

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**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

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
68th Legislative Day  
Tuesday, June 30, 2015

The House met according to adjournment and was called to order by the Speaker.

Prayer by Honorable Roberta B. Beavers, South Berwick.

National Anthem by Angela Pitteroff, Augusta.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Under suspension of the rules, members were allowed to remove their jackets.

The Journal of Tuesday, June 23, 2015 was read and approved.

**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.** Sent for concurrence.

The accompanying item 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)

(S. "A" S-287 and S. "B" S-288 to C. "A" H-415)

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Chelsea, Representative Sanderson.

Representative **SANDERSON**: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, I urge everyone in this chamber today to vote "no." To go back and finish the work that was begun. To address the individuals in this state who have not been addressed in this budget and in prior budgets.

As we took the original vote on this document, a family had loaded up all of their belongings in a U-haul and they were on the road out of this state; the LeVasseur family, Cindy and Paul, whose son, Michael, graduated from high school last year and he's autistic and he was not able to get into appropriate services. I've used him as an example on many of the bills that we've had before this chamber this year and the good Representative from Yarmouth stood up and mentioned that this gentleman does have MaineCare. Well, yes, he does. He does have MaineCare to address his medical needs. But what we're not doing is addressing the specific needs, the specialized needs that this young man has.

We also have other families with children on the spectrum who have graduated from high school and are on waitlists. We have children on the spectrum who don't go to school who are on wait lists. We have seniors who are on wait lists waiting for home services to keep them out of a much more expensive facility level of care. We have disabled on the waitlists. We have traumatic brain injured folks on the waitlists. We have folks with traumatic brain injuries in a facility in New Hampshire.

The total asked for them in this budget, the proposed budget, was \$2.5 million. This final budget funded them at \$1.5 million.

Out of \$300 million of new spending, we couldn't spare one? One for individuals who can't feed themselves? And the facility where they're housed in New Hampshire is closing. We're looking for placements for these individuals in states like Pennsylvania and Illinois. And pardon me, but I know that if they're in New Hampshire, that's a darn long day for families to go visit their loved ones. But now, it's not going to be a day trip anymore.

We are sending Mainers even further from home because we didn't have the fortitude to find an extra million dollars in our budget to care for these individuals, to bring them home where they belong. We pat ourselves on the back saying we've done a great job, a great job giving PNMI's, our assisted living facilities, a four percent increase, one percent up from three percent. Well that would be all well and good except for the fact that we've also taxed them an extra one percent, so it's awash for the facilities; no extra money in their pockets. But who it's going to hit is it's going to hit the seniors who are private pay. So while we are giving with one hand, our other hand is around their back picking their pockets, forcing them onto MaineCare sooner as we dwindle down their resources. This is not right. This is not right.

Meanwhile, we fund pet projects. We buy a Francis Perkin House for \$200,000. While that may be a noble idea, it should not come before the care of the most needy individuals in our state. We spend \$200,000 funding a lighthouse restoration. Again, probably something that has great historical value to us, but what about the needs of the citizens in this state who are not getting care? I urge you all: vote "no." We have a tool available to us to pass an interim budget.

The SPEAKER: The Representative will defer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Gardiner, Representative Grant, and inquires to why the Representative rises.

Representative **GRANT**: Aren't we to keep our comments relative to the matter before us? That is my question.

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative GRANT of Gardiner asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative SANDERSON of Chelsea were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would answer in the affirmative. Representative from Chelsea, Representative Sanderson, if you would keep your remarks to the pending motion, which is the reconsideration of the veto.

