

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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



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

LEGISLATIVE RECORD
OF THE
One Hundred And Thirteenth Legislature
OF THE
State Of Maine

VOLUME II

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

May 26, 1987 to June 30, 1987

Index

Subsequently, the House voted to concur.

The Chair laid before the House the third tabled and today assigned matter:

HOUSE DIVIDED REPORT - Majority (8) "Ought to Pass" - Minority (5) "Ought Not to Pass" - Committee on Labor on Bill "An Act to Increase the Minimum Wage" (H.P. 869) (L.D. 1170)

TABLED - May 27, 1987 by Representative DIAMOND of Bangor.

PENDING - Motion of Representative McHENRY of Madawaska to accept the Majority "Ought to Pass" Report. (Roll Call Requested)

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Hampden, Representative Willey.

Representative WILLEY: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: The minimum wage -- it seems like only yesterday that it was here before but I guess it has been three years and, low and behold, it is here again.

At the time we started, three years ago, we were on par with that of the federal government. In other words, \$3.35 an hour. The federal government is still at \$3.35 an hour while Maine has gone to the highest minimum wage of any of the continental United States, \$3.65 an hour. Alaska is at \$3.80 an hour, which is the only state that exceeds us.

I am sure you will hear from speakers that will say that the prosperity in the state that has been enjoyed in the last couple of years is due entirely to our high minimum wage. I don't think that is the case, since a number of other New England states have suffered even greater prosperity in the last few years and they did not increase the minimum wage.

I think Representative McHenry said yesterday, in the short time that he spoke on the bill, that it would be like pouring \$40 million or so into the state's economy and that it would, indeed, help the small employers. I can't, for the life of me, see how that is possible. In the first place, I don't know where the \$40 million would come from in that it appears none of us have a machine that makes money to turn out these dollars that are necessary to support it.

A good idea of what the thing may cost is the Report (H-188) that was put on your desks yesterday with a fiscal note saying that this year it cost the state \$96,000 and next year, \$292,000 and that, of course, will go up each year after that. The money has to come from somewhere and it comes from the consumer.

If an employer is forced to up the rates by 10 cents that he pays his employees, there is no place for that to come from but raising the cost of the products that he produces. Therefore, you are paying an extra cost for the same product, which results in inflation because you are having no extra production whatever, it is pretty much of a gratuity.

You might wonder about the unions position on this matter because the unions are very much for increasing the minimum wage. The reason you might wonder about it is because I don't believe there is a union around at all that has members that pay the minimum wage. I suggest that if they do, they ought to get another business agent because that simply is not the trend. The reason that they are for it is simply a floor, thereby an escalator, because everything is based on the minimum wage and it escalates in every pay scale from thereon up. Over a period of time, if you give the minimum wage people an increase of say, 8 percent, then over a year or two, that 8 percent eventually gets reflected in every pay scale on up through, including that of the

President. They maintain the same difference in these rates. As a matter of fact, in the discussion at the work session in committee, I offered to support the bill if it would be written in such a manner that the increase would be confined only to those who receive minimum wage and not be used as an escalator all the way up the ladder.

There are adverse effects on businesses, particularly businesses who manufacture products in this state and which must be sold outside of the state. They have a handicap in that respect and it is very difficult for them to compete against people in states where they sell their product who have a lesser minimum wage. This was brought out adequately in the discussions at the work sessions.

We are struggling mightily in this state and everybody has given it a lot of lip service for economic development. It is very difficult, I think, for this state to enjoy any amount of economic development when we have one of the highest workers' compensation costs in the nation and the highest minimum wage in the nation. That is very definitely a deterrent in this respect.

I have no intention of dragging this debate on because I am thoroughly convinced that, after being here a number of years, that 95 percent of us at least, had our minds made up before we come into this chamber. The decisions are made elsewhere.

I hope that this debate doesn't drag on for a long period of time because I don't think it will serve any useful purpose and I don't think very many votes would be changed.

