

ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION
19th Legislative Day
Thursday, March 23, 2023

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

Prayer by Pastor Russell Stewart, Sabattus Community Baptist Church.

National Anthem by Savannah Cook, South Berwick.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

The Journal of Tuesday, March 21, 2023 was read and approved.

At this point, a message came from the Senate borne by Senator DAUGHTRY of that Body, proposing a Joint Convention of both branches of the Legislature to be held in the Hall of the House at 10:45 in the morning for the purpose of extending to the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court, and members of the Judiciary, an invitation to attend the Joint Convention and to make such communication as pleases the Chief Justice.

Thereupon the House voted to concur in the proposal for a Joint Convention to be held at 10:45 in the morning and the Speaker appointed Representative TERRY of Gorham to convey this message to the Senate.

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

ORDERS

On motion of Representative GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 817) (Cosponsored by Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, ADAMS of Lebanon, ALBERT of Madawaska, ANDREWS of Paris, ANKELES of Brunswick, ARATA of New Gloucester, ARDELL of Monticello, ARFORD of Brunswick, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BAGSHAW of Windham, BELL of Yarmouth, BLIER of Buxton, BOYER of Poland, BOYLE of Gorham, BRADSTREET of Vassalboro, BRENNAN of Portland, BRIDGEO of Augusta, CAMPBELL of Orrington, CARLOW of Buxton, CARMICHAEL of Greenbush, CLOUTIER of Lewiston, CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham, COLLAMORE of Pittsfield, COLLINGS of Portland, COPELAND of Saco, COSTAIN of Plymouth, CRAFTS of Newcastle, CRAVEN of Lewiston, CRAY of Palmyra, CROCKETT of Portland, CYRWAY of Albion, DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, DAVIS of East Machias, DHALAC of South Portland, DILL of Old Town, DODGE of Belfast, DOUDERA of Camden, DRINKWATER of Milford, DUCHARME of Madison, EATON of Deer Isle, FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, FAY of Raymond, FOSTER of Dexter, FREDERICKS of Sanford, GALLETTA of Durham, GATTINE of Westbrook, GEIGER of Rockland, GERE of Kennebunkport, GIFFORD of Lincoln, GOLEK of Harpswell, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, GRIFFIN of Levant, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HAGGAN of Hampden, HALL of

Wilton, HASENFUS of Readfield, HENDERSON of Rumford, HEPLER of Woolwich, HOBBS of Wells, HYMES of Waldo, JACKSON of Oxford, JAUCH of Topsham, JAVNER of Chester, KESSLER of South Portland, KUHN of Falmouth, LAJOIE of Lewiston, LANDRY of Farmington, LANIGAN of Sanford, LaROCHELLE of Augusta, LAVIGNE of Berwick, LEE of Auburn, LEMELIN of Chelsea, LOOKNER of Portland, LYMAN of Livermore Falls, MADIGAN of Waterville, MALON of Biddeford, MASON of Lisbon, MASTRACCIO of Sanford, MATHIESON of Kittery, MATLACK of St. George, MEYER of Eliot, MILLETT of Waterford, MILLETT of Cape Elizabeth, MILLIKEN of Blue Hill, MONTELL of Gardiner, MOONEN of Portland, MORIARTY of Cumberland, MORRIS of Turner, MURPHY of Scarborough, NESS of Fryeburg, NEWMAN of Belgrade, NUTTING of Oakland, O'CONNELL of Brewer, O'NEIL of Saco, OSHER of Orono, PARRY of Arundel, PAULHUS of Bath, PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft, PERRY of Calais, PERRY of Bangor, PLUECKER of Warren, POIRIER of Skowhegan, POLEWARCZYK of Wiscasset, POMERLEAU of Standish, PRINGLE of Windham, QUINT of Hodgdon, RANA of Bangor, RECKITT of South Portland, RIELLY of Westbrook, RISEMAN of Harrison, ROBERTS of South Berwick, ROEDER of Bangor, RUNTE of York, RUSSELL of Verona Island, SACHS of Freeport, SALISBURY of Westbrook, SAMPSON of Alfred, SARGENT of York, SAYRE of Kennebunk, SCHMERSAL-BURGESS of Mexico, SHAGOURY of Hallowell, SHAW of Auburn, SHEEHAN of Biddeford, SKOLD of Portland, SOBOLESKI of Phillips, STOVER of Boothbay, STROUT of Harrington, SUPICA of Bangor, SWALLOW of Houlton, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, TERRY of Gorham, THERIAULT of Fort Kent, THORNE of Carmel, WALKER of Naples, WARREN of Scarborough, WHITE of Waterville, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor, WOOD of Greene, WOODSOME of Waterboro, WORTH of Ellsworth, ZAGER of Portland, ZEIGLER of Montville, Senators: BAILEY of York, BALDACCI of Penobscot, BEEBE-CENTER of Knox, BENNETT of Oxford, BLACK of Franklin, BRAKEY of Androscoggin, BRENNER of Cumberland, CARNEY of Cumberland, CHIPMAN of Cumberland, CURRY of Waldo, DAUGHTRY of Cumberland, DUSON of Cumberland, FARRIN of Somerset, GROHOSKI of Hancock, GUERIN of Penobscot, HARRINGTON of York, HICKMAN of Kennebec, INGWERSEN of York, President JACKSON of Aroostook, KEIM of Oxford, LaFOUNTAIN of Kennebec, LAWRENCE of York, LIBBY of Cumberland, LYFORD of Penobscot, MOORE of Washington, NANGLE of Cumberland, PIERCE of Cumberland, POULIOT of Kennebec, RAFFERTY of York, RENEY of Lincoln, ROTUNDO of Androscoggin, STEWART of Aroostook, TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin, TIPPING of Penobscot, VITELLI of Sagadahoc)

