

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LEGISLATIVE RECORD

OF THE

One Hundred And Fifteenth Legislature

OF THE

State Of Maine

VOLUME VI

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

House of Representatives
March 10, 1992 to March 31, 1992

Senate
January 8, 1992 to March 9, 1992

By unanimous consent, was ordered sent forthwith to the Senate.

The following item appearing on Supplement No. 22 was taken up out of order by unanimous consent:

SENATE PAPER

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government for the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1992 and June 30, 1993 and to Change Certain Provisions of the Laws" (EMERGENCY) (H.P. 1547) (L.D. 2185) which was passed to be engrossed as amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-1192) as amended by House Amendments "L" (H-1216), "N" (H-1219), "Q" (H-1222), "T" (H-1228), "U" (H-1230), "FF" (H-1252), "OO" (H-1275), "QQ" (H-1319), "RR" (H-1320) and "TT" (H-1329) and Senate Amendments "E" (S-708) and "H" (S-720) thereto in the House on March 30, 1992.

Came from the Senate passed to be engrossed as amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-1192) as amended by House Amendments "L" (H-1216), "N" (H-1219), "Q" (H-1222), "T" (H-1228), "U" (H-1230), "FF" (H-1252), "OO" (H-1275), "QQ" (H-1319), and "RR" (H-1320) and Senate Amendments "E" (S-708), "H" (S-720), and "M" (S-755) thereto in non-concurrence.

Representative Chonko of Topsham moved that the House recede and concur.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Topsham, Representative Chonko.

Representative CHONKO: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: As you well know, the amendment that was put on in the House earlier, "TT" has been removed and the amendment on there now is exactly the same as "TT" except for the one area where the shelter has been removed.

Representative Martin of Eagle Lake requested a roll call vote.

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 Chair recognizes the Representative from Waldo, Representative Whitcomb.

Representative WHITCOMB: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House recede.

The reason I make that motion is that we have an individual in our caucus who is working on an amendment, in all sincerity, that brings back before this body the issue of whether we wish to make cuts in programs across the line versus cuts to the employees, which seems to be the basis of the item that will be the result of the previous motion that was made. So, we would appreciate the opportunity either to have the final drafting of the amendment brought before us or at least to discuss it in its content.

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

Representative RICHARDS: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: If I could, as best I can and it's late, I'm tired, I can describe to the body what the proposed amendment would do.

We have gone through a series of various budget amendments in the last two days. My sense of what I hear from legislators on both sides is that they would prefer to look at cuts and do away totally with "WW." During the period of time that "AA" was out, if you all recall, I had a number of calls from state employees, approximately 15, and I described to them as best I could what that amendment did. I think I did include everything that was in there. One hundred percent of those 15 all agreed that we should cut state government — these were state employees. I had one from my district.

The one thing they were most concerned about was the issue that Representative Jalbert raised and that was the one percent. They did concede given the fact that they were looking at the alternative of \$20 million as opposed to \$3.2 which would have been the one percent for non-vested employees.

What I have attempted to do is look at a series of cuts that this body has endorsed through the various amendments, look at some of the cuts that were in original "AA" and put together an amendment that again reaches the goal of \$20 million in cuts. In addition to that, there is a savings of \$1.5 million which would go into the Rainy Day Fund.

If I could take a stab at this and briefly explain what some of those cuts are, (1) there was a lot of contention about the court closings. That has been restored. There was a savings at that time of about half a million dollars, so I had to find another half million dollars.

The other one was tree growth, that was, as you recall, last year's flat-funded and would be \$1.5 million and that cut was about \$1.3, which would have been \$200,000 over. What I did was restore the total amount of \$1.3 million so tree growth is fully funded.

The circuit breaker is as it was in "AA" and that is a \$4.5 million to \$5 million. This body endorsed a nine-tenths of a percent across-the-board cut in departments and agencies that excludes GPA, Municipal Revenue Sharing, the University of Maine and grants. So, essentially it is dealing with state government bureaucracy, reducing the size.