I do sincerely hope that we defeat this bill. I would ask for a roll call.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from LaGrange, Representative Hichborn.

Representative HICHBORN: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: At this time, we are discussing a people issue. To politicize this issue is to demean the issue itself. By so doing, the issue becomes larger than all of the people and all of the towns in all of the State of Maine. The issue then takes precedence over the people. That is wrong.

You would ordinarily expect a senior citizen of my years, a lifelong Republican, a third generation Republican, a real conservative, to be the last person in this room to stand up and speak strongly in favor of an increase in the minimum wage for the working people in Maine. I want to tell you that, neither age, political affiliation, or traditional philosophy can convince me that opposition to an increase in the minimum wage for the people of Maine is right, economically justified, or morally acceptable to me.

My friends have recounted what they thought was to my benefit all the old arguments that were used when the last three year minimum wage bill was passed by this body a few years ago. At that time, we were told that old business would flee the state, that new business would look elsewhere for a new home, that financial ruin would occur, that businesses would fail and there would be a tremendous loss of jobs. You know what happened as well as I do -- the sky didn't fall, the world didn't come to an end and we have more people working today than we did when that law was first passed, several years ago.

They tell us if we lift the bottom of the pot, the whole pot will rise and my answer to that is, so what if it does? They bemoan the spiraling effect and they say that disaster will follow, this escalation, and that all this will be a deterrent to business, both old and new. I say to you, that a 10 cent increase in the minimum wage to the working people at the bottom of the economic ladder won't be

half the deterrent that is presented by our outmoded and outdated tax procedures that we have on the books at the present time. It won't be half the deterrent that is imposed on us by some of the overly restricted limitations imposed on business by some of our regulatory agencies and it is not half the deterrent that we see resulting from our financially devastating Workers' Compensation program that is on the books today.

If we are really interested in business and we really want to promote industrial and economic growth, instead of bleeding the poor working man to death, why don't we tackle some of these big problems and take some positive action in those areas?

I want to tell you why I am really leaving the nest to support the proposed increase in the minimum wage. I have a lot of nerve, I have a thick skin — some people sometimes say I have a lot of brass, I am not really bashful but I want to tell you that I wouldn't have the nerve to go home and face my neighbors, my friends, and my family and all my other constituents and tell them that, a year ago, this legislature voted to give the teachers a \$2,000 bonus (and I voted for that) and to tell them that this legislature increased the minimum teacher's salary from \$3500 to \$13,500 (and I voted for that) and that we approved an increase in the Governor's salary of \$35,000 (and I voted for that) and, just a year ago, this legislature voted a \$4500 increase in pay for ourselves — I couldn't tell them all that and look them in the eye and say, you aren't worth 10 cents.

My colleagues probably will read me out of the party but I am telling you that I couldn't do this to my best friends. I couldn't face these men and women, who go out doing jobs every day for a minimum wage, jobs that maybe you and I can't do, a job that you and I don't want to do and jobs that you and I wouldn't do, because my constituents mean too much to me. I couldn't insult them by voting against this measure.

We hear the argument that if we pass this bill, our minimum will be higher than the national minimum and I again say, so what? What is Maine's motto? Is it just a word or words? Does it mean what we think it means or what we say it means? If it means what we pretend it means, we are going to vote to support a minimum wage increase for the working people in the State of Maine. If it doesn't mean to us what most people think it means, we ought to perhaps consider changing that motto to say, "We are happy to follow." We could express it more poetically by saying, "We are content to drag along behind." I didn't vote for a raise for myself last year but I accepted it and, if you did too, you and I are in the same box today and I hope that your conscience will encourage as it has encouraged me to abandon the double standard, which says, "Everything I can get for myself and to heck with the rest of the world." I hope that it will encourage you to join in the support of a bill that is designed to bring some measure of benefit to the working people of the State of Maine.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Mt. Desert, Representative Zirkilton.