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING
MARCH 2023 AS SOCIAL WORK MONTH**

WHEREAS, social workers have paved the way for change by enhancing the well-being of all people, especially the most vulnerable in society; and

WHEREAS, social workers have helped lead the nation's struggle for social justice and continue to advocate for positive social change and, more than the members of any other profession, social workers recognize that more must be done to address the persistent social problems that plague the State; and

WHEREAS, social workers support diverse families in every community and understand that individuals and communities together can bring about change; and

WHEREAS, social workers advocate for the rights of the disadvantaged and oppressed; and

WHEREAS, social workers advocate for children's rights to a safe environment and a good education; and

WHEREAS, social workers advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer rights; and

WHEREAS, social workers advocate for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, rules and policies; and

WHEREAS, social workers work to ensure good care is provided to older adults; and

WHEREAS, social workers help provide community support for veterans and their families after their service; and

WHEREAS, social workers strive to improve access to mental health treatment and health care services in order to save lives; and

WHEREAS, social workers effect change and put the ideals of citizenship into action every day through legislative, regulatory and social policy efforts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize March 2023 as Social Work Month; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the University of Maine, Orono, School of Social Work; the University of Maine, Presque Isle, College of Professional Programs and Education, Social Work; the University of Southern Maine, School of Social Work; the University of New England, School of Social Work; Saint Joseph's College, Social Work program; and the National Association of Social Workers, Maine Chapter.

READ and ADOPTED.

Sent for concurrence.

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

Subsequently, Representative TERRY of Gorham reported that she had delivered the message with which she was charged.

On motion of Representative RECKITT of South Portland, the following House Order: (H.O. 14)

ORDERED, that Representative Danny Edward Costain of Plymouth be excused Mar 16 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Daniel J. Hobbs of Wells be excused Mar 7 and 9 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Rebecca L. Jauch of Topsham be excused Mar 9 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Kelly Noonan Murphy of Scarborough be excused Mar 9 for personal reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Chad Richard Perkins of Dover-Foxcroft be excused Mar 21 for health reasons.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Representative Morgan J. Rielly of Westbrook be excused Feb 28 for personal reasons and Mar 7 and 9 for legislative business reasons.

READ and PASSED.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 103)

**STATE OF MAINE
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT
163 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0163**

March 10, 2023

Troy D. Jackson, President of the Senate
131st Maine Legislature
Senate President's Office
SHS #3, State House
Augusta, ME 04333

Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker of the House
131st Maine Legislature
SHS #2, State House
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: State of the Judiciary Address

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

I am pleased to accept the invitation to address a Joint Session of the 131st Maine Legislature on Thursday, March 23 at 10:45 a.m. I look forward to discussing the challenges faced and successes achieved by the Maine Judicial Branch over the last year, and an overview of the progress we hope to make in 2023 and beyond.

Very truly yours,
S/Valerie Stanfill
Chief Justice

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 107)

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

March 21, 2023

Honorable Troy Jackson, President
State of Maine Senate
#3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker
State of Maine House of Representatives
#2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:

Thank you for your invitation to a Joint Session of the 131st Maine Legislature for the State of the Judiciary address to take place on March 23rd at 10:45 a.m. in the House Chamber.

I am pleased to accept your invitation.

Sincerely,
S/Janet T. Mills
Governor

READ and ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.

The Following Communication: (H.C. 106)

**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SPEAKER'S OFFICE
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002**

March 23, 2023

Honorable Robert B. Hunt

Clerk of the House

2 State House Station

Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Clerk Hunt:

Please be advised that pursuant to her authority, Governor Janet T. Mills has nominated the following:

on March 13, 2023

The Honorable Brian Langley of Ellsworth for appointment to the Maine Charter School Commission.

Pursuant to Title 20-A, MRSA §2405, this appointment is contingent on the Maine State Senate's confirmation after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

Laura S. Burden of Portland, Janice de Lima of Falmouth, Alexa Plotkin of Biddeford, Ian Houseal of Portland, Robert C. Bryant of Hartland, Lee Jay Feldman of Lisbon, Robert Patten of Scarborough, John W. Egan of Freeport and Kevin Bunker of Brunswick for appointment to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority.

Pursuant to Title 30-A MRSA §5155, these appointments are contingent on the Maine State Senate's confirmation after review by the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business.

