pretty sure they were probably the fur trappers. I still do not know how my grandfather Duchesne came to meet and marry my grandmother, a woman who came here from Lithuania through Ellis Island when she was nine years old.

My wife's maiden name was McCrae. She's Scotch/Irish. She descended from some Irish brothers named Fitzhenry, who fled to Newfoundland as fugitives from the British who quite frankly wanted to hang them. There is nothing like the threat of being hanged to create refugees.

Well, with the exception of our Maliseet brother, Representative Bear, we all have similar stories. We are a nation of immigrants—the Great Melting Pot. However, our immigrant forebears mostly had one thing in common: They came here legally. We are a kind, compassionate, generous people. But our generosity has limits. Our constituents are picking up the tab, and they have made it clear to me that they are against general assistance for people who are here unlawfully, what some would call "illegal aliens." If you are here legally, looking to work legally and to contribute to our Maine economy legally, we will help as best we can. These are tough times and our generosity is constrained by our limited resources. This is a very tough budget, but we will do what we can. However, if you are here illegally, you are beyond the limits of our generosity. Try Vermont.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House, this amendment clarifies the eligibility definition in Title 22. It provides that a person who is unlawfully present and failing to follow a lawful process to apply for immigration status is not eligible for general assistance. Not now, not ever. This is a chance for all of us to go on the record and clearly oppose general assistance for illegal aliens by voting "yes." So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would request a roll call.

The same Representative **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ADOPT House Amendment "A" (H-439) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)**.

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 Lewiston, Representative Golden.

Representative **GOLDEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I will not be voting for this budget in its current form. To do so would be a betrayal of my principles. Voting to hurt men, women, and children here in Maine seeking a new life free of persecution is unacceptable to me. Voting to deny a helping hand to people far less fortunate than I am who came here hoping to find peace and freedom—many seeking asylum from violence and praying for the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families—flies in the face of everything that I stand for.

As a marine, I took great pride in standing up for the people that are not in the position to stand up for themselves. How could I do anything less as a legislator without betraying the values the Marines instilled in me? This budget does not take the necessary steps to ensure...

The SPEAKER: Will the Representative defer? The Chair would inquire as to why the Representative from Auburn, Representative Bickford, rises.

Representative **BICKFORD**: Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. Is the good Representative speaking on the budget or on the amendment that's been put forward?

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative BICKFORD of Auburn asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative GOLDEN of Lewiston were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would remind all members that the remarks and comments should be directed to the amendment on the floor.

The Chair reminded all Members to stay as close as possible to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **GOLDEN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, without the addition of this amendment, this budget does not take the necessary steps to ensure that Maine's asylees are provided a roof over their heads and food to sustain them until they are able to obtain a work permit, get a job, and become the successful productive members of our communities that they so desire to be.

I met an asylee in the State House today. Her name is Neima and she came to the United States from Djibouti. In Djibouti, America has a military installation that serves as a platform for operations to carry out the War on Terrorism—a global conflict that I fought in. Neima is a strong young woman. She came here with her husband. They were the beneficiaries of general assistance for less than one year. Once their asylum request was adjudicated and her husband was given a work permit, he got a job at LL Bean and has been working there for more than three years. Neima works for a nonprofit organization helping others, like our state once helped her. She is working on her college degree and she is pregnant with her child, who will be an American Citizen.

Failure to act to put into law the affirmative language necessary to continue to provide some small assistance to asylees, and by small I mean less than one-tenth of one percent of this budget, would mean that a woman like Neima—coming from a country where the US has a military base used to support military operations, a country not as secure and not as free as America—failure to act means that a woman like Neima is not welcome in our state.

This is the kind of vote that makes me question just what it is that I am doing in politics. If I won't stand up for the most vulnerable among us, than what am I prepared to fight for? An income tax cut giving 25 percent of the benefit to the wealthiest 10 percent? An income tax cut to the top one percent representing 7,000 Mainers earning more than \$370,000 a year receiving a tax cut of \$1,500 a year. Mr. Speaker, I say no. What would I do to protect Maine's vulnerable asylum seekers and to ensure that they receive the help they need to stand on their own and join in the enduring struggle to live the American Dream? Mr. Speaker, a better question is, what wouldn't I do?

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Grant.

Representative **GRANT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise in support of the amendment before us, and I am frankly ashamed that we are even having this public discussion about whether or not to assist the new Mainers in our state who need just a little help in order to get on the road to the American Dream.

Cloaked in the guise of 'welfare reform,' even purposefully using incorrect terminology regarding immigration status, the Chief Executive's biennial budget proposed to cut new Mainers from accessing the most basic food and shelter. To me, this would be an appalling breach of what I consider to be basic humanitarian aid. Even worse, to pit the immediate and compelling needs of some vulnerable people against the real needs of other vulnerable populations fabricates false choices. We are not in a fiscal crisis. In fact, today we are passing tax cuts.

With the actions of the Chief Executive, a murky court ruling, and difficult budget compromises, today the fate of hundreds of new Mainers in the cities of Portland, Lewiston, Bangor and Westbrook, who are here legally, hangs in the balance with our votes. The way we treat our most vulnerable speaks to our core values as Maine people, as Americans. How we treat the stranger in our midst is a tenet of all of the ancient religions, including my own. In fact my daily reading for today, June the 16th, is from the Book of Leviticus:

And I quote: "When an alien resides in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God." End quote.

Listening hour after hour in Appropriations to the testimony against the Chief Executive's proposals to cut general assistance for new Mainers, I couldn't help but think of the famous words inscribed on our Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

We are a country of immigrants, the great melting pot, and this has always been our strength. Sadly, sometimes our better angels do not govern us. Historically nearly every immigrant group has faced resistance on their arrival. But when we shut the door behind us, when we give in to bigotry and narrow-mindedness, those words of welcome in New York make us hypocrites. We are better than this. I urge you to follow my light and I am grateful for this opportunity to speak.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Yarmouth, Representative Cooper.

Representative **COOPER**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, when my grandfather arrived on these shores he saw those words on the Statue of Liberty and they meant a great deal to him, for he was fleeing the pogroms of the Cossacks in Czarist Russia, who had just as soon kill him because of his religion or should they decide not to kill him, to conscript him into the army once again for a seven year term as

that nation went to war yet again in a foolish, foolish way. But he did make it to New York and brought his family over, subsequently, and if he hadn't, his family would have been wiped out during the Holocaust.