Representative ZIRNKILTON: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I was one of those, a few years ago, expressing concern about what would happen to the economy of the State of Maine if we, in fact, increased our minimum wage, which we did. It is now, as Representative Willey pointed out, the highest minimum wage in the continental United States with only Alaska being higher. I would truly like to be able to support this bill but I cannot and the reason

that I cannot is because, during all of the testimony that we had in our hearings, subsequent work sessions, conversations that I have had with those that represent the minimum wage earners and with those that represent the opposition, I have not been convinced that an increase in the minimum wage would, in fact, benefit the very people that we are trying to help stay and that is the minimum wage earner. In fact my concern is, that by increasing the minimum wage, we may, in fact, hurt them. Let me explain to you why I have that concern.

You were given some figures earlier by Representative Willey so please bear with me for a moment while I run some others by you in a bit of a hypothetical situation.

If someone receives a 10 percent raise in their wages, it takes no genius to realize that there are other associated costs that go along with that such as an increase in the workers' compensation premiums the employer must pay and also an increase in the unemployment compensation that the employer must pay. The amount that they pay, of course, depends upon their classification and their rating and the amount that they pay in the workers' compensation area so for our conversation today, we will use a rough estimate.

Let's say, for example, that someone receives that 10 cent increase in their wages and the miscellaneous associated cost to the employer to go along with that 3 to 4 percent range so the increase to the employer is, let's say 13 or 14 percent in that area. The employer, as all of you know, unless they have an excellent profit margin with their product or their service, is not going to eat that loss. It is that simple. What they will do is they will pass that onto the consumer.

You all know that most of the minimum wage jobs are in the services type area, whether it be grocery stores, gas stations — basically all the kinds of things that all of us and all of the minimum wage earners consume on a daily basis so what we will be doing is increasing the cost to these services and these products to the minimum wage earner by 13 to 14 percent. How are they going to pay for that with a 10 percent raise in their wages? I don't understand that.

With regard to comments that were made by my good friend, Representative Hichborn, as far as the increases in salaries for teachers and the Governor, even with the mandated increase in teachers' salaries that we gave to our teachers, they still rank, as I understand it, 48th in the nation in salary, even with that increase. The Governor was given an increase because he, too, was one of the lowest paid Governor's in the United States. The other side of that coin is that our minimum wage earners certainly don't earn enough but they are, as I stated earlier, the highest paid in the continental United States.

The argument that we used in the past about being competitive with other nations, I don't think can hold true any longer. For that reason, when the federal government considers its increase in the minimum wage, I will favor that increase. The reason that I will favor that increase is because it will establish uniformity among all of the United States and it will make the Congress realize that our people should not be continually subjected to working for low, low wages in a society with high costs, all in the name of remaining competitive with foreign nations who, for the most part, pay their people so much less than our present minimum wage that we couldn't possibly be competitive if we tried. If we are to remain competitive with them, we will have to do so in other areas, whether it be tariffs or

quota's or whatever, but that argument, I just don't think, will hold true any longer.

As far as what it has cost us to implement the minimum wage here in the State of Maine, I really don't think it can be measured. Certainly, the economy has boomed, at least in the area of service-related jobs, it has gone along with the rest of the nation in that. I think what cannot be measured is — what jobs have not been created because of that increase? That is a question that I think, frankly, no one in this chamber or, for that matter, probably no one in this state, can answer. The facts, the figures, the statistics, just aren't available to produce any factual information regarding that.

The economy, regardless of what we do, will always dictate the expansion of business, the creation of jobs, and the type of lifestyle that our people will lead here in Maine and, indeed, throughout the nation. If the economy is going well, jobs will be created. Not only will jobs be created but people will earn more. The reason they will earn more is because, when you have a lot of jobs, there is competition among employers to find available help. I don't know what things are like in your area but I can tell you that, in my area, help, at least at this time of the year, is very, very hard to come by so there are very, very few minimum wage jobs. You can see ads in the paper advertising positions starting at \$4, \$5 and sometimes even more dollars per hour because they cannot find available help. That is a prime example where a healthy economy dictates what the salary will be.