Sincerely,

S/Rachel Talbot Ross

Speaker of the House

READ and with accompanying papers **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (H.C. 108)

**STATE OF MAINE
CLERK'S OFFICE
2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002**

March 23, 2023

Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross

Speaker of the House

2 State House Station

Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Speaker Talbot Ross:

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the following Joint Standing Committees have voted unanimously to report the following bills out "Ought Not to Pass:"

Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

L.D. 180 An Act to Allow a Person to File a Paper Copy of a Timber Harvest Notification Form

Education and Cultural Affairs

L.D. 386 An Act to Assist Schools with Heating and Transportation Fuel Costs During the School Year (EMERGENCY)

L.D. 570 Resolve, to Provide Information to Maine's School Administrators and Maine Communities About the Financial Advantages of Modern Wood Heating

Environment and Natural Resources

L.D. 188 An Act to Require the Department of Environmental Protection to Pay for Certain Water Tests for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (EMERGENCY)

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

L.D. 55 An Act to Move the Headquarters for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

L.D. 441 An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Recreational Freshwater Fishing with Respect to a Portion of Middle River in Marshfield and Machias

Judiciary

L.D. 243 An Act To Eliminate Residency Requirements for District Court Judicial Appointments

L.D. 543 An Act to Reimburse Counties for Judicial Costs

Sincerely,

S/Robert B. Hunt

Clerk of the House

READ and with accompanying papers **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

The Following Communication: (S.C. 210)

**MAINE SENATE
131st LEGISLATURE**

March 21, 2023

Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross

Speaker of the House

2 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0002

Dear Speaker Talbot Ross:

In accordance with 3 M.R.S.A. §158 and Joint Rule 506 of the 131st Maine Legislature, please be advised that the Senate today confirmed the following nominations:

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

- Isaac Jurson of Houlton for appointment, to the Maine Maritime Academy, Board of Trustees,
- Denham Salisbury Ward, MD of Bowdoinham for appointment, to the State Board of Education,
- Wendy L. Ault of Wayne for reappointment, to the State Board of Education,

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Transportation:

- The Honorable Bettyann Sheats of Auburn for appointment, to the Maine Turnpike Authority, Board of Directors,
- Marguerite Miller Fleming of Portland for reappointment, to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority.

Best Regards,

S/Darek M. Grant

Secretary of the Senate

READ and **ORDERED PLACED ON FILE.**

At this point, the Senate came and a Joint Convention was formed.

In Convention

The President of the Senate, the Honorable Troy D. Jackson, in the Chair.

The Convention was called to order by the Chair.

On motion of Senator VITELLI of Sagadahoc, it was ORDERED, that a Committee be appointed to wait upon the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court; the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine; the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court; and Members of the Judiciary, and inform them that the two branches of the Legislature are in Convention assembled, ready to receive such communications as the Chief Justice is pleased to make.

The Chair appointed the following Members:
The Sen. from Cumberland, Senator CARNEY
The Sen. from Cumberland, Senator BAILEY
The Sen. from Penobscot, Senator LYFORD
The Rep. from Portland, Representative MOONEN
The Rep. from South Portland, Representative RECKITT
The Rep. from Cumberland, Representative MORIARTY
The Rep. from Biddeford, Representative SHEEHAN
The Rep. from Auburn, Representative LEE
The Rep. from Falmouth, Representative KUHN
The Rep. from Skowhegan, Representative POIRIER
The Rep. from Paris, Representative ANDREWS
The Rep. from Hampden, Representative HAGGAN
The Rep. from Rumford, Representative HENDERSON
The Rep. from the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Rep. DANA

Subsequently, Senator CARNEY, for the Committee, reported that the Committee had delivered the message with which it was charged, and that the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court; the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine; the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court; and the Honorable Members of the Judiciary would attend forthwith.

The Chair welcomed to the Convention the Honorable Justices of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court: Associate Justice Andrew M. Mead; Associate Justice A. Mark Horton; Associate Justice Catherine Connors; Associate Justice Rick Lawrence; and Associate Justice Wayne Douglas; as well as Chief Justice Robert Mullen of the Maine Superior Court; Chief Judge Brent Davis of the Maine District Court; and Deputy Chief Judge Lea-Anne Sutton of the Maine District Court.

The Chair welcomed the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, accompanied by the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine.

At this point, the Chair recognized in the Gallery the following members and guests of the Judicial Branch: Amy Quinlan, Barbara Cardone, Julia Finn, Rick Record, Amron Osmon, Laura Ryan, Blake McCartney and Ashley Monti.

The Chair requested the Honorable Valerie Stanfill, Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, to please step forward and address the Joint Convention.

Chief Justice **STANFILL**: Thank you. Thank you. Governor Mills, President Jackson, Speaker Talbot Ross, Members, guests of the 131st Maine Legislature, people of the State of Maine, I am honored and frankly excited to be here and bring you some updates on the State of the Judiciary, Maine's third branch of government. Now that we've all learned to protect ourselves against some of the dangers of COVID, I'm particularly delighted to be able to address you in person this year for the first time for me, as I tell you about how the Judicial Branch has weathered the pandemic and how we're moving forward.