So, those words mean a lot to me, as I'm sure they mean much to all of us. And they mean a lot to the people for whom this amendment means so much—the people that were out in the hallway as we walked into the chamber this morning. I hope you had a chance to exchange a few words with these people. They are people. They are not blank faces. They are not numbers. I asked as many of them as I could, "What's your name? Where do you come from? What did you do in your old country?" Every single one of the people that I spoke to, and I spoke to at least a dozen, was somebody that we could be so proud of. They were engineers, they were software designers, social workers, professors. These are the very kind of people that Maine needs. These are people with the energy and the motivation and the willpower to make the most out of their lives and to share it with their family and their community.

How can we turn our backs on them? They are the best that the world has to offer. I know these people also because I did some work as a lawyer—well, not in court, but doing some advising—through the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Program. This is an organization, ILAP, that gives advice to people who are seeking asylum. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if you know the difference between a lawful refugee and an asylum seeker. Most people don't. The only difference is where that person has filed their application. If they filed it in Africa, for example, and been granted, they are refugee. If they do it here, they are an asylum seeker. The requirements, the criteria, are exactly the same. And they are tough. You have to be under a definitive threat of death or harm because of your race, because of your tribal association, because of your religion, because of your political beliefs.

These people have nowhere else to go. If they go home, they will die. There's no two ways about it. So, I know what brought them here and I think that they have much to offer us and we owe them at least a fair start in their new land. Thank you.

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

Representative **STUCKEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I've been here for four biennial budgets. They've all been different. I've been told by people way more experienced than I have, that the state budget is a lot like sausage—most of us don't really know very much about what goes into it, very few of us have a stomach for making it, but almost all of us have an opinion about how it tastes and how it could taste better.

I know a whole lot has been thrown into this budget that I really don't like, and not that much that I do like. I know it's too early to know how it's going to taste, but I'm very worried about bad heartburn. But right now, Mr. Speaker, I need to tell you how I feel about something that just can't wait. There are several thousand new Mainers in our state who are in this country legally, who want very much to become contributing members of our communities and citizens of our state. They are women and men, mothers, fathers, and children. They are multilingual, educated, hard-working. Where they came from, they were teachers, doctors, homecare workers, engineers, lawyers, social workers, backyard gardeners, bankers, nutritionists, office workers, cab drivers, and shop owners. But they can't work for money here now because they're seeking asylum and they cannot work, they may not work, without permission on papers.

So while they wait they volunteer, making positive contributions to their new communities. And when they're not

doing that, they're going to school to learn English and more about our culture. Maine is their new home. Up until now, I've been extremely proud of how we've welcomed and provided basic needs to these new Mainers. I'm certainly enjoying the richness that cultural diversity is bringing to my city, and I think we should all be looking forward to the enthusiasm, experience, work ethic, and skills that these folks will shortly be bringing to our state workforce.

In Portland, there are 1,000 legal immigrants waiting for permission to work. There are hundreds more in Westbrook and Lewiston and Bangor, and smaller numbers scattered throughout the state. And, Mr. Speaker, now I'm worried. These days, the vast majority of general assistance is spent on housing. That means eliminating GA for asylum seekers in Portland could immediately put 1,000 legal immigrants—men, women, and children—out on the street. A thousand people. That must be the equivalent of a devastating fire leaving a whole neighborhood, in many towns, full of homeless people. Or in some cases, 1,000 people would be a whole town homeless.

Without the continuing availability of general assistance for all legal immigrants, this budget simply will not work for me or for Maine. It's inedible sausage, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to close, Mr. Speaker, last night when I got home, I had an email from a constituent that's pretty direct. It says, "Do not betray the democratic ideals you were elected to uphold by voting for a budget that forces people out of their homes. The outcomes of this action will define the way I vote during the next election cycle. Virtually all my friends and acquaintances feel exactly the same way. Good luck to you and to those families whose fates rest in your hands." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from South Berwick, Representative Beavers.

Representative **BEAVERS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I just want to quote one verse from one chapter in the New Testament. Matthew 25:40, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Westbrook, Representative Gattine.

Representative **GATTINE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House, I want to thank my good friend, the Representative from Hudson for bringing this motion. It is incredibly important and the only thing I'm going to add to this that hasn't been said yet is that we need to understand that the only way to preserve general assistance for asylum seekers and for other people lawfully present is to get this language in the budget. I think it's important for people to understand that this is already paid for in the budget, in the report that many of us voted on just a few minutes ago. When we moved that budget, we voted for the money that would pay to continue GA for the people seeking general assistance.

But what happened was, the reason for a decision that many of us are aware of made it clear that we also need the language that the Representative from Hudson has put forward in the budget to protect the temporary support for asylum seekers who are waiting for permission to work. These people want to work. They have skills, but because of the limbo that they're in as they're waiting for their applications, they are no work, they can't work.

This amendment simply provides the necessary language we need in order to provide them support and, Mr. Speaker, as I've thought about this matter over the last few months, and I've thought about it a lot over the past few months, obviously my concern and my worry is for the people that my friend, the

Representative from Portland, just mentioned. You know, well over 1,000 people, not just in my community, but throughout the state who really, really need this help in order to prevent homelessness and, you know, to help them combat the devastating poverty that they live in now. But, you know, every time I think about this, ultimately there are other thoughts that come into my head, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, every time I think about this, I think about my ancestors, my people who came over here over a century ago. And I remember being a kid and sitting at my grandparents' kitchen table and listening to their stories. And my people, like the ancestors of many of you I am sure, came to America because they were fleeing. Fleeing oppression, fleeing civil war, fleeing famine, fleeing poverty. They were in flight.

They came to America fleeing those things. And when they got here it wasn't easy for them either. It was hard. But they embraced America and America, sometimes with hesitation, embraced them back. And they became interwoven into the fabric of this country. And my immigrant ancestors built this country. And that makes me proud. They worked and they labored and they sweat and they swung hammers and they drove tractors and they built roads and they taught school and they took care of the sick, and when the time came they went off to war, to the very places where they had come from, and put their lives on the line to protect the freedom that they found here.

And the people that we are trying to help here today are the same. They are exactly the same. There is no difference between today's immigrants and my people, my ancestors who came here. And they are the key to the future of this state and of this nation. In my community the children of immigrant families sat side by side in school with my kids. And that makes sense because their future and the future of my children are intertwined and they cannot be separated. And the continued greatness of America and the future prosperity of Maine will depend on the achievement of all of those children. My children. Your children. All the children of Maine no matter where they were born or where their parents were born.

And, Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn our backs on people who so desperately need a little temporary support to survive. And let's be honest, what they need does not cost a lot and as I said, it's already in the budget. But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, when push comes to shove, it isn't about the money. At the end of the day we cannot turn our backs on these people who so desperately need our help because we can't dishonor our own people—our ancestors who struggled and worked and fought to make sure that we could be here and stand here today. I cannot dishonor them by turning my back on people who are just like they were. The people we are trying to help here are just like us. They are just like us. And if we turn away from them we are turning away from ourselves and turning away from all of the people who brought us here.