This body also endorsed the \$2 million in abandoned property and that is in there as well. The one percent that this body also endorsed in earlier amendments dealing with the one percent for new employees that is for retirement, growth management is still in there.

The seven and a half percent pay cut for the 116th First Regular Session for legislators as well as the constituent allowance, the \$600,000 still comes out of the account. There are still some contentious items, we couldn't take all of them out or I could not find another place to take all of them out and those contentious items are again — the gap.

As you recall, we discussed the gap and dealing with what that would amount to by taking out the gap. On the average, it would affect roughly 40 percent of people on AFDC and that would reduce on the average their benefit down to \$1,200. On the average, they get \$13,000 and again that would not cut out the fact that they receive Medicaid and all the other entitlement programs that we give or we

have in place in the state as well as locally.

The other item that is out is dealing with the single parent on AFDC that has an additional child, that is out.

I know I have left out two other items in there and I believe these items I have not mentioned are not ones that I think this body has endorsed.

I have a quick list here and I am tired so I would ask this body to recede. I understand it should be ready in about a half hour but being legislative time, I am sure that means 45 minutes to as much as an hour. I apologize for that but I feel very strong that by continually cutting back on the labor force on state government, we continue to demoralize and compromise the services that we are giving to people in this state. I feel that it is very important that we look, as painful as it is, we have to look at cutting back on programs. By cutting back programs, we increase the efficiency that we are giving other services in state government and I think that is very important.

This whole thing with restructuring obviously is for another day, for the 116th, certainly not for a special session. It is something that I think this body has to do in the future. I think it is better for state government. I think the people of the State of Maine want restructuring. In restructuring, I think we have to look at the fact of our physical plant. A lot of the proposals we had this year did not consider the physical plant, that would have cost more money. I think it is something that takes a lot of time, a lot of thought, a lot of input but I think that will ultimately have the biggest impact of efficiency in how this state runs and how we can deliver services in a more quality basis, how we can implement the bill that we all introduced and endorsed of total quality management. That would better work with a restructuring plan that makes sense in state government.

Where we are today with entitlement programs, where we are with recession, where we are with state government the way it is, is of no fault of anybody else except that I think that all state governments are facing what they are facing today because we have grown, we have tried to do as best we can for everybody that has a need but, unfortunately, we have not kept in reserve or kept in check, our growth. I think it is important that we consider where we are today so that when you come back in the 116th, we can do something, we can pick up the ball and start rolling. Perhaps we can look at those programs that we cut and maybe put them back in place.

My colleague has just indicated two other items that are contentious items that are still in this bill. The Maine Health Care Program, as you recall, was \$4.6 million and that is for adults and then you have MHCFC. I will just take one more minute of your time with respect to MHCFC. I don't think I made a pressing enough comment on that the last time. As everybody understands, it is an organization that is very sophisticated, an organization that is very complex, their rule making is very complex. It would be very difficult for any one of us to stand up here today — Representative Rydell probably understands that better than anybody here how that works. The fact of it is that that organization, that agency, is expensive. It has been stated by a lot of the smaller hospitals that are supposed to benefit that it is no longer needed, they can do without it. The fact of it is that it is an impediment, it does not

any longer represent the constituency. So, I think at this point, if there is a need, we can come back and restructure something that does make sense in the future that perhaps accomplishes the same exact thing.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would ask that you would recede so that we could table this matter so we can all consider the amendment that is being produced.

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

Representative GWADOSKY: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: This has been somewhat of an unusual opportunity to have described an amendment that is not before us but for the most part, I think it has been helpful in making our decision as to whether we want to recede at this point or not. It gives us an idea of what is coming and I think that is more helpful than not. I want to accept those items that are being offered up as sincere. We have debated many of those items and I think most of us share the concern about the growth in state government and what we want to see in terms of cuts in programs. It is very difficult to agree sometimes and reach a consensus on what we want to do but if you look at the items that are being discussed as to be offered prospectively in the future for us at a later time, most of those were rejected just in the last two days by Democrats and Republicans. Democrats and Republicans overwhelmingly rejected those very same issues, those very same proposals.