What we are attempting to do here is to falsely address what the economy dictates by legislatively mandating what will happen to our minimum wage here in the state. Certainly no one can argue that that will fuel inflation. There is no question about that. I am not going to stand here and tell you that the economy will collapse or anything else as we all espoused a few years ago because I don't think that will happen. But I do believe, as I did before, that it is not in the best interests of the very people that we are trying to help. It is a tough issue, it is an emotional issue, and that is how I feel.

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

Representative RAND: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: Since the first debate on this issue, there have been those who have argued that minimum wage laws hurt the economy, cause inflation, and lead to increases in unemployment. Congress has traditionally responded to these arguments by raising the minimum wage, never raising it high enough to eliminate poverty, but raising it nonetheless.

The traditional arguments were, again, presented to the Labor Committee. Opponents to a minimum wage increase bemoaned the fact that they will have to fire people, that their businesses will be hurt and that they will be forced to pass the increase onto their customers. Glaringly omitted from their testimony was one shred of evidence that the past increase had harmed their business in any way. Indeed, one very local opponent had actually expanded his business by one additional Burger King franchise per year for the past three years.

I am willing to be reasonable to balance scales between the employer and the employee but I need more evidence than that to convince me that an increase in the minimum wage will sound the death note for Maine business. It has been said that an increase will send the wrong signal to businesses that contemplate locating in Maine. I say that the signal we should send is that we do not condone what amounts to slave

wages for our people. Maine people work hard, give a full day's labor for a day's wage. That wage should enrich, not insult their labors.

The proposed, very modest increase, will be a small attempt at reflecting the work of all people. Even if successful, remember that thousands of Mainer's will still be laboring at below federal poverty guidelines.

I urge the members of this body to vote for justice and give 70,000 hard working Mainer's a 10 cent an hour raise.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Waldoboro, Representative Begley.

Representative BEGLEY: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I come from a rural district and have many small employers running many small businesses. What is the most frequent request that I have from them? Please vote against legislation that will overregulate and, in essence, keep us restricted to what the state wants us to do.

Small businesses are the backbone of the Maine economy and, when an employer is able and decides to pay in excess of minimum wage, that is just fine with me. What I do object to is the desire at this level here in this body to legislate salaries for private businesses. Some of our employers are competing against out of state prices and foreign markets. Since we are second only to Alaska in having the highest minimum wage in the states and since we are presently higher than the existing federal minimum wage, I encourage you to vote against the pending motion and not increase the minimum wage at this time.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from York, Representative Rolde.

Representative ROLDE: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: In seven terms in this body and listening to debate on the minimum wage, I don't think I have ever heard anything new except the differing amounts as to what that minimum wage should be. So, in an attempt to remedy that lack of innovation, I would add one point which I believe has never been made and this is an esoteric bit of history that I read in a book by the great French economic and social historian, Fernand Braudel. In that book, Braudel posed a question — which country in the world, prior to the industrial revolution, was the most industrially advanced? The answer to that question was India. Then the next question was — why didn't the Industrial Revolution occur in India instead of in England? The answer was, because Indian wages remained so low so that an increase in wages led to an increase in innovation. That is what history teaches us.

It is also the reason the third world countries are so marred in poverty because they have kept their wages so low.

I am sure that the debate here today is the same as when the minimum wage was 20 cents an hour or 50 cents an hour. We didn't keep our wages low and our economy in Maine has advanced. So, as a famous Maine Governor used to say: "Think about it."

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Madawaska, Representative McHenry.

Representative MCHENRY: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I don't believe there is anything that I can say or anyone else can say that will change the mind of the people in this House. But I feel that I must correct a statement that was made by prior speakers.

Presently, the District of Columbia has a minimum wage of \$3.50 to \$4.75 an hour depending upon classification. Massachusetts will have a minimum wage of \$3.75 starting July 1, 1988. New Hampshire will be \$3.65 in 1989. Rhode Island will be \$3.65

July 1, 1987 and Vermont, following our lead, of course, will be \$3.65 July 1, 1988.