The Chair reminded Representative SANDERSON of Chelsea to stay as close as possible to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **SANDERSON**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, we do not have to shut state government down if we do not vote to pass this budget today. We do not have to do that and to say that we're going to shut state government down if we don't pass this budget, that's what I hear as a false choice. We've heard a lot about false choices this year; false choices between GA for undocumented immigrants, false choices in choosing to fund waitlists. There is no such thing as a false choice. It's a true choice that we've made. It's a true choice not to set priorities for the individuals of this State of Maine who have lived here all their lives. It's a true choice that we have made not to support seniors in their home who are on the waitlist. It's a true choice that we have made to not fund individuals in front of pet projects. These are true choices because if it were truly were a false choice, then we'd be funding them all, but we're not.

The pot of resources that we have is only this big, yet we have needs this big. I would urge every one of us to vote "no," send our Appropriations individuals, members, back to the table and take a look at what we have in the budget. Remove the junk, support the needs, and let individual bills stand on their own merit. There were many bills in my committee that were rolled

into the budget. Are they good bills? Yes they are. I voted for them. But they're individual projects that we should be looking at as an individual project, not rolling it into the big picture so it gets passed because we are afraid to shut state government down. And the fact of the matter is: we don't have to. We don't have to. Again, I urge you to vote "no." Citizens of this state want welfare reform—true welfare reform. They want our elderly cared for, our disabled cared for. The families with traumatic brain injured folks in New Hampshire, I bet they want their family members closer to home; not in Pennsylvania or Illinois. \$1,000,000 out of \$300,000,000. That's a sad commentary on priorities. Thank you.

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

Representative **McCABE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, first I rise to thank the good Representative from Newport, Leader Fredette, as well as you, Mr. Speaker, for your work on this budget. I also rise to thank the members of Appropriations, the many committees that put their efforts into this budget. This is a bipartisan budget before us. It has tax cuts in it for 579,000 families. It puts money into our classroom. It invests in our workers. It doubles property tax relief for working families and seniors to help them stay in their homes and to stay in their communities.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, today's vote prevents an imminent state shutdown. If we don't vote for this budget, there's no way to prevent a state shutdown. A continuing resolution is not an option. It is not lawful. It violates the Constitution. We are required to pass a balanced budget, and frankly, it just kicks the can down the road.

So, we have a bipartisan agreement before us. It's one that 105 of us in this body have voted for before. I urge all of us to stick with our votes and support a budget that gives tax cuts, property tax relief, and it invests in our workers and it invests in our school and our children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Canaan, Representative Stetkis.

Representative **STETKIS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House, early this year at the beginning of session, many of us were dismayed when starting on schedule seemed to be near impossible. Many of the people that have been around for a while would sort of grin and say, "It's always been like that here." In fact, we came to learn—the new people—come to learn that the running joke around this building is, "It's just simply legislative time."

In the real world, outside these walls, being late is known as being disrespectful and irresponsible. Of course there are obvious occasions when running late is unavoidable but should be expected. Should be the exception, not the rule. I imagine there must've been a time, probably many decades ago, where timeliness was allowed to start sliding down that slippery slope to get us to where we are today.

The SPEAKER: Will the Representative defer? The Chair recognizes the Representative from Saco, Representative Chenette, and inquires why the Representative rises.

Representative **CHENETTE**: I question the germaneness of the topic at hand, Mr. Speaker. We are voting on an override motion, not talking about time or timeliness.

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative CHENETTE of Saco asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative STETKIS of Canaan were germane to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would take that into consideration and would agree to keep the comments strictly to what is before us and that is the budget and the veto reconsideration.

The Chair reminded Representative STETKIS of Canaan to stay as close as possible to the pending question.

The SPEAKER: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **STETKIS**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is today going to be that day where Representatives of the citizens of Maine say "no" to this budget process and keep the government from sliding down the slippery slope that this process has brought us to? Is today going to be the day the process of an appointed committee of appropriators who work and debate and negotiate the priorities of our state becomes the next running joke in this building? Is it today that this body will place its stamp of approval for all future Legislatures to allow a few politically powerful members to override the process whenever things become difficult?