Before I begin, I thank President Jackson for having introduced the Members of the Judicial Branch but I'm going to spend a little bit more time on that myself, although they don't have to stand; particularly you, Justice Horton, I promise. So, I do want to take some time to do that. Foremost, Senior Associate Justice Andrew Mead, who has appeared in front of you in my stead as recently I think as last week as well as in his role previously as Acting Chief Justice before my appointment to this position. I particularly mention him because we owe him our deepest gratitude for steering us during the darkest days of COVID. Thank you, Justice Mead. And my colleagues and members of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, I think you've met Associate Justices Mark Horton, Catherine Connors and Rick Lawrence. Also, our newest member who was just in front of the Senate just a few weeks ago, I think, appearing for the first time in his new role, Justice Douglas. Justice Joseph Jabar is not here. He was unable to be here today because he's in Vienna on a trip that was scheduled and canceled and rescheduled multiple times, and I think Rene has more pull than you do or I do and that's why he's there.

I'd also like to introduce the Chiefs of the Trial Courts. We don't see them as often but I know that President Jackson recognized them, but Chief Justice Robert Mullen of the Superior Court, Chief Judges Brent Davis and Deputy Chief Lea-Anne Sutton of the District Court. They work tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure things run smoothly. And, again, they've already been recognized but I'm going to mention again the key members of our administrative team who are here, our State Court Administrator Amy Quinlan. With her are two of the many people that I know many of you know, Barbara Cardone and Julie Finn, who you see here. Judges are often the public face of the branch but we can't function without the talented and critical members of our administrative office. So, thank you to all of them.

I'm also going to take a moment to recognize a few people who aren't here and call them out because you gave me the stage so I get to do that. Dave Packard, who is our Chief Information Officer, and our whole information technology team. They've had to respond to an ever-changing explosion of technology needs in the last few years and they have kept us all working. Sue Bement, the Clerk of the Lewiston District Court, and Michele Lumbert, who's the Clerk of the combined Augusta District and Superior Courts. Both of them have helped to navigate their teams through the unprecedented changes in the last few years, as have all of our Clerks, but both are retiring in the next few weeks after more than four decades of service for each of them to the people of the State of Maine. They will be missed.

Ted Ross, our Judicial Marshal, and his whole team of Deputy Marshals, a couple of whom are here, they've kept all of

us safe while the pandemic tasked them with the need to figure out how to screen for COVID symptoms and how to do Zoom and while all at the same time appropriately responding to frankly an increasingly agitated and frustrated public.

Finally, I do want to recognize all of the women and men who comprise the Judicial Branch; they are far too numerous to name; for their hard work, their dedication and their willingness to serve the interests of justice. I am truly blessed to be surrounded by extraordinary people who work every day quietly for the people of this State. So, thank you to all of them.

This morning in this address, I'm going to discuss with you the following topics. First, I'm going to talk about our case backlogs, staffing and other resource pressures on the courts as we emerge from the pandemic. Second, I'm going to let you know what we're asking you to do. Third, the status of the implementation of Maine eCourts and Odyssey, which is our new electronic case management system. And, finally, I'm going to end on a high note and discuss some of the successes that we've had in the last year despite the pandemic hardships and shortage of resources.

I've been a judge for 16 years. And particularly during my years on the District Court, before COVID and coronavirus were part of our lexicon, it felt like I was working harder and harder, longer, that there was less breathing room, that it was increasingly difficult to get to cases in a timely fashion just in the time that I was on that court. We seem to be running faster all the time and yet struggling to keep up. And I knew that the numbers of cases filed were flat or even down and that seemed inconsistent with how I was feeling. But I also knew that I wasn't alone, that other people felt the same way. So, as Chief Justice, I've had the luxury of digging into some of the data and, frankly, it backs up my experience. The State court system, by the way, never closed during the pandemic, but there were about 15 months when some of the dockets involving large numbers of people, especially jury trials, were significantly curtailed in order to comply with CDC recommendations, emergency orders, capacity, distancing requirements. So, this led to a buildup of cases, of course, that we are still trying to address. And when we talk about backlogs, we're really talking about two different things. One is an increase in the numbers of cases pending and the other is the length of time a case takes and we're experiencing problems in both of those areas. Both of them have increased dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic. However, it turns out that those increases, both in the numbers of cases pending and in the length of time it was taking to get to them were increasing before the pandemic.

So, I'm going to dive a little deeper and take some time to explain that and explore that with you. Looking at the criminal dockets, which I know is something that gets a lot of attention, we currently have 60-65% more cases pending now than before the pandemic, primarily because of the inability to hold jury trials for a significant period of time. Even though most cases actually resolve without going to trial, by plea or otherwise, it generally doesn't happen until the trial is scheduled. Human nature, right? Until there's a deadline. So, without trials being scheduled, far fewer cases resolved. That increase in the pending cases has fluctuated a little, but it's held steady roughly for about two years now. In other words, once we started doing jury trials, we're holding, but we're not really making progress. Significantly, the caseload, though, isn't evenly distributed across the types of cases that we include in our criminal dockets, so, I think; I said that the pending caseload is up about 60-65%, civil violations are down about 35% from before the pandemic. Misdemeanors are up 55-60%. But most importantly it's the most serious cases, the felonies, that are up about 87% at this point. So, that

explains a lot because obviously more serious felonies tend to take longer both to prepare for trial and to try. They often have more court events. They contribute more heavily to the backlog.