So, Mr. Speaker, the generations that came before us are watching what we do here today. Today's generation is depending on what we do here today. The generations of the future will judge us based on what we do here today. And I hope we can make them all proud and support the people who need our help. Thank you.

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

Representative **FARNSWORTH**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, Others have spoken certainly much more eloquently than I can. All I can say is that my vote in support of this amendment is driven by my Christian values. And I want to quote somebody else, who actually, I think, put it right on the spot. "If you don't want tax dollars to help the

poor, then stop saying you want a country based on Christian values, because you don't." And that's from Jimmy Carter, our former President. Please support the amendment.

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

Representative **RUSSELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, on the afternoon of October 9, 2012, a young Pakistani girl boarded her school bus in the northwest Pakistani district of Swat. A gunman asked for her by name. He then pointed a pistol at her and he fired three shots. One bullet hit the left side of her forehead, travelled under her skin through the length of her face, and then went into her shoulder. That same little girl managed to survive. She is currently receiving asylum in Great Britain.

In December of last year, she won the Nobel Peace Prize for standing up for women and girls having the right to education. Her name was Malala and I wonder what we would do today if Malala was one of the girls who were seeking asylum in our state. I wonder what we would do today if we were able to open our doors to 200 Nigerian girls who were kidnapped from a school and taken. We won't know because we haven't found them yet. Two hundred and sixteen girls remain missing. We all know these stories because they're on the front pages.

What we don't always know are the stories that are in our back yard. And when I talk to people, I've met former US Senators, not US Senators, Senators from their country living here in Maine. You'd never know it. People are here because they've been persecuted. When rape is a strategy in your country for oppression, when violence is an everyday way of life, there are no choices. I hope today that we will call upon our better angels and think about the faces that we do know and think about what it would be like and what we would say to that person if they were in front of us.

When I was in Morocco last fall, I spoke to a woman who was an Afghanistan Member of Parliament. And one of her colleagues happened to be markedly wealthy and so she was able to have a limousine that was capable of withstanding an IED and it's a good thing because an IED hit her—hit her car. Everyone outside of the car died that day but she was alive. She was alive, but she was hit because she had the audacity to be a woman and serving in government. There are no protocols to protect members of Parliament for security purposes.

We are talking about freedom fighters. We are talking about people who stood up in their countries for civil rights. We're talking about people who are standing up for the rights of women, the rights of girls to be educated. We should be honored to be bringing people of this caliber of intellect, educational capacity, and courage. Courage. What an amazing word. It gets overused. That's who we're talking about. Sometimes the courage is packing a bag and grabbing your kids and getting in a car and going someplace, any place, that does not end up in your children being dead. And it doesn't mean that you cannot be a hero because you're a taxi cab driver. It just means that you're standing up for your family. We don't have to know what courage looks like here. We don't ever have to know. As a politician, I am never going to have the problem of having to buy a limousine that can withstand a bomb simply because I have the audacity to show up to work and stand up for the people that I believe in.

But we have politicians in this state who came here because if they did not, they would be dead because they stood up for their people. There's a lot of honor in the people that were in the hallways today. There is a lot of honor throughout the state in our folks who are seeking asylum. Sanctuary, really. They're seeking sanctuary because they have the audacity to express what we continue to hold for granted, which if the First

Amendment right to free speech. What would you do if it was your daughter? What would you do if your daughter got on a bus, who had had the audacity to write a blog that said that girls should be educated. Would you hold your hat out and ask for help if it meant that your daughter had an opportunity for a future? What about if it was your son that might get kidnapped and taken into a military rebel group? What would you do?

We're talking about the extremist of circumstances for people. I, for one, would be honored if Malala chose to move to Maine. But I don't have to be because I'm already honored by the immigrants who have come here hoping for a better life, following the torch of the Statue of Liberty.

My family came to this country in the 1600's on both sides of my family. I am no less an immigrant than they are, than they were. My family came, just like many of the folks in this room, fleeing religious persecution. I've never mentioned this before because it's not something that I think is really helpful, but there is a governor in my ancestry of the State of Maine. That governor has the distinction of having removed folks from Malaga Island. That is not an honor that my family wants to live up to. We have an opportunity to change that, to show the world, really, that we value life, that we respect courage, and first and foremost that we love our neighbor as our self.

I urge you to vote in support of the pending motion. And if you vote against it, I hope I get a whole bunch of notes explaining to us how we're going to see 900 people on the streets of Portland in two weeks' time. Explain to us how that's going to work. I want to see notes from people who have camps who are willing to open those camps up for folks so that they have a home this summer. And if you can't do that, I would ask you to support the pending motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Winthrop, Representative Hickman.

Representative **HICKMAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House, I rise in support of the pending motion. Every person in this chamber, I believe is a proud American. Our ancestors come from different places, practice different faith, sometimes eat different meals, but we share one nation and one set of ideals. We share a belief in the greatness of our country—a belief that what makes us a great nation isn't our sameness, but our diversity.

Today, in these hallways, we have heard and saw, in the hallways of this magnificent building, we saw Maine's diversity right before our eyes. There were people here from Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Congo Brazzaville, Djibouti, Mauretania, Rwanda, and Somalia. They hail from the continent of my ancestors who did not come to these shores by choice, who did not come here fleeing anything, and still, I love America more than any other country on Earth and I wish to be nowhere else.

It has already been quoted but I'm going to say it again, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door." I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that every person here, anyone listening or watching knows that those closing lines from Emma Lazarus's 1883 sonnet entitled, "The New Colossus" are emblazoned on a bronze plaque on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, placed there in 1903. We are a nation of immigrants, let us never forget. As Thomas Jefferson challenges us, "Shall we refuse the unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which the savages of the wilderness extended to our fathers arriving in this land? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe?" We are a nation of immigrants.

Let us be reminded by the international community, through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for which this country voted that, quote, "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." End quote. We are a nation of immigrants, let us never forget. Throughout this long and painful conversation, we have heard arguments that we can't afford to take care of our own. We can't even help our own disadvantaged, our elderly, and our infirm, so how can we help those people? I say, well, why not? Why can't we?

From the long perspective of human history, from before the times of the pharaohs to now, in the wealthiest nation ever to exist on Earth, can we really claim poverty in good faith? Throughout this conversation, Mr. Speaker, we have heard fears that sound like this: "They don't look like us." "They don't speak our language." "They worship a different God than we do." "They have strange ways." "They cannot be trusted." "They just come here to take from us, to pick our pockets, to live off the dole." Is that so? If we haven't walked in their shoes, than how can we know? Who are we to judge them?

Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House, have we forgotten what makes us human? Have we forgotten what makes us humane? Have we forgotten the purpose of this government, our purpose for existing, for being here? The principles that guide our work in this chamber are laid out in our State's Constitution. We have formed the government of the State of Maine, quote, to "establish justice, insure tranquility, promote our common welfare, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of liberty." End quote. Is not the welfare of all God's children our common welfare? Isn't treating all of our residents with fairness and equality indeed justice? Isn't our responsibility to truly secure the blessings of liberty for those who have sought refuge among us, fleeing tyranny and civil war? It breaks my heart that we are even having this debate, Mr. Speaker.

I will quote a passage from The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin. Quote, "Life is tragic, simply because the Earth turns and the sun inexorably rises and sets, and one day, for each of us, the sun will go down for the last, last time. Perhaps the whole root of our trouble, the human trouble, is that we will sacrifice all the beauty of our lives, will imprison ourselves in totems, taboos, crosses, blood sacrifices, steeples, mosques, races, armies, flags, and nations, in order to deny the fact of death, the only fact that we have. It seems to me that one ought to rejoice in the fact of death—ought to decide, indeed, to earn one's death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life." End quote.

And so, in facing the conundrum of life, in this conversation, I am going to flip the script. I am not going to call them immigrants or asylum seekers or legal noncitizens. I am going to call them exactly what they are: human beings, seeking a better life in the greatest country on Earth. How can we, in good conscience, vote to throw decent human beings out onto the streets because our sometimes cold and our sometimes insensitive language around, quote, "welfare cheats and illegals," end quote, has been repeated so often. We have lost our ability to see the human beings behind the labels. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience." In order to live with my conscience, Mr. Speaker, I cannot, ought not, will not vote against human beings who need our help. I cannot, ought not, will not pit them against other human beings who also need our help. And I cannot, ought not, will not fear what happens at the ballot box in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House, no matter the outcome of this conundrum, this amendment, this vote that we are about to take this afternoon, I pledge to work with anyone in

this chamber on any side of the aisle to make sure that our state is more welcoming to young families, more welcoming to people who do not look like most of us, more welcoming to people from different lands and other countries. And yes, more welcoming to human beings fleeing the terrible places where life can be found, human beings whose toughness and resilience and ambition will make us a better state now and in the future.

Brilliantly blessed are those who create unity out of vast diversity, for they will experience Heaven on Earth. Mr. Speaker, Women and Men of the House, let us remember who we are. Let us follow the golden lamp of Lady Liberty and vote to pass this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Adoption of House Amendment "A" (H-439) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 269

YEA - Alley, Babbidge, Bates, Battle, Beavers, Beck, Beebe-Center, Blume, Brooks, Bryant, Burstein, Campbell J, Chapman, Chenette, Chipman, Cooper, Daughtry, Davitt, DeChant, Devin, Dion, Doore, Duchesne, Dunphy M, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Fecteau, Fowle, Frey, Gattine, Gideon, Gilbert, Golden, Goode, Grant, Grohman, Hamann, Harlow, Herbig, Hickman, Hobbins, Hogan, Hubbell, Hymanson, Jorgensen, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Lajoie, Longstaff, Luchini, Martin J, Martin R, Mastraccio, McCabe, McCreight, McLean, Melaragno, Monaghan, Moonen, Morrison, Nadeau, Noon, Picchiotti, Pierce T, Powers, Rotundo, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Saucier, Schneck, Shaw, Stanley, Stuckey, Sukeforth, Tepler, Tipping-Spitz, Tucker, Verow, Warren, Welsh, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Austin, Bickford, Black, Buckland, Campbell R, Chace, Corey, Crafts, Dillingham, Dunphy L, Edgecomb, Espling, Farrin, Foley, Fredette, Gerrish, Gillway, Ginzler, Greenwood, Guerin, Hanington, Hanley, Hawke, Head, Herrick, Higgins, Hilliard, Hobart, Kinney J, Kinney M, Lockman, Long, Lyford, Maker, Malaby, McClellan, McElwee, Nutting, O'Connor, Parry, Peterson, Pickett, Pierce J, Pouliot, Prescott, Reed, Sanderson, Sawicki, Seavey, Sherman, Short, Sirocki, Stearns, Stetkis, Theriault, Timberlake, Timmons, Tuell, Turner, Vachon, Wadsworth, Wallace, Ward, White, Winsor, Wood.

ABSENT - Marean, Skolfield.

Yes, 83; No, 66; Absent, 2; Excused, 0.

83 having voted in the affirmative and 66 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent, and accordingly **House Amendment "A" (H-439) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)** was **ADOPTED**.

Representative **STUCKEY** of Portland **PRESENTED House Amendment "D" (H-451) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415)**, which was **READ** by the Clerk.

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

Representative **STUCKEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I'd like to start by thanking my colleagues, our colleagues, on the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee for the insufferable amount of time that they've put in trying to get us to a place that seems very difficult to get to. I'd also like to thank the hard-working staff on the second and first floor at OFPR and the Revisor's Office for helping me pull together this amendment, which, Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief in presenting.

What I've done, Mr. Speaker, is because of angst I have of things that have been left out of the budget, I've figured out a way to find a little money, and I'll tell you about that and then I'll tell you about how I would propose to spend it. I would impose a tax equalization process on the top two percent of wage earners, so

that it equals what the bottom 98 percent of us pay in taxes and for the biennium, in FY 16, that would raise \$180 million and in Fiscal 17, \$205 million. That's tax equalization on the top two percent of taxed households giving us \$385 new million for the budget.

The other thing I did was went through the Maine State Housing Authority looking to the Housing Opportunity for Maine Fund for \$3 million in each year, and I'll tell you that I would spend that right away on housing vouchers for the homeless, three million dollars each year. The rest of the money I would propose as follows.

In education, I would fully fund the essential programs and services and I would replace the federal Title 1 money, which as it is now supplants, inappropriately I would add, local funds. So, I would replace Title 1 money that goes into the formula so that the Title 1 money could be used as it is intended. And I would put money into the Maine State Grant Program. It would be \$194 million for the essential programs and services, which would bring us to 150 or 155—they'd like that wouldn't they?—55 percent. The Title 1 supplement, not supplant, would be \$90 million for the biennium, and there'd be \$18 million in the Maine State Grant Program.