Mr. Speaker, I would be surprised if a single member here campaigned with the promise that they were going to support Maine's government becoming more like that of our dysfunctional federal government in Washington, DC. Yet here we are. We have a \$6.7 billion budget negotiated behind closed doors, filled with expensive pet projects being a priority over our most needy citizens. A 700-page budget released to those of us tasked with voting on it without adequate time to read or understand it. All the while having wasted so much time, we were pressured with the possibility of a government shutdown.

If I wasn't here to witness it myself, I'd swear we were talking about Washington, DC, not Augusta, Maine. I will be voting today against allowing this process to become the status quo. I will be voting in support of our Appropriations Committee getting back to work and completing what they were tasked to do several months ago. I will be voting today to sustain this veto in an effort to maintain the integrity of the process of the people's house and I invite you all to join me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Amherst, Representative Lockman.

Representative **LOCKMAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I want to address the process by which we got here today, debating an override of the Chief Executive's veto of this budget. About two weeks ago, Scott Thistle, State House Reporter, wrote a story for the *Lewiston Sun Journal*. I want to quote from it.

"Legislative leaders on both sides of the political aisle Tuesday defended a \$6.7 billion state budget and tax bill that was largely crafted by secret negotiations among party leaders. Their chief defense for the secretive nature of the negotiations was that they ran out of time to follow a more public process. Those proposed changes were presented to lawmakers in a series of caucus meetings Monday night," two weeks ago, "and Tuesday morning," two weeks ago, "both at the State House and at private locations outside the Capitol complex in Augusta. The public was not invited to these meetings, and no notice was given to the media. By Tuesday morning," two weeks ago, "specific details on the proposed changes were still unclear and at least one staff member for House Speaker Mark Eves told a reporter that they would know what was in the budget once it was voted on by the Legislature.

"The closed-door nature of the negotiations and the tightly controlled dissemination of information prompted the resignation from the Legislature's Right-to-Know Citizen's Advisory Committee of Mal Leary, a veteran state government reporter for the Maine Public Broadcasting Network. Leary did issue a letter to his fellow board members about the secret deal reached by legislative leaders." Quote.

The SPEAKER: Will the Representative defer? The Chair recognizes the Representative from Standish, Representative Shaw, and asks why the Representative rises.

Representative **SHAW**: I wonder if we're talking about the lead-up to the budget or the budget itself.

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative SHAW of Standish asked the Chair if the remarks of Representative LOCKMAN of Amherst were germane to the pending question.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair would remind Members to focus their comments on the budget before us. The Chair would determine the process by which we got here is germane and relevant.

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

The **SPEAKER**: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **LOCKMAN**: Continuing. Quoting from Mal Leary: "All of these changes, which include a rewrite of the tax code, will be presented as an amendment to the budget with no hearing or vote by the Appropriations Committee. In short, they are making us as bad as Washington, DC, where votes are taken before members know what they are voting on, let alone the public. I have protested this travesty. I want no part of the process that excludes the public from even knowing about proposed changes in law that affect them."

Mr. Speaker, this is precisely the kind of Washington, DC style politics that has earned the contempt of the American people. Washington is a place where secret, backroom deals are the norm and where legislators vote on bills that nobody has time to read before the vote and now this is the way we do business in the Maine Legislature. Never before has a Maine state budget been drafted and negotiated in secret by partisan leadership with legislators and the public kept in the dark until just hours before the vote. This lack of transparency is unprecedented and it flies in the face of both the letter and the spirit of Maine's freedom of access laws. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I urge you to sustain this veto and we will move on, pass an interim budget, and send this back to the Appropriations Committee for public hearings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representative **McCLELLAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I will try to stay on track because I know there's a rush to get this all done, so, what should be concerning to people. But, I stand, Mr. Speaker, to agree with the Rep. from Chelsea, Representative Sanderson. And earlier in this budget process, Mr. Speaker, I was proud. I work with people with disabilities and I was going around saying, "Wow, we're going to do this. We're going to close this waiting list this year." So, I'm disappointed to be voting on a budget today, or I guess on a veto of a budget, that is built on the backs, in my opinion, of people with disabilities.