But, again, this trend started before the pandemic. It's not just the pandemic. Despite modest decreases in overall criminal filings, felonies were an increasing portion of the cases that have been filed for the last decade before the pandemic. Failures to appear, continuance rates are increasing before the pandemic especially in felonies. Judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys have been working hard to come up with fair and creative ways to dispose of cases but each additional appearance takes additional judge time, clerk time and all of the other resources. And it's not just felonies that are more time consuming. Think of a typical OUI prosecution, drunk driving. When I started as a lawyer; we won't talk about how many years ago that was; but when I started as a lawyer, the evidence consisted that I would get handed over as a defense lawyer would be like a one-page report with the results of a breath test. Now, the reports are many pages and with the use of body and cruiser cameras by law enforcement, it takes far longer for prosecutors to review the case, it takes longer for defense counsel to review the case, then they file the pretrial motion and the evidence is presented and now the judge has to review all of the video. And then the trial comes and it takes longer because all of these hours of video may be played for the jury. So, what used to be a half-day trial in front of a jury now takes one or one and a half days. That's just one little OUI case. Multiply that across the system.

Other factors and complexity in delay include high rates of mental health and substance use disorders, things I know you are concerned with as well. The opioid epidemic and substance use disorders drive not only drug crimes but crimes of violence, property crimes. Unless a full range of treatment resources are available both in the community and during incarceration, the cycle just continues to repeat itself. Significant mental health disorders are also adding to the complexity of our cases. Judges ordered three times as many mental health examinations in 2022 as we needed to order in 2014, just eight years before. Three times as many; and then that means a longer pretrial wait while the evaluation is being done, another court appearance and another proceeding once we have the results. And, in fact, it's not just that we're ordering them but findings that defendants are incompetent to stand trial have more than tripled, even in misdemeanors.

A couple of other trends, and I promise you I'm not going to cover everything, but significantly the number of child protective cases; again, a topic I know that is something that you're talking about a lot as well; the number of child protective cases brought by the Department of Health and Human Services was fairly flat between 2010 and 2017. It stayed about the same. Suddenly, in 2018 and 2019; again, before the pandemic; those filings almost doubled. Almost doubled. And the amount of court time on the district court docket devoted to child protective cases has always been significant but it's now about 75% higher than it was just in 2010. So, the number of filings has really affected how much court time it takes. The average time in family cases is getting longer. Again, an increasing number of cases pending and families with children are being left to wait longer periods of time for resolution of their living situations. There's lots of other changes that have affected the time devoted to cases. A few more examples. As a result of the foreclosure crisis, foreclosure cases now typically require trials. They may be very short; nonetheless they have to occur. Changed statutory procedures for debt buyer cases require a judge to review every case upon filing. Electronic processes, remote proceedings, are efficient for court users but

not for the courts. It takes court clerks about five times as long to schedule a mediation that will be held remotely as one in person by the time they scan the documents and all the other things that are involved. All these things are; not saying they're not good advances, but they take time.

Finally, one of our most pressing struggles is with scarcity of constitutionally required counsel. Again, something I know you're familiar with. All of us here care deeply that the constitutional rights of the people who come before us are protected as they face criminal charges or the loss of their children. I know you recognize this problem. But it also affects Maine's court operations in many ways. Our clerks are spending hours and hours trying to find a lawyer in cases rather than just making a simple phone call as they used to be able to. Our trial courts have to shift operations on a regular basis to accommodate the needs of attorneys who are strained by their caseload and who are spread out across many counties. So, this means increased use of Zoom, which is not always effective, depending on the kind of proceeding. It means cases are continued, whether formally through a motion or informally, because there's just too much for the attorneys to handle at one time. While that crisis is not directly the court's problem, we're all interconnected in this justice system. The problem, of course, is multifactorial. It includes an aging bar, shrinking rural practices, not enough new attorneys entering the practice of law. And the lack of lawyers is felt not only in cases where attorneys are constitutionally required, but also in civil cases as well. Our civil legal services providers do what they can, but many people struggle to represent themselves in cases that involve their families, housing, protection orders and other critical needs. Indeed, in most of the family cases we have, at least one of the parties is self-represented and that affects how cases move through the system as well as outcomes.