I would add six Forest Ranger II's to the agriculture budget, a Consumer Protection Inspector—that's a milk inspector—and money to support the Food Assistance Program for a total of \$892,000 for the forest rangers, \$151,000 for the Milk Protection Inspector, and \$76,000 for the Food Assistance Program. In Health and Human Services, in wages for the in-home and community support workers—that would be for the biennium—\$15 million.

And then, two of my favorites. I told you I wasn't going to go after what was in the budget proposal, and I'm not. But, the changes to the Inheritance Tax I find particularly curious in a day and age when people who are residents of nursing facilities and assisted living facilities who have gone through the Medicare Spenddown and have \$2,000 in the bank and an \$8,000 used car in the parking lot, and that's their total liquid assets, and they are given, after they give over their Medicare payments to the Department, they are given a \$10 a month allowance in a nursing facility, and a \$20 a month allowance in an assisted living home.

And I go back five, you're not going to have to pay an estate tax now for your estate, and it's hard to believe that this happens because financial advisors, I think, can usually help you circumnavigate this problem. But, if your estate is now less than \$5.5 million, you will be free from estate tax and we can't give a little old lady in a nursing home \$10 a month. That's pretty strange to me.

I have money for Housing First, which is a program that would support services in a project, in a housing project, that would be targeted at folks who are mostly members of the Consent Decree—they have severe and persistent chronic mental illnesses. They're a homeless population now. The Housing First model has been demonstrated successfully in Portland twice—one in a facility for men, and another for women—housing 30 individuals, with services. And the money to do another one, the capital funds, are available. They're waiting for the service money, so I've put \$800,000 into the budget for that.

There are 12 peer centers, which are the front end of the mental health community based service system around the state. There are 12 of them. They haven't had an increase in their budget in 19 years. The budget that we're considering has found a little bit of money for them. A 10 percent increase for those 12 centers would be \$147,000 a year, so I've put in a little money to bring that up, to fully fund that. And then going forward with that,

another \$24,000 in '16 and \$48,000 in '17 to rebase the funding for those grants.

There's \$2 million a year for childcare vouchers and quality programming assurances to support the restoration, resurrection of the early care and education system in the state, and supports for families who are in search of quality childcare. There's \$1.4 million each year in the budget, in this amendment, for Head Start to bring the Head Start new allocation up to \$2 million. There's money to remove the DEL Asset Test and to restore the Quimby crossover payments in nursing facilities and to create critical access nursing facility funding. And, that, when you get to the end, we've spent \$350 million out of the \$391, so there is \$33 million, give or take, to go to the Budget Stabilization Fund. And, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time, and I look forward to a robust support for this amendment. Thank you.

Representative GIDEON of Freeport moved that **House Amendment "D" (H-451) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415) be INDEFINITELY POSTPONED.**

Representative STUCKEY of Portland **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **INDEFINITELY POSTPONE House Amendment "D" (H-451) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415).**

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 Indefinite Postponement of House Amendment "D" (H-451) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 270

YEA - Alley, Austin, Babbidge, Battle, Beck, Beebe-Center, Bickford, Black, Buckland, Campbell J, Campbell R, Chace, Chenette, Cooper, Corey, Crafts, Davitt, Dillingham, Doore, Duchesne, Dunphy L, Dunphy M, Edgcomb, Espling, Farrin, Fecteau, Foley, Fowle, Fredette, Frey, Gerrish, Gideon, Gillway, Ginzler, Greenwood, Grohman, Guerin, Hanington, Hanley, Hawke, Head, Herbig, Herrick, Higgins, Hilliard, Hobart, Hobbins, Hogan, Jorgensen, Kinney J, Kinney M, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Lockman, Long, Longstaff, Luchini, Lyford, Maker, Malaby, Martin J, Martin R, McCabe, McClellan, McElwee, McLean, Morrison, Nadeau, Nutting, O'Connor, Parry, Picchiotti, Pickett, Pierce J, Pierce T, Pouliot, Prescott, Reed, Rotundo, Sanderson, Saucier, Sawicki, Schneck, Seavey, Shaw, Sherman, Short, Sirocki, Stanley, Stearns, Stetkis, Sukeforth, Theriault, Timberlake, Timmons, Tucker, Tuell, Turner, Vachon, Verow, Wadsworth, Wallace, Ward, Warren, Welsh, White, Winsor, Wood, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Bates, Beavers, Blume, Brooks, Bryant, Burstein, Chapman, Chipman, Daughtry, DeChant, Devin, Dion, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Gattine, Gilbert, Golden, Goode, Grant, Hamann, Harlow, Hickman, Hubbell, Hymanson, Lajoie, Mastraccio, McCreight, Melaragno, Monaghan, Moonen, Noon, Peterson, Powers, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Stuckey, Tepler, Tipping-Spitz.

ABSENT - Marean, Skolfield.

Yes, 110; No, 39; Absent, 2; Excused, 0.

110 having voted in the affirmative and 39 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent, and accordingly **House Amendment "D" (H-451) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415) was INDEFINITELY POSTPONED.**

Representative McCABE of Skowhegan **PRESENTED House Amendment "C" (H-449) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415),** which was **READ** by the Clerk.

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

Representative **McCABE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, for a moment, I want folks to look at me, not as the Majority Leader, but as a Representative—a Representative of the folks from Skowhegan and from Madison, the two communities that I represent folks in. I ask folks to look at me, I'll take my Majority Leader hat off for a moment. I also need to say that I truly respect those people, those people in the caucus that asked me not to bring this forward today, Mr. Speaker, yourself included. Asked me not to bring this issue forward to discuss today on the House floor. I bring this issue, not to disrespect members of committees that have worked on this issue—members of Education who worked this issue, or the members on Taxation who've reported a bill out that's in the pipeline where this amendment comes from.

But, Mr. Speaker, I rise today, sort of out of desperation. Desperation for those folks—my friends, my neighbors—the folks living in many towns around the State of Maine, the unbelievable mill towns of the past, the towns that are close to disappearing. And I bring this amendment forward and I think back to this morning, Mr. Speaker, when the good Representative from Portland, Representative Farnsworth rose in caucus and he said, "What are we doing for the mill towns?" What are we doing about what the good Representative from Medway, Representative Stanley raised last night at the caucus? It was at that point, Mr. Speaker, this morning that I decided I needed to go forward, I needed to bring this amendment forward. I needed to give an opportunity for the good Representative from Medway to speak, for the good Representative from Jay, Representative Gilbert to speak and to talk about the hay days—the hay days of that community, the hay days of that mill town.