I've heard over the last weekend, or last week, overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly from my community to go back and do this correctly. Mr. Speaker, I stand to say that I'm disappointed in the scare tactics, the delays, the last-minute nature of this process. And so I will be supporting the Chief Executive today and I, for one, am ready to go back to work, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from East Machias, Representative Tuell.

Representative **TUELL**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the veto override. I think how we got here, why we're here, we're here. We are here today. Today is June 30th. And there are many different people have many versions of how and why what happened, happened. I would urge folks to keep in mind that if this bill goes down, whatever people think happened this past time, will happen 100 times worse with the

next steps to come. We will be in uncharted waters. It will be a very dangerous, slippery slope.

And I'm trying to be careful about how I say what I want to say because I truly believe everyone on both sides of this is doing what they feel is in the best interests of their people back home. I know I am. I know everyone over here truly is doing that. I believe everyone, I believe you and everyone else in this body is doing the same. But I believe we passed a budget two weeks ago. We made a commitment. We made a commitment to our people. And it's high time we honor that commitment.

Whether people have buyer's remorse or had time to pick it apart or whether people had time to read this or read that, I know there was a lot of chatter in the halls that could've been spent reading the actual document. And, you know, everyone here is guilty of that. I'm pointing the finger at myself. I think everyone here is guilty of that. Everyone who didn't sit in their seat and read through what was presented, that was time. So, I'm tired of hearing, "There's no time." There was plenty of time for people to talk, but more importantly, there was enough time for people to sit and go about their business.

And I guess I'll just leave it at that and say that I think we have a good budget. I think we have the best budget we could get. I think nobody, there's things I don't like that we are spending \$300 million. But guess what more? But guess what? We're also contemplating spending \$265 million more in bonds over the next two years and nobody is up in arms over that one. I'm not going to get onto other bills today, but I can honestly say keep that in mind as you think about this one. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Turner, Representative Timberlake.

Representative **TIMBERLAKE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, as one of being part of this process, the process that I feel did not work because it was derailed at the very bottom end of this process. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I would've hoped and wished that when the votes started coming out of Appropriations at nine to four, that we'd have had a time-out called and we'd have gone back to re-focus on what the problem was and why we were at where we were at.

Because the process didn't work and because some of the things that I truly believe in didn't happen, I'm very disgruntled over what has happened here today and what's happening here today. So, Mr. Speaker, I only wished that in your leadership and in your tenure here that when that process broke down that you would've called a time-out and we'd have gone back to revisit it. And I will be voting the same way as I voted last time because I think the process failed and I thank you all very much for the indulgence.

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

Representative **SIROCKI**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise in opposition to the pending motion and will vote to sustain the veto. I am still voting against this budget because I still know we can do better. While it is not easy, we can and should take the time to make improvements. Essential things should have been included in the budget, but this budget under difficult negotiating conditions made other choices, as the good Representative from Chelsea outlined.

While I can make no promises that sustaining this veto will prioritize our disabled, elderly, autistic, traumatically brain injured, over funding for cherry-picked bills and other costly decisions, I do promise you that it will provide us with the opportunity to right a wrong. The process was compromised. Mr. Speaker, we

should consider these decisions in the open with full public scrutiny. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Amherst, Representative Lockman.

Representative **LOCKMAN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak very briefly to the content of this budget, just one piece of it. Maine Revenue Services has found that nearly 188,000, or 17 percent, of Maine households will see a tax increase under this plan. The majority of these households, about 74,000 of them, earn between approximately \$26,000 and \$92,000 and are middle-class Mainers who are already struggling to get by. And although the budget plan would greatly increase the size of the standard deduction, it also phases out itemized and standard deductions starting at \$70,000 for a single taxpayer. The largest itemized deductions for taxpayers are: charitable contributions, mortgage interest deductions, and medical expense deductions, meaning that those who donate to charity, buy a home, or have medical expenses could take a significant tax hit if we override this veto today.