I don't believe that there is anything I can say that will change anybody's mind after the eloquent speech of the good gentleman from LaGrange, who was honest and true to his word -- he did say that he would support minimum wage and I have never heard a better speech so there is nothing I can add to what the good gentleman, Representative Hichborn, said.

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

Representative CONLEY: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I, too, want to commend Representative Hichborn for his remarks. They were conscientious, sensitive -- a man who is truly speaking his heart on this issue.

I also want to commend the Speaker for ringing the bell, I think it is highly disturbing that so many people have left the chamber during a debate, which I consider to be a very important one. It is a perennial issue but it is an issue which deserves a lot of attention and I think the people should listen to both sides of the debate.

As Representative Baker pointed out yesterday, it is difficult to change people's minds on this issue, the only way people can change their minds and the only way society changes is if people listen conscientiously to what other people have to offer on both sides of the argument.

I would like to say in regards to this particular issue, the issues which have been trotted out are by those who are in opposition to raising the minimum wage and are the very issues which have been trotted out by everybody since the minimum wage was first enacted in the state and at the federal level. They were either against putting in a minimum wage or raising a minimum wage.

Two points I would like to make in regards to this. First, there is not one Maine business which closed as a result of this state passing a minimum wage, which was higher than the rest of this country some years ago.

Second, I did a little figuring and it seems to me that we, who are sitting here, are paid about two and a half times more than what those people get who are working for the minimum wage. Those are actually people who work for a living, who are out there making that money. We are people who sit here and can raise or pass a raise for ourselves, we are the only people who can pass a raise for them. They have no union, they are the people who do the job that nobody else wants to do. I would ask the members of this body to think about that and vote in favor of raising the minimum wage.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Waterville, Representative Jacques.

Representative JACQUES: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: Two years ago we debated the minimum wage and I heard all these predictions of gloom and doom and I did have some reservations when I voted to increase the minimum wage because I had heard so often that all the businesses in this state would be packing and heading out. I heard that the Kittery bridge would be flooded with all these businesses leaving and any who came would stop at the Kittery bridge because of the minimum wage in the State of Maine. We found that that did not happen. The arguments are a little less severe in that direction but they, basically, allude to the same concept that, if we raise the minimum wage for the working people of this state, that businesses will not want to locate here and that businesses will leave this state.

You know, every month you get a little report from the Bureau of Labor -- I look at mine, I don't throw it in the trash -- and traditionally, for the past two years, the unemployment rate in this state is in better shape than the rest of the nation, including states like Louisiana and Georgia where they still pay slave wages today. The unemployment rate is still better. You should ask yourself, why?

For the last two years, you know what the Energy and Natural Resources Committee has been dealing with, over-development in the State of Maine -- from solid waste problems to shoreland zoning problems to minimum rock size to subdivision laws. Hardly sounds like a state that nobody wants to come to because, obviously, if there was no business here, people wouldn't be coming here to live and vice versa. Those issues are still on the table downstairs in the Energy and Natural Resources and we are still trying to deal with them. There is getting to be more and more development in this state. Hardly a state that is on its way backwards.

Every time I have talked to a business of why they wanted to leave here, I have never heard, as Representative Conley said, them mention minimum wage. Foreign competition -- there is not much that we can do about that on the state level. They have mentioned workers' compensation but they have never mentioned minimum wage.

We had a survey that was mailed to everyone here that said -- "Why do you want to come to Maine?" It is the quality of life, the quality of the people who work here -- there is still work ethics and pride here in the State of Maine. I remember very distinctly when I asked Nick Carsano, who was the Vice-President of S. D. Warren Division -- why do you like it in Maine? We like it in Maine because you have good, strong, dependable workers. Now, those workers in Scott Paper are not minimum wage workers but he was talking about work ethics and that work ethic applies to somebody who is getting \$4.00 an hour just as much as somebody who is getting \$14.00 an hour.