Mr. Speaker, I also had to give an opportunity for the good Representative from Norridgewock to be able to stand up, Representative Farrin, and to speak about his experience—his experience at the recent town meeting in Madison where they voted to disband the police department. So, many of us come from communities where that would be unheard of. I imagine people can't even fathom what that's like. Most of the time, we go to town meeting, we discuss whether or not we're going to buy another police car, whether we're going to add a detective. I speak in broad terms as I say that because in our towns, we struggle. We struggle to keep police cars on the road. We struggle because we are one-horse towns.

Mr. Speaker, you've heard me talk before about how proud I am of my town. I speak about New Balance. I speak about the Sappi Mill. But when the Sappi Mill came to our town and they said, "We're cutting. We want a reappraisal. We don't want to pay as much in taxes." And the town was blindsided. Overnight the value of that mill went down \$100 million and it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough, Mr. Speaker. They've come back. They want more. We will battle in court. We will spend probably a half million dollars on court fees and appraisals just to lose more value in that mill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I look up the river, I think of the folks in Madison. I think of all they've done to try to keep that mill there. The valuation of that mill was cut. They will no longer have a police department. Mr. Speaker, I went home the other night, my wife was writing the school budget for her classroom. I think she has \$100 or \$200 to spend. She'll spend more of her personal money out of her \$38,000 salary than she will get for a budget for her school classroom. I really rise today out of desperation. I don't know what to do. I truly am conflicted, Mr. Speaker. I'd hoped that what's on the board, this amendment would've made it in the budget, as you know. But it didn't.

I am here to offer this. I offer this not only for the folks in Skowhegan and Madison, but the folks in the rim counties, places

that people visit, places that used to be productive. In many cases, they still are productive. But, we are one-horse towns. Those mills can no longer pay 60-70 percent of our tax burden. I'm here today, Mr. Speaker, because I think this is an issue of fairness. We decided to, at some point in time to save money, to tweak the way we value our towns. We decided to go with a 3-year average. We changed things in sudden and severe to save money. We made some of those adjustments, Mr. Speaker, to help our thriving communities—to help our thriving communities so that they could be on a 3-year average because they are doing better.

But I say to you, Men and Women of the House, it's not working for communities that lose valuation overnight. They lose valuation because the valuation in their mills drops out from the bottom of them, Mr. Speaker. We have sat in this House chamber, we have debated free trade policies, and I am here, Mr. Speaker, as a Representative of a community who sees and feels the burden of those trade policies, Mr. Speaker. So if men and women disagree with free trade, if they disagree with what's happened with the paper industry, with foreign subsidies being dumped on the market, Mr. Speaker, I encourage you to light up the board. Vote for this amendment not because I'm the Majority Leader or anything like that, Mr. Speaker, but because you value mill towns around the State of Maine.

I don't rise today to try to derail the budget. I truly rise because I don't know what to do, Mr. Speaker. Myself, I put forward several bills. This is not a new issue. When you go downstairs, you look at the law library, this has happened in towns around the State of Maine. Usually, it's not so complex. Usually, a bill gets proposed, it's acted upon, it moves forward, it ends up not being a partisan issue, and we address the needs of those communities, Mr. Speaker. So, I am risen today really thinking about the times in our caucus, Mr. Speaker, when the good Representative from Medway stands up, Representative Stanley, he speaks, I listen. His stories, they resonate with me. I listen to those stories, those stories stay in my head, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, those stories stay in my heart.

So, I hope when we light up the board today, this gets support. But I also realistically realize that this has other consequences. It could upset the budget process, Mr. Speaker. But my hope is, today we send this down to the other body with this amendment attached, we see how it does, we'll debate this later on this week as well. But I really rise out of desperation and I ask for your help, Mr. Speaker.

Representative GIDEON of Freeport moved that **House Amendment "C" (H-449) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415) be INDEFINITELY POSTPONED.**

Representative McCABE of Skowhegan **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **INDEFINITELY POSTPONE House Amendment "C" (H-449) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415).**

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 Norridgewock, Representative Farrin.

Representative **FARRIN**: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise to you today as we face very many difficult decisions. And I'm reminded that the reason I was sent here was to represent the citizens in District 111, which include: Madison, Norridgewock, and Solon.

I had the opportunity on June 8th to attend the Madison annual meeting and I know we've had lots of discussions about carve outs and backroom deals and everything else. And this is in the light of day that very similar to my colleague from Skowhegan, Representative McCabe, I'm reaching out to you to

say I don't know what else to do as well. I watched the citizens of the Town of Madison make difficult decisions on that night. In the last two years, their evaluation, their mill rate's gone up by \$4 per thousand. They've cut a half a million dollars out of their school administration budget. They've cut \$800,000 out of their municipal budget. And they just recently, on that Monday night, decided to turn their police department over to the Somerset County Sheriff's Department.

So, they're not looking for a handout. This body created part of this problem. And I don't know the exact date, but two or three years ago, when it did the 3-year evaluation. And what this legislation is doing—and I submit to each of you, it could happen in your hometown—instead of doing the 3-year average, is to do the 1-year. And it could happen to any one of you if you have a large employer in your town. And we're looking to make that, instead of the 3-year average, for the 1-year. And the citizens of Madison look out and say, "Yes. We know that we're asking for this specifically, but if you look at a lot of the other folks, it could happen in your hometown." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Kennebunkport, Representative Seavey.

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

The SPEAKER: The Representative may pose his question.

Representative **SEAVEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I'm wondering if this amendment will affect the reimbursement amount already calculated to the communities under the School Funding Formula. And if it does, can we have a breakdown on how this amendment affects our communities?

The SPEAKER: The Representative from Kennebunkport, Representative Seavey, has posed a question through the Chair to anyone who may care to respond.

The Chair recognizes the Representative from Jay, Representative Gilbert.

Representative **GILBERT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I stand in support of the motion before us. Town valuations should be modified as quickly as possible to reflect the valuations when they experience sudden and severe drops in valuation as a result of mill abatements. In particular, the School Funding Formula, as applied to each community, including the Town of Jay, should be modified to reflect that loss in revenue.

Prior to 2013, the mill in Jay was valued at \$927,345,195. As a result of an abatement received by Verso Paper in 2014, the mill's value decreased to \$673,206,244, a reduction in taxable property of \$254,138,951, or 27 percent of the mill's taxable value. The Androscoggin Mill represents 69 percent of the tax base for the Town of Jay, with a population of a little over 4,000. This loss is a very significant one for the purposes of the School Funding Formula.

It is no coincidence that each of the paper mill towns have suffered significant reductions in valuation. It is an unfortunate reality in the paper industry and the state. The impact is severe on each town's evaluation and application of the School Funding Formula and its impact on our students.