Increasing taxes on these individuals, or on any individual in Maine, is not only counterproductive and detrimental to economic growth, it is unnecessary and unneeded. Maine is raising record amounts of revenue and is spending higher amounts than ever before. A tax increase is not needed and should not even be an option that is on the table at this point in our budget process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Auburn, Representative Melaragno.

Representative **MELARAGNO**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I just wanted to make a quick note—sort of the elephant in the room here—which is: if the folks on the other side of the aisle really wanted to go to bat for the neediest people in our state...

The SPEAKER: The Representative will defer. The Chair is concerned that this might be going down a road of personal intent. So, the Chair would make sure that the Representative stays to the pending motion.

The Chair reminded Representative MELARAGNO of Auburn that it was inappropriate to question the motives of other members of the House.

The SPEAKER: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **MELARAGNO**: Sure. I think we need to remember that in this budget, there were certain folks in this room that fought hard to reduce the taxes of the wealthiest in this state. They fought hard. And they got a lot of that. So, what happened was, in terms of income tax breaks, the wealthiest got the biggest tax break in this budget. So, let's remember when we talk about the neediest people in our state that there are certain people who fought really hard to get the tax breaks for the wealthiest in our state, while talking out the other side of their mouth saying that they care for needy people. So, let's give that a thought as well. I'd argue the Republicans got exactly what they want.

The SPEAKER: The Representative will defer. The Chair recognizes the Representative from Auburn, Representative Bickford, and inquires as to why the Representative rises.

Representative **BICKFORD**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, is the Representative questioning integrity of other Members of the body?

On **POINT OF ORDER**, Representative BICKFORD of Auburn objected to the comments of Representative MELARAGNO of Auburn because she was questioning the motives of other members of the House.

The SPEAKER: The House will be in order. The Chair would remind all Members, as emotional as the debate is, to stick to the

substance of what is in front of you, do not question the motives of other Members, and to keep to the content of the motion before you.

The Chair reminded all members that it was inappropriate to question the motives of other members of the House.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dixfield, Representative Pickett.

Representative **PICKETT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I rise today to speak about the budget, not to look at anybody and cast any judgement on why they vote the way they vote. I look very simple to tell you this story: When I was campaigning, I went door-to-door to every door in my district. And I talked with people and looked them in the eye and they looked me in the eye and they told me what they were concerned about. And one of the greatest pieces that they told me they were concerned about was the welfare reform, how it was running rampant in our state.

They also talked about their taxes. But they told me what they felt and what they wanted me to do when I came down here to Augusta. So I came down here and now comes time for the budget. I looked them in the eye and I made promises; promises that I told them I couldn't keep alone. I would have to find other people that wanted to work with me to make those promises come true. But I would go and I would work very, very hard to try to make those promises come true to them.

In a nutshell, I promised to stand up for meaningful welfare reform. I promised to stand up for brain injured people and others truly in need. I promised to support meaningful tax relief on the state level for every Maine income tax payer and I promised to oppose any bill or budget proposal that would pass more mandates and more taxes down to Maine communities and citizens. And finally, I promised to increase support as needed for the elderly Maine people. Those were my promises and those are a solid part of my belief system.

Here's the bottom line to all of this: I believe our responsibility to our elderly Maine people is a sacred trust. Our mothers, our fathers, our aunts, and our uncles were among the builders of Maine. I refuse to compromise with people until they realize that our grandfathers and our grandmothers come first. These people paid their dues. They raised their families and they received no welfare from the state. Welfare, as it is now passed out, did not exist. These folks took personal responsibility for their lives and their families and they formed the bedrock of our once self-sufficient people. I will not abandon them. Sit down in a room and compromise away these people in order to continue to build a welfare state.