As I indicated in my caucus, I did not play a particularly close role in the negotiations in the last two or three days but the one meeting I did attend, I remember a vivid conversation with Representative Foss when the issue of Health Care Finance came up, the issue of Maine Health Care Program came up, the issue of growth management came up and even Representative Foss and others said, we can't fight that battle again. We fought it in Appropriations, we fought it on the floor of the House, this institution cannot stand another fight regarding that battle. That is beyond us now, we have got to move on.

Maybe there are those who want to go down the road and look into the future and deal with those issues and try to target some of those things and probably they should. There are some of those in fact that I will vote for and some of those I can vote for but I think we have reached the point now where we don't see enough new that we haven't seen already and that in fact with respect, I am going to ask for a Division on the motion to recede. I think we are in the position now where we can move on. I don't think we want to get into a partisan game where one side is going to accuse the other of not making enough cuts or not having the stomach to make the necessary cuts. No one is served by that. People in Maine are wondering why we are here right now. Believe me, they are wondering. They probably don't know we are here but tomorrow morning, they will be wondering. I know that our families are wondering why we are here right now so let's move on. I am going to ask for a Division with respect to the receding motion so that we can then move on and get this bill behind us.

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

Representative RICHARDS: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: Believe me, I don't want this thing to turn into a partisan issue and I am not

attempting to make it into a partisan issue. I feel very strongly about this, I feel that this is probably the best course. When I put "AA" together, I had too much salt. I didn't take out all the salt but it is edible and that is why I am asking this body to consider or at least have a chance to look at this amendment in its entirety.

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

Representative FOSS: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: Since Representative Gwadosky mentioned my comment the other evening, I would like to explain the context in which that was made.

As we all know, this is a fluid process and I guess I have expressed in other places in this building my deep disappointment to what happened earlier. Rules changed immediately. We had an understanding, once again, that we had a unanimous committee agreement and it was violated with a new amendment which was put on our desk with no notice. It had parts that we had never discussed. That comment the other evening about the Maine Health Program was when we were working on that very unanimous report. I know very well what hot spots some of those are for some of the Democrats but I want to make it very clear that those cuts that I understand Representative Richards is now proposing were unanimously endorsed by the Republicans on the committee. It did not show up in the report because we didn't have the votes to do it but I hope that this body will at least give him the courtesy of reviewing his amendment as the Majority Party did on the amendment which we had two minutes to review.

I ask for a roll call.

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 Chair recognizes the Representative from Fairfield, Representative Gwadosky.

Representative GWADOSKY: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I want to rise to agree with Representative Foss because I think in the context that she did make that statement that they were working towards a unanimous committee report and that is clearly evident in her statement at that time. But, I think we can all see where this is going. We can take the time now to allow any individual to put together a program that have been traditionally opposed by one or the other of the parties. We could spend the same amount of time and allow somebody from this side of the aisle to put together the amendment to cut the State Planning Office or the Department of Education, the Department of Economic and Community Development — we can play that game because that is a lot of the areas that we have attempted to cut but have been unable to do it successfully just as many people on the other side have been unable to cut Maine Health Care Finance Commission or perhaps the Maine Health Care Program. I don't think any of us are served by the game of who can load up the cuts at this point to make a political statement as to who is more serious about cutting state government. We have

all been put in this very difficult situation with our backs to the wall and with state employees taking another brunt to our efforts. It is all well and good that we are concerned about state employees and seriously concerned about what is going to happen to them in this process. I don't see this route, with respect to the comments of Representative Richards and Representative Foss leading us to a productive path at this point and that is why with respect, once again, I don't think we should be receding. I think we should be moving along with the process and get on with the people's business in this state in a manner that I think they would expect us to do so.

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

Representative FOSS: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I want you to understand where this bill stands right now. It includes both furlough days and an across-the-board cut. I think that will have a devastating impact on the delivery of services without reduction in programs. It is that simple.