Let me conclude by urging that all of us do the right thing. The education of a child in Jay is no less, nor more important than the education of a child in Kittery, Fort Kent, or anywhere in between. If we want all our children to have an opportunity to learn and grow, then we need to allocate our limited resources in a fair way to provide everyone with a fair opportunity. House Amendment "B" does just that, and I urge you to support the amendment. I am asking, pleading for your support for the paper mill towns throughout the State of Maine.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Medway, Representative Stanley.

Representative **STANLEY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I stand in front of you today, probably the hardest speech I ever had to make in this House. And why? Because I'm going to talk about us as Mainers. We care about other people. If somebody in your community came down with cancer or came down with something, we'd all go to the town hall, we'd all chip in, we'd all help as much as we could. And that is what's going on in these mill towns today.

We are one Maine. It's time for us to realize that. We're all in this together. What's good for northern Maine, what's good for eastern Maine, what's good for western Maine, and what's good for southern Maine—it's good for everybody. We all prosper. But when you have communities—four hometown communities—that are going down the tubes. I hate to say use the word, "going down the tubes" because I know. I've lived through Millinocket. I've lived through East Millinocket. And I've just recently seen what happened down in Bucksport. And I'll tell you what: you live in one of those communities, you know what I'm talking about. When you don't live there, it's pretty hard to visualize what goes on.

But I'm going to tell you a little bit about what goes on. When you have elderly people living in a homes on Social Security that work in these mills all their lives, and what happens is they become the taxpayer in these communities. You're trying to run a school. You're trying to run a town. And this, guess what? When your mil rate goes up to \$25, \$30 a thousand and you're living on \$1,600, \$1,700 a month, I'll tell you what, that tax bill becomes very high. Very hard to think we sit here, we've all gone door-to-door, knocked on people's doors, talked to people, talked to the elderly. And what do we do? We come down here and say, "Boy, I feel bad for those people. Here now, what can we do to help them?"

Well, here you have. You have an opportunity to help not just a few people—thousands. You stop and took the population of these communities and add them up and you're talking thousands of people. And I'll tell you what, I live in Maine. Why? Because of the quality of life that we have here and the quality of life that we provide to the other people that come here. But I see what's going on in some of these mill towns. The quality of life is not what it used to be. The quality of life is deteriorating. And why it's deteriorating is because of what is going on because of the big drops in valuation that these municipalities have.

When you take \$150 million, \$200 million, \$100 million off an evaluation of probably \$300 million or \$450 million, I'll tell you what, you're talking a third of your budget. A third of your valuation is gone. With that being gone, I'll tell you what, who's left to pay? The people and the residents in that community. And most of those people are retirees, because what's going on today in a lot of these communities are people that are working in these factories are coming from away—15, 20, 30 miles away because that's the only jobs in the area, good paying jobs in the area. And these people are travelling to there so it just affects all these little small towns and everyone.

I live in Medway, Maine. Let me tell you about Millinocket, Maine. Millinocket, Maine has about 400, 450 homes either in foreclosure or been abandoned. East Millinocket, down the road about eight miles, that has about 150 right now of abandoned or foreclosed property. I live in Medway. Never had a problem because I never had a paper mill in my town. I just a regular community that's located beside one of these paper mill towns. And I see right now, I went to the post office which is four miles

away from my home, and there's eight vacant homes there now. There's never been vacant homes in Medway.

So you see what's going on, people. I know I lost a mill in Millinocket and then we're going to be losing a mill in East Millinocket and I understand that. What I'm concerned about is the way that these two mills that I've lost started out the same way as what's going on right here right now with the valuation being dropped, and being dropped substantially. And like the gentleman from Jay, Representative from Jay stated a few minutes ago: they used to pay, in East Millinocket and Millinocket, anywhere between 75 and 85 percent of the taxes in those communities. Today, they don't pay. Millinocket is on the verge of bankruptcy. East Millinocket is not that far away from it.

And here we are sitting in this body down here with a chance to help some people that need the help, people that have a home. When you go home at night, you go home to a home. That's what these people have: homes. But the problem with a home, the home has changed in these communities. The way of life has changed. Now you see people going to the food banks. Now you see all kinds of different things that you never, ever saw before or you never experienced. And what it is, it's your hometown, people. These are your home towns that I'm talking about.

The very existence that why we live where we live because of these home towns. We like to grow up and raise our children in the town that we grew up in and that's what these towns have done. And now, here we are, on the verge of not allowing them to do that. Because way I feel about this whole thing: this is about people. That's why I sit in this body here. Because I care about people. And I know people aren't supposed to be important in some instances, but I'll tell you what, when you live in these areas like I've lived and then you go to the other areas and see what's going on out there, there's poverty here and there's no place for these people to go.

We have not done a good job as a state providing jobs on a statewide basis. Hollered about that now ever since I've been here, and I'm still hollering about it and I'm going to keep on hollering about it until we do something about it. Because like I said in my last, not my last speech but the speech before, not shame on them, shame on us. We're the ones that not doing our jobs. We're sitting here looking out for this, this, and that, when we should be looking out for what's best for everybody in the whole State of Maine. And by doing something in this line, by rejecting the Indefinite Postponement, you are doing something to the people of this state. You're helping a few regions of this state.

And then I think it's time, if we do this, I think we, as a body, as a Legislature, we ought to be sitting down seeing what we can do to help these areas so that we can provide jobs. Because I'll tell you, a job does a lot of things for a person, does a lot of things for a community. And I'll tell you what, we're not doing a very good job in parts of our state by creating jobs. And I'll tell you what, if we want to solve problems like this right here, the way to do it is how to diversify your economy and we haven't done that. We allow these paper mill towns become what they are. Like in my situation. In my situation, Great Northern Paper Company at the time wouldn't allow other businesses to come in the area and provide jobs because they wanted a captivated workforce. And they had a captivated work force, which is a good thing for them but it's not a good thing for the community because when the big horse dies, problems start. And as you can see in my region, the big horse dies.

And I hate to say it, some of you other people sit in this room might not be representing them today, but down the road that big horse in your community might die too. And when he does, it's

time for us as a state to have the problem so that we can have something in place to help these towns. This right here is just a quick fix to try to solve a problem that not just one community has, four communities. It doesn't affect 1,000 people. It probably affects 10, 12, 13,000 people. And I'll tell you what, we as a state, it's our obligation to provide for the needs of the people. And this is a need that has to be dealt with and I feel that this legislative body, by being a Mainer, I care about other people, I care about the quality of life that we provide here. Shouldn't just provide it to people from away, while we provide it to ourselves. Because I'll tell you, I'm from Maine, I'm proud to be from Maine, and I'll tell you what, if you need a hand tomorrow, your car breaks down, I'm willing to go up there and give you a hand, not walk by you. So I think we, as a body, ought to be doing the same thing. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Brunswick, Representative Daughtry.