I believe that we had a process that we went through and now we have a budget before us. I voted "no" on the budget the other night. I plan to vote to sustain the Chief Executive's veto. And the reason I am is I believe we can do better. I believe we owe it to the people of this state to do better. It's time for us to put welfare reform where it belongs. It's time for us to get busy and take care of the people in this state that really need it. That's what our people want. That's what our people told us when we came here and now it's our responsibility to do it. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Newport, Representative Fredette.

Representative **FREDETTE**: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, it's the witching hour. It's 11 o'clock a.m. It's June 30. We have 13 hours to resolve this issue. The reality is, as a factual matter, we are at the end of the fiscal year and we are where we are.

Let's acknowledge a couple things, which I believe are simply factual. One is, is that there was a breakdown in the process.

There was a breakdown in the process in terms of House Republicans buying into and having their priorities put into this budget and that created an unusual process. And I, as a former member of the Appropriations Committee back in the 125th Legislature, can tell you, at least from my experience in that session that this was not the normal process that which we would normally follow in terms of getting a budget. And when I served in the 125th Legislature when Republicans controlled both the House and the Senate and we passed a significant budget then that had significant income tax reductions in it, that we did that in a bipartisan manner. We did that in the Appropriations Committee, brought it up to the floor of the House and the other body, and that bill became law. And that's not the way this process happened and that's just a factual matter.

But as the process moved forward, I believe House Republicans stepped forward to say, "These are what our priorities are in this process: some welfare reform, some additional money to be spent on those most needy, approximately \$10 million of additional money put into those with brain injury, Section 21 waitlist, PNMI." And another significant priority of House Republicans, that being an income tax reduction package.

I want to credit the Chief Executive for bringing the matter forward of income tax reform here in Maine and he did that in his biennial budget that he presented before the Legislature and worked on in the Appropriations Committee. And that started six months ago. And then, approximately two months ago, Senate and House Democrats came forward with their own income tax reduction package called "The Better Plan." And then shortly after that, House and Senate Republicans came forward with a package which was the Republican income tax reduction plan. And while this process was going on, approximately two or three weeks ago, there was a number of newspaper accounts in the newspapers that was talking about one of the tax packages that was being worked upon that might, in fact, become law. And so, it was not the right process. But it is the process that we ended up where we are today, 13 hours before the end of the legislative session.

I want to talk about, very briefly, what I think was some important components of that income tax reduction package, which I think was a fair distribution. Talking about Maine residents and exporting a portion of revenue to those people that come to our state—30 million people a year—exporting some of that revenue generating mechanism so that we could give income reduction and property tax relief to Maine tax people. So, what did we do that's important, in my opinion?

We doubled the Homestead Exemption from \$10,000 to \$20,000. That means Maine people who own a residence—young, old, middle-class, those with two young children—are going to get a doubling of their Homestead Exemption. Those in the military who are retiring and they decide they want to come to Maine are going to have the opportunity to come to Maine and have their full pension, full military pension income, be exempt; a major priority of the Chief Executive and both parties. I think that's significant. We raised the Estate Tax from \$2 million to roughly \$5 million, protecting many of those small businesses right here in Maine and many of those small farms so that they can look at passing on a significant asset that they've helped create and generate over their lifetime and generations. And that's significant.

And we also lowered the income tax rate for those in the middle income tax bracket—very important piece here, Ladies and Gentlemen. Roughly speaking, the highest, you are defined as "rich" in this state and you are at the top income tax bracket at approximately \$20,000 under current law. You paid 7.95 percent

at roughly \$20,000 AGI here in Maine. The second year of this package, we expand that bracket from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Up to \$50,000, so we've gone from \$20,000 to \$50,000 and we've gone from a rate of 7.95 percent down to 6.75 percent. That is significant income tax reduction and it is focused on the middle class; many of those people that we want to have stay here in Maine. Many of those people that we focus on who we say, you know, "You're a young family. You have young children. We want you to stay here in Maine. We're going to put more money back in your pocket, not taxing you at 7.95 percent when you're making \$21,000, but taxing you at 6.75 percent." That's real income tax relief, folks. That's real and that's meaningful.