We have not seen those visitors leave. We have to make a decision -- do we want to pay people? There was a guy on TV the other day, who was a leading professor and he was talking about the current trend, Reaganomics, Reagan administration, and he said, "Look, I will tell you something right now, you can talk about welfare until you are blue in the face but, until you do something to allow people to earn a decent living wage, whether it be the single mother whose husband took off and she can't get any child support or the guy who is trying to support a family and doesn't have the education needed to get a high paying job, you will have welfare. Until the people in this country get rid of that mentality about not paying people a living wage, you are going to have welfare because they are better off on welfare doing nothing than they are working and receiving nothing." So, we can talk about welfare, we can talk about cutting back on the people who are dependent upon government subsidies, whether they be state, federal or local, but until you give people the incentive to work and give them the money, that they need to support their families, you are not going to solve that problem. All the rest is just political rhetoric and hogwash.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Mt. Desert, Representative Zirkilton.

Representative ZIRNKILTON: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I am going to try, very briefly, to add what I think maybe is some new information to

this debate that we didn't have a couple of years ago and that deals with the area of taxation.

I recently learned that the State of Maine treats its poorest (as far as taxes are concerned) considerably rougher than do many other states. So, there are a lot of fingers that point at the employers of this state who pay the minimum wage — perhaps fingers should be pointed at us also for not reducing that tax burden on the poorest of our poor. It certainly should be noted that, with the federal tax changes and also with the soon-to-come state changes, these poor will, in fact, benefit. To what extent, remains to be seen. It is something we are still pondering in the Taxation Committee and really haven't come to any significant conclusions as of yet but there will be some benefits. I just wanted to make it known that we, too, are culprits and if taxes were less, then people would have more money to pay their people. If we taxed our people less, they would have more money to spend in our economy so maybe we ought to watch what we do here as well.

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

Representative BAKER: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: Just to respond to the Representative from Mt. Desert, Representative Zirnkilton, in 1983, I sponsored an income tax bill which would have done precisely what the Representative has suggested. It would have relieved the tax burden of those people who are making around \$8,000 or \$9,000 a year. I would remind this body that that bill was laughed off the face of this legislature so let's not point to alternatives if we are not going to enact those alternatives.

While I am on my feet, I would like to take issue here with my favorite newspaper, the New York Times, that great bastion of liberalism. Here we have a paper that suggests that the minimum wage is outmoded. What do they suggest? Wage supplements, training and education — now I am not opposed to training and education but when you deal with workers and wages, you cannot simply deal with them in isolation. But I would like to point out that we are not doing any of this. To simply point to all of the alternatives and not do them, in my opinion, is simply not worthy. I think we should get on with the business of dealing with the minimum wage issue and I think we should pass a higher minimum wage.

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

Representative HEPBURN: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I think it was a little bit lamentable at the hearing we had on this minimum wage — we didn't have any economists or anyone who studied the effects of wages and the cost of labor who appeared before us, it was mostly individuals from organized labor and those from the business community. The U.S. Congress has had some hearings on the federal minimum wage increase and had a hearing on April 8th. They did have the benefit of some people who are professionals in this field. I just wanted to relate to you some information that they said. Charles Brown, of the University of Michigan, who is the senior economist on the minimum wage study commission for the U.S. Congress had a few things to say. I think one thing that is most important here as it relates to the effect that the increased minimum wage would have on the working poor is that Brown said "An increase in the minimum wage would have little impact on the poor." The correlation between working for low wages and being poor, i.e., having a low income is surprisingly weak. Even a hypothetical 22 percent increase in the minimum wage with no loss of employment raises the

income of these households with less than 1 percent. Here we are considering an increase in the minimum wage of 8.2 percent so, if his figures were to be correct, we would be talking about a household income increase for these types of families something in the order of four-tenths of a percent.

Ladies and gentlemen, raising the minimum wage is very improper and an indirect tool in an attempt to alleviate poverty and lessen the burden on those people who don't have the ability to maintain a decent standard of living.