Representative **DAUGHTRY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise to answer a question that was prior asked. I just wanted to highlight that this is a matter that is very near and dear to the Education Committee. We saw quite a few bills dealing with taxation and valuation.

In fact, there was a bill that a subcommittee of our committee worked with the Taxation Committee, LD 550, which dealt exactly with this. And, it recognized that we don't know when this is going to happen to any town, when the poor, unfortunate task of having this sudden and severe change in your municipal valuation can happen to any of us, anywhere in Maine. The bill was actually passed with an emergency enactor and engrossed in both chambers, and is on its way to the Chief Executive. And some of us on the committee do have some concerns about tacking this on to the budget.

So, I want to highlight that we all understand this. We all feel for these communities and that is why we did put it as a measure that would apply in the future because it could potentially change the factors for the current GPA figures and the valuation.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Embden, Representative Dunphy.

Representative **DUNPHY**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, rural Maine is, as you know, is struggling. In the small area that I live in, in about a 20 mile radius, Solon Manufacturing, which is the largest tongue depressor maker in the world, made tongue depressors and popsicle sticks, closed up. North Anson Reel, the absolute largest metal wire rope reel producer in the world closed their doors. Redmond's Mill, made gunstocks for Remington Arms and Savage. They've gone. They've disappeared.

And now the paper mills are struggling. And these paper mills, the impact in a rural community is huge. It's astounding. Either the trucking, the lumbering, the gas stations, the stores—they all rely on this. And I talked with one of the managers at Madison just about an hour ago and they're looking again at downtime. So, when these mills, when they get reevaluated, in Madison Paper's case, they know what the value was. It's not some hoax because they were sold a couple of years ago, so they know very well what the value is. They're not asking for a handout, they're asking for fair evaluation.

However, the impact on the local communities, part of it, because of the way the reevaluation is done, it's devastating. It hurts the school system. It hurts the police departments. I think Representative Farrin commented about the steps that Madison has gone through simply to continue to function as a community. So, I would ask that you support Representative McCabe's proposal here because it truly is critical to the survival of rural Maine. Thank you.

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

Representative **McCABE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify. There was some confusion as far as the text from this bill. This bill, or this amendment, I should say, is based on work that the Taxation Committee did and the concept is a bill that remains in the pipeline at this point in time. There was a task force from Education that came forward, made some recommendations, and those recommendations are included in this amendment. I do understand there's some concern as far as distribution as far as it's related to education funding and other sorts of state assistance. I will say that this budget includes quite an increase to the General Purpose Aid, so at this time, if we take the actual valuations of these communities, the real evaluation, it seems like an appropriate time to include those and as the money's redistributed anyway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Indefinite Postponement of House Amendment "C" (H-449) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415). All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 271

YEA - Austin, Babbidge, Bates, Battle, Bickford, Blume, Burstein, Campbell J, Chace, Chapman, Chenette, Cooper, Corey, Crafts, Dillingham, Dion, Edgecomb, Espling, Farnsworth, Foley, Fredette, Gattine, Gerrish, Gideon, Gillway, Ginzler, Goode, Grant, Greenwood, Guerin, Hanington, Hanley, Hawke, Head, Herbig, Herrick, Hilliard, Hobart, Hobbins, Hubbell, Hymanson, Jorgensen, Kinney J, Kinney M, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Lockman, Long, Longstaff, Luchini, Lyford, Maker, Mastraccio, McClellan, McElwee, McLean, Morrison, Nadeau, Nutting, O'Connor, Pickett, Pierce J, Pierce T, Pouliot, Prescott, Reed, Rotundo, Sanborn, Sanderson, Sawicki, Schneck, Seavey, Shaw, Sherman, Sirocki, Stearns, Sukeforth, Tepler, Theriault, Timberlake, Timmons, Tucker, Tuell, Turner, Vachon, Wadsworth, Wallace, Warren, Welsh, White, Winsor, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Alley, Beavers, Beck, Beebe-Center, Black, Brooks, Bryant, Buckland, Campbell R, Chipman, Daughtry, Davitt, DeChant, Devin, Doore, Duchesne, Dunphy L, Dunphy M, Evangelos, Farrin, Fecteau, Fowle, Frey, Gilbert, Golden, Grohman, Hamann, Harlow, Hickman, Higgins, Hogan, Lajoie, Malaby, Martin J, Martin R, McCabe, McCreight, Melaragno, Monaghan, Moonen, Noon, Parry, Peterson, Picchiotti, Powers, Russell, Rykerson, Saucier, Short, Stanley, Stetkis, Stuckey, Tipping-Spitz, Verow, Ward, Wood.

ABSENT - Mearan, Skolfield.

Yes, 93; No, 56; Absent, 2; Excused, 0.

93 having voted in the affirmative and 56 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent, and accordingly **House Amendment "C" (H-449) to Committee Amendment "A" (H-415) was INDEFINITELY POSTPONED.**

Subsequently, **Committee Amendment "A" (H-415) as Amended by House Amendments "A" (H-439) and "B" (H-448) 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.**

Under further suspension of the rules, the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-415) as Amended by House Amendments "A" (H-439) and "B" (H-448) thereto and sent for concurrence.**

By unanimous consent, all matters having been acted upon were **ORDERED SENT FORTHWITH.**

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Divided Report

Majority Report of the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-450)** on Bill "An Act To Promote Academic Opportunities for Maine Youth during Summer Months" (H.P. 286) (L.D. 419)

Signed:

Senator:

MILLETT of Cumberland

Representatives:

KORNFIELD of Bangor
DAUGHTRY of Brunswick
FARNSWORTH of Portland
HUBBELL of Bar Harbor
MAKER of Calais
McCLELLAN of Raymond
PIERCE of Falmouth
POULIOT of Augusta
STEARNS of Guilford
TIPPING-SPITZ of Orono

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:

Senators:

LANGLEY of Hancock
EDGEComb of Aroostook

READ.

On motion of Representative McCABE of Skowhegan, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED.**

The Bill was **READ ONCE. Committee Amendment "A" (H-450) 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-450)** and sent for concurrence.

CONSENT CALENDAR

First Day

In accordance with House Rule 519, the following item appeared on the Consent Calendar for the First Day:

(H.P. 877) (L.D. 1291) Bill "An Act To Promote Food Self-sufficiency for the People of the State" Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-447)**

Under suspension of the rules, Second Day Consent Calendar notification was given.

There being no objection, the House Paper was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended** and sent for concurrence.