Now there are some things I don't like in this budget. There are things I imagine if you ask all 151 of us in this body, there are things that we don't like in this budget. But we are where we are today. I have to focus on those things that I think that are important to myself and my constituents. I think I've identified those things that I think that are important. We, as Republicans, in our caucus encourage people to speak freely and to have differences of opinions and we obviously have that on this side of the aisle. But I don't think that's a bad thing. I don't think that's a bad thing at all. And I respect those that disagree with me.

But at the end of the day, folks, less than 13 hours from now, in my opinion, if we don't have a state budget, I think that we are faced with a state government shutdown. Now there may or may not be an alternative. Certainly there's not one that's been tried before. But at the end of the day, I'm going to support this budget because I think there's some good things in it. And yes, I think there's some bad things in it, but it is what it is. Ladies and folks, we have divided government. We have a Democratic House, we have a Republican Senate and a Republican Governor. This is divided government, folks. You don't get everything that you want.

I believe the people of Maine sent us here to do a job and I think we can all do that in a respectable, reasonable way. This isn't the end of this, folks. We'll be back here in six months. There may or may not be a Supplemental Budget. There may be new bills in place. There may be bills to amend the tax plan. We'll be back here in six months, continuing to do the job that we can and that we have applied to do and been elected to do. But today, we have a much simpler question before us today and that is we have a budget before us. And at the end of the day, I'm going to support that budget and I'll ask you to follow my light. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

After reconsideration, the House proceeded to vote on the question, 'Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor?' A roll call was taken.

The SPEAKER: The pending question before the House is 'Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor?' All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

#### ROLL CALL NO. 396V

YEA - Alley, Austin, Babbidge, Bates, Battle, Beavers, Beck, Beebe-Center, Bickford, Blume, Brooks, Bryant, Burstein, Campbell J, Chace, Chenette, Cooper, Corey, Daughtry, Davitt, DeChant, Devin, Dion, Doore, Duchesne, Dunphy M, Edgcomb, Espling, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Farrin, Fecteau, Foley, Fredette, Frey, Gattine, Gerrish, Gideon, Gilbert, Gillway, Ginzler, Golden, Goode, Grant, Grohman, Hamann, Herbig, Higgins, Hilliard, Hobart, Hobbins, Hogan, Hubbell, Hymanson, Jorgensen, Kinney J, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Lajoie, Longstaff, Luchini, Maker, Marean, Martin J, Martin R, Mastraccio, McCabe, McCreight, McElwee, McLean, Monaghan, Morrison, Nadeau, Nutting, Parry, Peterson, Picchiotti, Pierce T, Pouliot, Powers, Prescott, Rotundo, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Saucier,



Sawicki, Schneck, Seavey, Shaw, Sherman, Short, Stanley, Stearns, Tepler, Tipping-Spitz, Tucker, Tuell, Vachon, Verow, Wadsworth, Ward, Warren, Welsh, White, Winsor, Wood, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Black, Buckland, Campbell R, Chipman, Crafts, Dillingham, Dunphy L, Greenwood, Guerin, Hanington, Hanley, Harlow, Hawke, Head, Hickman, Kinney M, Lockman, Long, Lyford, Malaby, McClellan, Melaragno, Moonen, O'Connor, Pickett, Pierce J, Reed, Sanderson, Sirocki, Skolfield, Stetkis, Stuckey, Sukeforth, Timberlake, Timmons, Turner, Wallace.

ABSENT - Chapman, Fowle, Herrick, Noon, Theriault.

Yes, 109; No, 37; Absent, 5; Excused, 0.

109 having voted in the affirmative and 37 voted in the negative, with 5 being absent, and accordingly the Veto was **NOT SUSTAINED**. Sent for concurrence.