Another group of economists that worked with the U.S. Minimum Wage Commission concluded that the increase in minimum wage "appears to be a poor policy with effects that have often been misunderstood and misrepresented." If we raise the minimum wage to \$3.95 to \$4.50 or \$5.00 an hour, we will still have people that will need to have help from the state and help from us in society. That is okay but it is important to remember that it is not the marketplace that should be subsidizing our welfare payments in this state, it is the State of Maine. If people need help, we should give it to them, we shouldn't expect the business community to pick up the tab.

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

Representative KETOVER: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I rise too because I am a supporter of this legislation. I just want to quote another article that I have just read and I thought it might be of interest to you. It says, "The drop in value of the minimum wage, since the last increase in 1981 has so reduced actual purchasing power that a rise to \$4.61 an hour would merely return workers' wages to the 1981 level, let alone increase their standard of living. It seems another way that the \$3.30 minimum is worth under \$3.00 today and it means that it has eroded to a subminimal wage. And, as the real wages of the most vulnerable workers in society, the young and the poor are lowered, the number of people living below the poverty line increases. A minimum hourly wage reflecting today's standard of living and once we bring wages up to fair value, we must to ensure that, once and for all, the minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living. A fair minimum wage is not just a labor issue, it is an issue that all Americans concerned with the plight of the working poor, the economy and the standard of living, must be concerned about. We must continue working towards these goals in order to safeguard the minimum protection for the most vulnerable. To raise the minimum wage is to a minimum standard of decency."

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been requested. For the Chair to order a roll call, it must have the expressed desire of more than one-fifth of the members present and voting. Those in favor will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

A vote of the House was taken and more than one-fifth of the members present and voting having expressed a desire for a roll call, a roll call was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The pending question before the House is the motion of the Representative from Madawaska, Representative McHenry, that the House accept the Majority "Ought to Pass" Report.

The Chair recognizes the Representative from Leeds, Representative Nutting.

Representative NUTTING: Mr. Speaker, I request permission to pair my vote with the Representative from Sanford, Representative Paul. If he were present and voting, he would be voting yes; I would be voting no.

The SPEAKER: The pending question before the House is the motion of the Representative from

Madawaska, Representative McHenry, that the House accept the Majority "Ought to Pass" Report. Those in favor will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 83

YEA - Aliberti, Allen, Anthony, Baker, Bost, Boutilier, Brown, Carroll, Carter, Cashman, Chonko, Clark, H.; Clark, M.; Coles, Conley, Cote, Crowley, Diamond, Dore, Duffy, Dutremble, L.; Erwin, P.; Farnum, Gould, R. A.; Gurney, Gwadosky, Hale, Handy, Hichborn, Hickey, Hoglund, Holt, Hussey, Jacques, Jalbert, Joseph, Ketover, Kilkelly, Lacroix, LaPointe, Lisnik, Macomber, Mahany, Manning, Martin, H.; Matthews, K.; Mayo, McGowan, McHenry, McSweeney, Melendy, Michaud, Mills, Mitchell, Moholland, Murphy, E.; Nadeau, G. G.; Nadeau, G. R.; O'Gara, Paradis, J.; Paradis, P.; Perry, Pouliot, Priest, Racine, Rand, Reeves, Richard, Ridley, Rolde, Rotondi, Ruhlman, Rydell, Scarpino, Sheltra, Simpson, Smith, Soucy, Stevens, P.; Strout, D.; Swazey, Tammaro, Tardy, Thistle, Tracy, Vose, Walker, Warren, Wentworth, The Speaker.

NAY - Anderson, Armstrong, Bailey, Begley, Bickford, Bott, Bragg, Callahan, Curran, Davis, Dellert, Dexter, Farren, Foss, Foster, Garland, Greenlaw, Hanley, Harper, Hepburn, Higgins, Holloway, Ingraham, Jackson, Lawrence, Lebowitz, Look, MacBride, Marsano, McPherson, Nicholson, Norton, Paradis, E.; Parent, Pines, Reed, Rice, Salsbury, Seavey, Sherburne, Small, Stanley, Stevens, A.; Stevenson, Strout, B.; Taylor, Telow, Tupper, Webster, M.; Whitcomb, Willey, Zirkilton.