Representative Gwadosky said that we are playing a partisan game — I had no idea that the members of my committee on the other side of the aisle were going to buy onto an amendment that had obviously been prepared in advance nor did I know that it was being prepared. I was still working with my caucus trying to get the votes for the unanimous agreement that we all agreed to last evening. But that aside and the fact that you don't feel that Representative Richards has the same courtesy to have his ideas expressed, I think is rather appalling, but as the bill stands right now, I think it will have a devastating effect on the delivery of services to the people out there that this government is all about.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from East Millinocket, Representative Michaud.

Representative MICHAUD: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I hope you will vote against the pending motion to recede. We have spent many hours on this budget, many weeks and many months. When we ran into the problem when the budget was first turned down, the members of the Democratic Party on the committee, decided to try to find ways where we could find \$20 million. It is not easy, it is very, very difficult.

There was an amendment offered earlier this evening — "TT" by Representative Daggett. I first voted against the amendment, I wasn't sure what was in the amendment. Basically, there was only two items that were different in that amendment. Those two items are not worth going home without a budget. We were elected here to represent the people back home to the best of our abilities.

Personally, I was appalled at the fiasco that went on here last Spring and last Fall. People throughout the state were disappointed, angry and they were upset at each and everyone of us. Today, I think you and I have an opportunity to prove to the people that we can do better, that we have learned our lesson and give them a budget. This isn't a Democratic budget, it is not a Republican budget, there are items in this budget that I don't like, I now there are items in this budget that Representative Foss doesn't like, but it is a budget. I think it is a fair compromise, it is a good compromise and I hope that before you press your button that you will consider this budget.

I don't think we can afford to go home. I don't think the state employees can afford to have us here any longer, those people are really depressed, a lot of you are depressed. We have cut roughly \$750 million in nine months, that is a lot of cuts. I know members of my caucus would just as soon have tax exemptions but we realize that that is not going to happen. There are members on the other side of aisle who would like to cut more programs and we realize that that is not going to happen. I think it is very important that you vote for your people back home. They want a budget, they need a budget and we need a budget so please vote against the pending motion.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Presque Isle, Representative MacBride.

Representative MACBRIDE: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I think we shouldn't lose sight of the fact today that the Appropriations Committee really was working hard to come out with a unanimous budget that a majority of this caucus could support. That is what you people wanted in the Democratic Party when you removed the emergency from the Supplemental Budget so you could pass it with a majority vote. That is what we have here today.

I do want to remind you that when we worked hard trying to find the \$20 million, it was the Democratic Chairman of the Committee who brought in the amendment to make cuts in the state employees and we were surprised when they did. Eventually however, we all did it except that plant and we accepted in good faith and brought to the House to all of you. There was a great deal of difficult with that so we all went back to work again. We brought forth another agreement and the committee process certainly did fall apart and did fall down and I think that is unfortunate when we work together.

I do hope that you will vote against it.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Presque Isle, Representative Donnolly.

Representative DONNOLLY: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I hope that the Representative from East Millinocket will not be offended by my comments but I do disagree with him on how the people at home want a budget. The people I have talked to at home and around the state didn't say to vote for anything. What they say is, "Bite the bullet, make some cuts, make some hard decisions and stop passing the buck onto the state employees." It is about time we made some tough decisions and I know there are cuts that I wouldn't be happy with and there are cuts that a lot of people in here wouldn't be happy with but I think it is time for us to stop with the fluff and go on and make some hard decisions.

I hope that you will vote to recede and at least give Representative Richards a chance to present his amendment and then with that in front of you, you can decide if you don't want to vote for it, then that's great. At least it is an informed decision rather than us passing around some ideas and Representative Richards can go over what is in there. I think we should have an opportunity to look through his budget amendment and make some decision on the actual facts that are in there. It looks like it will be another couple of minutes. If I stay up here and talk long enough, I will get shot, but the amendment will be back.

Thank you members of the House, I appreciate your time.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rome, Representative Tracy.

Representative TRACY: Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: I know that the hour is late, you hear that often, but it is late. Can anybody tell me where we are after we recede? Is this going to be for enactment or what? I am getting confused here.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would advise the Representative that if the motion to recede prevails, the bill would be ready for amendments. If the motion to recede fails, then it will be ready for enactment.