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

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 323)

**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 vetoing LD 1080, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway 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."

A sound transportation infrastructure, especially roads and bridges, is critical to a good quality of life and economic prosperity. Many in the Legislature have asked me to raise the gas tax to fund these improvements, but there is another way. My Administration has adopted a policy of stretching the transportation dollar to ensure funding for the basics, such as quality roads, safe bridges and prosperous ports. No longer do we spend millions of dollars planning projects that we know we will never build.

We must scrutinize the Highway Fund Budget to ensure we are directing as much funding as possible to core infrastructure. Paying per diems for legislators to meet in the summer, funding cold case squads or computer crimes do not result in better roads and bridges. Moreover, the Constitution of the State of Maine mandates that highway fund dollars be spent solely on highway fund activities. I took an oath to uphold the Constitution, and I intend to honor that oath.

Early this month, I exercised my authority to line-item veto those items in the Highway Fund Budget that were not related to transportation. The Legislature decided to override those vetoes and the Constitution. Therefore, I am compelled to veto the underlying bill. I ask each one of you to honor your oath to uphold the Constitution as I have and sustain this veto.

For this reason, I return LD 1080 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,  
S/Paul R. LePage  
Governor

**READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.** Sent for concurrence.

The accompanying item An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway 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 (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 740) (L.D. 1080)

(C. "A" H-457)

After reconsideration, the House proceeded to vote on the question, 'Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor?' A roll call was taken.

The SPEAKER: The pending question before the House is 'Shall this Bill become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor?' All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

**ROLL CALL NO. 397V**

YEA - Alley, Austin, Babbidge, Bates, Battle, Beavers, Beck, Beebe-Center, Bickford, Black, Blume, Brooks, Bryant, Buckland, Burstein, Campbell J, Chace, Chapman, Chenette, Chipman, Cooper, Corey, Crafts, Daughtry, Davitt, DeChant, Devin, Dillingham, Dion, Doore, Duchesne, Dunphy L, Dunphy M, Edgcomb, Espling, Evangelos, Farnsworth, Farrin, Fecteau, Foley, Fredette, Frey, Gattine, Gerrish, Gideon, Gilbert, Gillway, Ginzler, Golden, Goode, Grant, Greenwood, Grohman, Guerin, Hamann, Hanington, Hanley, Harlow, Hawke, Head, Herbig, Hickman, Higgins, Hilliard, Hobart, Hobbins, Hogan, Hubbell, Hymanson, Jorgensen, Kinney J, Kinney M, Kornfield, Kruger, Kumiega, Lajoie, Lockman, Long, Longstaff, Luchini, Lyford, Maker, Marean, Martin J, Martin R, Mastraccio, McCabe, McClellan, McCreight, McElwee, McLean, Melaragno, Monaghan, Moonen, Morrison, Nadeau, Nutting, O'Connor, Parry, Peterson, Picchiotti, Pickett, Pierce J, Pierce T, Pouliot, Powers, Prescott, Reed, Rotundo, Russell, Rykerson, Sanborn, Saucier, Sawicki, Schneck, Seavey, Shaw, Sherman, Short, Sirocki, Skolfield, Stanley, Stearns, Stetkis, Stuckey, Sukeforth, Tepler, Timberlake, Tipping-Spitz, Tucker, Tuell, Turner, Vachon, Verow, Wadsworth, Wallace, Ward, Warren, Welsh, White, Winsor, Wood, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - NONE.

ABSENT - Campbell R, Fowle, Herrick, Malaby, Noon, Sanderson, Theriault, Timmons.

Yes, 143; No, 0; Absent, 8; Excused, 0.

143 having voted in the affirmative and 0 voted in the negative, with 8 being absent, and accordingly the Veto was **NOT SUSTAINED**. Sent for concurrence.

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

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The Following Communication: (H.C. 299)

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

June 26, 2015

The 127th Legislature of the State of Maine

State House

Augusta, Maine