So, I've gone into a lot of detail. I could go into even more, but I won't. I've gone into a lot of detail to try to explain how the increased number of cases and the lengthier times to disposition were not created solely by the pandemic. Rather, the pandemic was the tipping point. It unmasked the reality that even before 2020, the courts and the Judicial System were straining to keep up with the demand of cases. We're still struggling to provide appropriate security, leading to courthouse closures over the last couple years. We continue to wrestle with the pandemic backlog. Courts are facing progressively complicated cases, new technology demands, overburdened and decreasing numbers of counsel to handle the caseload, and an increasingly frustrated public who also continue to struggle with fallout from the pandemic. Together with Amy Quinlan, our State Court Administrator, I've traveled around the State in the last year from Fort Kent to York and Calais to South Paris visiting our courthouses and the people who work there. I talked with a judge so discouraged she can't make headway regardless of how many cases she jams onto her dockets or how late she works. I see our clerks working nights, weekends, trying to catch up. I've listened to judges tell me how the light has gone out in their jobs. Jobs we love. Leading to some early retirements of some very valuable and experienced judges. I witness our marshals calmly responding to the increased agitation and mental health issues and substance use at entry screening. Judicial Branch employees are feeling the weight of the realization that seems no matter what we do, we can't catch up, we can't address our backlog. Frankly, it hurts my heart. For folks whose goal is public service and helping others, it's a crisis of confidence.

So, what are we asking for you, from the 131st Legislature? Our budget requests have focused on resources to address these long-term staffing needs. The Governor's budget includes a substantial number of new positions for the Judicial Branch as well as general funding for some other existing positions. We actually originally proposed more positions to try to stabilize operations but we're also realistic about hiring and other things that we can accomplish. Specifically, our budget request, though, is focused on the operations, what you see; judges, clerks, marshals, electronic filing specialists, court technology assistants who do the recording and all of that. It also includes some funding for increased facility operations, technology and licensing costs, just like your household budget, all these things are going up rapidly in cost. With the support of the Governor, I'm also asking for four new judges to allow us to handle more cases in a timely manner. Along with each judicial position, we have to also add a clerk and a marshal because we can't move cases along in a courtroom unless we have a clerk and a marshal working with the judge. These requests have been carefully thought out. They were not plucked from thin air. We spent a lot of time internally doing focus groups and meetings, trying to analyze what our greatest needs were. And last fall, we also asked the National Center for State Courts to take a look, to collect data and analyze the workloads of our clerks and judges, they didn't go beyond clerks and judges, but they looked at the clerks and the judges. They've reported; we don't have their final report yet, but they have reported to us that we are significantly under resourced. We kind of knew that but they have confirmed that. We don't have, as I say, their final written report, but the preliminary data shows we actually need substantially more judges and clerks than we've requested in order to staff our court system adequately. And, by the way, that is just to continue to do the work we're already doing, not to catch up and do more.

Another point that is important to mention about resources: Maine judges are among the lowest paid in the nation. Have been for years. Maine ranks 51st in judicial salaries. When corrected for the cost of living, 48th in raw numbers. The statutory 3% cost of living adjustment is not enough to change that or even keep pace, frankly, with inflation. So, I'm also asking for a modest salary increase for Maine judges. Let's lift them from the bottom. Not aiming really high, just let's get out of the bottom. Even with such an increase that we've asked for, our salaries will still remain well below those of our peers in New England. It's a matter of equity for Maine judges, but it's also necessary because of the salary compression we experience across all positions. Top salaries affect the ones below them, the ones below them, the ones below them. Our employees at every level are frankly paid too little for their hard work and this has led to significant problems with hiring and retaining qualified people, which puts additional strain, of course, on the system.

So, there are many important issues. We can't do it all at once. Our requests, however, go a long way toward addressing our most pressing needs, and I am immeasurably grateful that the Governor has recognized the position that we've been in and have supported these requests, and I hope you will as well.

I'm going to move on, switch gears. I'd like to update you on the status of Maine eCourts, the system known as Odyssey. Odyssey is a fully integrated electronic system for filing, docketing, case management. Users can file electronically, access dockets, documents remotely. In addition, it's intended to be integrated with law enforcement systems, as our current system is, for bail, protection orders and the like. It's an off-the-shelf product from Tyler Industries, but one that critically we can configure to our needs and processes.

So, toward the end of 2020, we began accepting electronic filings for all civil and family matter cases except for protection orders in the Bangor Superior Courts as well as the Statewide Business and Consumer Court. We'd previously gone live with Violations Bureau, traffic tickets, as well. Unfortunately, the Bangor and Business Court implementations happened during the pandemic, which created even more obstacles to the already complex implementation process. Our IT department, frankly, was nothing short of heroic, trying to implement the Maine eCourts while also trying to, at the same time, implement all the new technologies that we needed to equip us for remote proceedings and everything else that was occasioned by the pandemic. Frankly, there were more hitches and issues than we anticipated and it was, frankly, a lot harder on the clerks and judges than anyone thought. But they've worked really hard and I thank them and they continue to work hard on this project. In any event, when I became Chief Justice, which was June of 2021, I became a little concerned about the problems we were encountering as we tried to roll out this system. So, I want to make sure that it succeeds. So, at my urging, we hired BerryDunn Justice Systems Consulting Group, who's worked with the same systems before, to conduct what we call a point in time assessment on the project. And so, we've continued, by the way, behind the scenes on programming, troubleshooting, and the integrations, but we paused any further public rollout or extension of the project in 2022, while we conducted the assessment. This led to internally a governance reorganization and we also are continuing to work with BerryDunn as consultants on the project. In other words, what we did was regroup, set the stage for success.