A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is the motion of the Representative from Waldo, Representative Whitcomb, that the House recede. Those in favor will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 424

YEA - Aikman, Ault, Bailey, H.; Bailey, R.; Barth, Bennett, Butland, Carleton, Carroll, D.; Carroll, J.; Donnelly, Duplessis, Farnum, Farren, Foss, Garland, Greenlaw, Hanley, Heino, Hepburn, Kutasi, Lebowitz, Libby, Lipman, Look, Lord, MacBride, Marsano, Marsh, Merrill, Michael, Murphy, Nash, Ott, Pendexter, Pendleton, Pines, Reed, G.; Reed, W.; Richards, Savage, Spear, Stevens, A.; Stevenson, Strout, Tupper, Whitcomb.

NAY - Adams, Aliberti, Anthony, Bell, Boutilier, Cahill, M.; Cashman, Cathcart, Chonko, Clark, H.; Clark, M.; Coles, Constantine, Cote, Crowley, Daggett, DiPietro, Dore, Duffy, Dutremble, L.; Erwin, Farnsworth, Gean, Goodridge, Gould, R. A.; Graham, Gray, Gurney, Gwadosky, Hale, Handy, Heeschen, Hichborn, Hوجلund, Holt, Hussey, Jacques, Jalbert, Joseph, Kerr, Ketover, Ketterer, Kilkelly, Kontos, Larrivee, Lawrence, Lemke, Macomber, Manning, Martin, H.; Mayo, McHenry, Melendy, Michaud, Mitchell, E.; Mitchell, J.; Morrison, Nadeau, Norton, Nutting, O'Dea, O'Gara, Oliver, Paradis, J.; Paradis, P.; Paul, Pfeiffer, Pineau, Plourde, Poulin, Pouliot, Powers, Rand, Richardson, Ricker, Ruhlin, Rydell, Saint Onge, Sheltra, Simonds, Skوجلund, Stevens, P.; Swazey, Tammaro, Tardy, Townsend, Tracy, Treat, Vigue, Waterman, Wentworth, The Speaker.

ABSENT - Anderson, Bowers, Hastings, Hichens, Luther, Mahany, McKeen, Parent, Rotondi, Salisbury, Simpson, Small.

Yes, 47; No, 92; Absent, 12; Paired, 0; Excused, 0.

47 having voted in the affirmative and 92 in the negative with 12 being absent, the motion did not prevail.

The SPEAKER: The pending question before the House is the motion of the Representative from Topsham, Representative Chonko, that the House recede and concur. (a roll call having been ordered) Those in favor will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 425

YEA - Aliberti, Bell, Boutilier, Cahill, M.; Carroll, D.; Cashman, Cathcart, Chonko, Clark, M.; Coles, Constantine, Cote, Crowley, Daggett, Dore, Duffy, Dutremble, L.; Farnsworth, Gean, Goodridge, Gould, R. A.; Graham, Gray, Gwadosky, Hale, Handy, Hichborn, Hوجلund, Jacques, Jalbert, Joseph, Kerr, Kontos, Larrivee, Lawrence, Manning, Martin, H.; Mayo, Melendy, Michaud, Mitchell, E.; Mitchell, J.

Morrison, Nadeau, Norton, Nutting, O'Dea, Paradis, J.; Paradis, P.; Paul, Pfeiffer, Pineau, Poulin, Pouliot, Richardson, Ricker, Ruhlin, Rydell, Sheltra, Simonds, Skoglund, Stevens, P.; Strout, Swazey, Tamaro, Tardy, Townsend, Vigue, Waterman, Wentworth, The Speaker.