ABSENT - Hillock, Kimball, Lord, Murphy, T.; Weymouth.

PAIRED - Nutting, Paul.

Yes, 90; No, 52; Absent, 5; Vacant, 2; Paired, 2; Excused, 0.

90 having voted in the affirmative and 52 in the negative with 5 being absent, 2 vacant and 2 paired, the Majority "Ought to Pass" Report was accepted, the bill read once and assigned for second reading later in today's session.

The SPEAKER: By unanimous consent, unless previous notice is given to the Clerk of the House or the Speaker of the House by some member of his or her intention, the Clerk is authorized today to send to the Senate, 30 minutes after the House recesses, all matters passed to be engrossed in concurrence and all matters that require Senate concurrence. After such matters have been sent to the Senate by the Clerk, no motion to reconsider will be allowed.

On motion of Representative Martin of Eagle Lake, Recessed until the sound of the gong.

(AFTER RECESS - 4:20 p.m.)

The House was called to order by the Speaker.

At this point, the rules were suspended for the purpose of removing jackets for the remainder of today's session.

Bill "An Act to Improve the Teacher and Administrator Certification Law (H.P. 1195) (L.D. 1629) (S. "A" S-78)

TABLED - May 27, 1987 by Representative DIAMOND of Bangor.

PENDING - Motion of Representative SMALL of Bath to Indefinitely Postpone Bill and Accompanying Papers. (Roll Call Requested)

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Orono, Representative Bost.

Representative BOST: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I hope that you will abide by your previous action on this bill and vote against the motion to indefinitely postpone.

The strong bipartisan majority of the Education Committee deliberated for several weeks on the administrator and teacher certification law and concluded that the primary components, as presented to us from the State Board of Education, remain intact. We strongly differ on the third tier, the many reasons for which were brought forth in the debate last week. Master Teacher by any other name is still Master Teacher whether you call it professional two, lead teacher or something else. It is divisive and virtually impossible to define.

I feel I must respond to the press release from the Governor's Office last week with regard to Master Teacher. Part of the statement reads, "Repeal of Master Teacher certification in state law will threaten to turn back progress." Rather than turning back progress, I believe eliminating the third tier will serve to successfully reopen the discussion on reasonable and workable alternatives. The Education Committee is committed to working to such an alternative.

In that same press release, the Governor cites "The Carnegie Foundation's identification of a need for 'lead teachers' as a reason for his position." Yet, if he were to examine carefully, that Foundation's report, he would discover that recommends "lead teacher" be a voluntary choice, local option. I quote from the Carnegie Report: "We propose that districts create positions for a group of such people, designated lead teachers, in each school." Master Teacher, as piloted, would be mandated as part of certification. The Majority Report leaves it as a local option.

I must also respond to the Governor's statement that "refusal to accept change at the expense of progress is a fool's errand." Well ladies and gentlemen of the House, accepting change for the sake of change and, then placing that change into law, is the fool's errand. If Master Teacher, as presented to the Education Committee, is someone's idea of progress, dampening collegiality, promoting divisiveness among educators, endorsing a system of arbitrary awards, circumventing local options, I truly believe we are not progressing, we are regressing.

Because the purposes of licensing and certification are to establish minimum qualifications for professional practice, it has never been the function of teacher certification to reward teachers. However, some members of the public concerned about teacher morale would like the new certification law to perform this task; hence the political pressure behind the Master Teacher certificate. This contradictory charge asks those involved in the local Master Teacher certification process to simultaneously carry out the licensing function of identifying minimal competence, while at the same time carrying out the reward function of identifying outstanding competence.

I, and the majority of the Education Committee, have serious reservations about the ability of a state licensing process to reward teachers, due to the extraordinary technical difficulty of making this activity come under the umbrella of a certification process. After several years and millions of dollars