NAY - Adams, Aikman, Anthony, Ault, Bailey, H.; Bailey, R.; Barth, Bennett, Butland, Carleton, Carroll, J.; Clark, H.; DiPietro, Donnelly, Duplessis, Erwin, Farnum, Farren, Foss, Garland, Greenlaw, Gurney, Hanley, Heeschen, Heino, Hepburn, Holt, Hussey, Ketover, Ketterer, Kilkelly, Kutasi, Lebowitz, Lemke, Libby, Lipman, Look, Lord, MacBride, Macomber, Marsano, Marsh, McHenry, Merrill, Michael, Murphy, Nash, O'Gara, Oliver, Ott, Pendexter, Pendleton, Pines, Plourde, Powers, Rand, Reed, G.; Reed, W.; Richards, Saint Onge, Savage, Spear, Stevens, A.; Stevenson, Tracy, Treat, Tupper, Whitcomb.

ABSENT - Anderson, Bowers, Hastings, Hichens, Luther, Mahany, McKeen, Parent, Rotondi, Salisbury, Simpson, Small.

Yes, 71; No, 68; Absent, 12; Paired, 0; Excused, 0.

71 having voted in the affirmative and 68 in the negative with 12 being absent, the motion to recede and concur did prevail.

By unanimous consent, ordered sent forthwith to the Engrossing.

The following items appearing on Supplement No. 24 were taken up out of order by unanimous consent:

SENATE PAPERS

Non-Concurrent Matter

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Special Commission on Governmental Restructuring (S.P. 910) (L.D. 2330) (C. "A" S-725) which was passed to be enacted in the House on March 29, 1992.

Came from the Senate passed to be engrossed as amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-725) and Senate Amendment "A" (S-734) in non-concurrence.

The House voted to recede and concur.

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act to Encourage the Development of Business and Infrastructure through the Extension of State Tax Increment Financing" (S.P. 974) (L.D. 2460) which was referred to the Committee on Taxation in the House on March 29, 1992.

Came from the Senate with that Body having adhered to its former action whereby the Bill was read twice under suspension of the rules without reference to a committee and passed to be engrossed as amended by Senate Amendment "A" (S-750) in non-concurrence.

The House voted to recede and concur.

Representative Joseph of Waterville moved that the House reconsider its action whereby the House voted to recede and concur on An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Special Commission on Governmental Restructuring (S.P. 910) (L.D. 2330) (C. "A" S-725).

The SPEAKER: The Chair will order a vote. The pending question before the House is the motion of the Representative from Waterville, Representative Joseph, that the House reconsider its action whereby the House voted to recede and concur on L.D. 2330. Those in favor will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

A vote of the House was taken.

79 having voted in the affirmative and 41 in the negative, the motion to reconsider did prevail.

Representative Joseph of Waterville moved that the House Adhere.

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

Representative PENDEXTER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question to the Chair.

Would it be in order to make a motion to recede and concur?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would answer in the affirmative. Once the motion is reconsidered, it goes back as though no motion has been made.

Representative PENDEXTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House recede and concur.

Mr. Speaker, Men and Women of the House: The hopes of many of us that restructuring would result in some positive changes in the way that state government would better respond to the needs of the citizens of the state seem like many other issues discussed in this session, going nowhere. We hear that Maine citizens complain about the operation of certain agencies of state government and we also hear that they are complaining about the inability of the legislature to act on areas of major concern in this session.

I hope you will all ask yourselves, how has our being in session this year benefited the improvement of how necessary services are delivered to Maine state citizens? I am making one final attempt to implement a piece of restructuring which is the creation of a Department of Children and Families and the Department of Health.

May I remind everyone, unlike some of the other proposals for the restructuring of other areas of state government, that this idea has been reviewed, considered, studied, analyzed, evaluated, researched, examined, studied, scrutinized, assessed, reassessed, studied, discussed, weighed, debated, studied — now is the time to move on.

We know that we are obligated to provide services to children and their families, what we are attempting to do is to provide better coordination of these services and do it more effectively and efficiently. Some of you have worked very hard, put a lot of time into seeing that the Department of Children becomes a reality. You have served on Task Forces and Commissions to study the issue. I present you the opportunity to see your efforts become reality. Let's vote together to do what is right for children and their families. This restructuring proposal is a sound one supported by four studies,