So, as an aside, just sort of a funny point, I can't help but note we sometimes underestimate obstacles that aren't always obvious. Maine is the only court system in the country that works on Apple. We have Macs. No one else does. We've done this for years. But the switch to Odyssey also means switching out all the hardware to PCs and many of our courthouses, especially some of our older courthouses, actually simply don't have the wiring or the physical space to support running two systems while we transition. Just another little problem. I promise you no other state had that problem. We'll solve it and we're going to get there, but just as an example.

So, where are we going? Well, we're working with the Department of Public Safety to ensure a smooth transition or integration of Odyssey with the Metro Switch, which is a critical piece before we can go to protection orders or criminal dockets. The Metro Switch is a system that moves those out electronically to law enforcement. Public Safety has expressed concern they can't be ready with their end of the integrated software for a while. I'll leave it that way. So, we're focusing on implementing Odyssey for civil and family cases in additional courts rather than trying to move on to other kinds of dockets. So, our intent is to bring the family and civil case type package to Lewiston-Auburn in later this year and then we'll move on with other implementations and we're setting up some systems as well to keep the public informed, provide information to help system users navigate the system.

So, now I want to highlight some successes, instead of all doom and gloom, because we have them. We do. Some accomplishments to celebrate. Well, first, let me say, for too long, people who have walked into our courtrooms have felt excluded because they look different, frankly, than the portraits on the wall. We are working hard at increasing diversity, inclusion and decreasing implicit bias in the Judicial Branch and also through educational programming but also through outreach. For example, we had a new initiative which started in

Lewiston to hire court interns born in Somalia and our first intern is here, I think I saw her up there, Amron Osmon. We now have an internal standing court committee to address these issues and we will be moving out to engage more broadly with our justice partners to expand efforts out into communities we serve and to try to become a more diverse and inclusive organization ourselves as well as the way in which we serve the people of Maine. We've increased training for our judges and the use of problem-solving courts, treatment courts, veterans' courts. We did some pretty substantial trainings so we have more judges trained to do that this year, to help address the root of the problems that have resulted in criminal activity. We've expanded the use of mental health dockets to try to better address the significant mental health challenges in our criminal dockets. We've improved public court access using Zoom and hybrid appearances, language access, physical access, accommodations for those with hearing loss, other disabilities, and improvement of forms that make document preparation easier for the non-lawyer. We're now using a Sharefile platform for email transmission of filings in criminal cases statewide and are prepared to use it as well to provide remote access to jury questionnaires for attorneys.

The Violations Bureau, traffic tickets, is now 100% Zoom platform. The presiding judges are based in Lewiston and those wishing to contest a civil traffic violation can do so remotely, have their trial, without traveling to court. Not only the people who have the tickets but the officers can also attend and testify from their cruisers rather than coming to court. We partnered with the Opportunity Alliance to develop and offer information sessions for parents involved in the child welfare system, sessions which are led by a parent with lived experience in the child welfare system to help spread some information and assist them through the process.

We continued throughout the pandemic to offer an annual educational conference to professionals who work in the child welfare system. The 2022 conference, two days, was focused on trauma informed practices. Next week is the first live in-person conference since 2020 and the focus will be on fostering a deeper understanding of the communities the child welfare system aims to serve. We've been working hard on developing resources, practices and policies to better support self-represented litigants and court users and facilitate their engagement in court proceedings. We have new materials including videos about the court process and handouts that explain how to start certain case types. In August, last August, in partnership with Home to Home and the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, we were awarded a Justice for Families federal grant of \$550,000 to expand the availability of affordable supervised visitation in family cases for families in Maine as well as to provide domestic violence training to court-based and court-related personnel who work with families with a history of domestic and sexual violence.

And last, but far from least, the new York Judicial Center in Biddeford brings the district courts from Biddeford, Springvale and York together in one building as well as the superior court from Alfred, all in one location. It's a modern, fully accessible, energy-efficient facility that's going to help us realize operational efficiency by not having to duplicate clerks' offices, facility operations and security screening. We expect the building will be open for court business in May and we'll have a grand opening in June. I hope maybe we'll see some of you there. Most importantly, words not often said, the project is on time and on budget.

So, I could go on, but I won't. From what I've said, I hope it's apparent that we are working hard to stabilize Maine's court system, to increase the transparency, communication and collaboration with our justice partners. And that's perhaps the most hopeful message of all; working together, we can improve the essential services that we offer to our citizens. We can stop the erosion of public trust in our institutions. Together, we can ensure that everyone has confidence that our justice system will serve the public interest, protect individual rights and provide meaningful access to justice for all of Maine's people. Thank you.

The Chief Justice withdrew amid the applause of the Convention, the audience rising.

The purpose for which the Convention was assembled having been accomplished, the Chair declared the same dissolved.

The Senate retired to its chamber amid the applause of the House, the audience rising.

(After the Convention)

The House was called to order by the Speaker.

PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING REFERENCE

Bill "An Act Regarding Penalties for Maintaining Drug-involved Premises"

(H.P. 820) (L.D. 1295)

Sponsored by Representative COSTAIN of Plymouth.
Cosponsored by Representatives: CRAY of Palmyra, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of Wilton, JAUCH of Topsham, SHAW of Auburn, Senator: BLACK of Franklin.

Bill "An Act Regarding Transition Coordination, Prisoner Attendance at Funerals, Furloughs, Visitation, Education and Discretionary Accounts at County Jails"

(H.P. 826) (L.D. 1301)

Sponsored by Representative COLLINGS of Portland.

Bill "An Act to Provide That the Legal Use or Possession of Cannabis Is Not a Violation of Probation, Parole or Pretrial Release"

(H.P. 836) (L.D. 1311)

Sponsored by Representative BOYER of Poland.
Cosponsored by Senator BRAKEY of Androscoggin and Representatives: ANDREWS of Paris, DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor.

Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Give the Governing Board of a Municipality Input into the Budget Developed by a School Board"

(H.P. 825) (L.D. 1300)

Sponsored by Representative CAMPBELL of Orrington.
Cosponsored by Senator LYFORD of Penobscot and Representatives: NUTTING of Oakland, SAMPSON of Alfred, THORNE of Carmel.

Bill "An Act to Clarify Requirements for Payment of Tuition for Children with Disabilities by the Department of Education's Child Development Services System" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 834) (L.D. 1309)

Sponsored by Representative GATTINE of Westbrook.
Cosponsored by Senator PIERCE of Cumberland and Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, CRAFTS of Newcastle, JAVNER of Chester, LANIGAN of Sanford, MEYER of Eliot, MILLETT of Cape Elizabeth, MURPHY of Scarborough.

Bill "An Act to Increase School Security Through Design and Protocol"

(H.P. 839) (L.D. 1326)

Sponsored by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.

Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook.

Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Resolve, to Ensure Compliance by the State with an Agreement Regarding the Operation of the Landfill in Old Town

(H.P. 843) (L.D. 1330)

Sponsored by Representative DILL of Old Town.

Cosponsored by Representative: LANDRY of Farmington.

Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Resolve, to Design and Implement a Community-based Model of Care for Adolescent Mental Health

(H.P. 830) (L.D. 1305)

Sponsored by Representative GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach.

Cosponsored by Senator BALDACCI of Penobscot and Representatives: GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, JAVNER of Chester, MILLETT of Waterford, NUTTING of Oakland, STOVER of Boothbay, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, WOOD of Greene, Senator: TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin.

Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Barriers to Achieving Behavioral Health Integration and Parity (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 829) (L.D. 1304)

Sponsored by Representative PERRY of Calais.
Cosponsored by Senator BAILEY of York and Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DHALAC of South Portland, MADIGAN of Waterville.

Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** suggested.

On motion of Representative MEYER of Eliot, the Resolve was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Create a Rebuttable Presumption Under the Workers' Compensation Law for Line Workers Diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder"

(H.P. 827) (L.D. 1302)

Sponsored by Representative O'CONNELL of Brewer.
Cosponsored by Senator FARRIN of Somerset and Representatives: BELL of Yarmouth, HOBBS of Wells, MONTELL of Gardiner, MORIARTY of Cumberland, MURPHY of Scarborough.

Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Amend the Opioid Education Requirements"

(H.P. 838) (L.D. 1323)

Sponsored by Representative NUTTING of Oakland.
Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Establish a State Emergency Rental Assistance Program" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 835) (L.D. 1310)

Sponsored by Representative WARREN of Scarborough.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ARFORD of Brunswick, COLLINGS of Portland, CROCKETT of Portland, DHALAC of South Portland, GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, KESSLER of South Portland, SHEEHAN of Biddeford, SUPICA of Bangor.
Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** suggested.

On motion of Representative ROEDER of Bangor, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Protect Homeowners from Unfair Agreements to Exclusively List Residential Real Estate for Sale"

(H.P. 831) (L.D. 1306)

Sponsored by Representative BELL of Yarmouth.
Cosponsored by Representative: DODGE of Belfast, Senators: BAILEY of York, CARNEY of Cumberland.

Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Notify School Boards and Select Boards That Lobbying Associations Are Not Governmental Agencies"

(H.P. 822) (L.D. 1297)

Sponsored by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ADAMS of Lebanon, BAGSHAW of Windham, GREENWOOD of Wales, LYMAN of Livermore Falls, POLEWARCZYK of Wiscasset, SAMPSON of Alfred, SOBOLESKI of Phillips.

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Require Constitutional Officers to Be Elected by Statewide Election

(H.P. 832) (L.D. 1307)

Sponsored by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.
Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook, Senator FARRIN of Somerset and Representatives: DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, SUPICA of Bangor, WARREN of Scarborough, Senators: BALDACCI of Penobscot, BENNETT of Oxford, BRAKEY of Androscoggin, HICKMAN of Kennebec.

Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Amend the Maine Bail Code"

(H.P. 824) (L.D. 1299)

Sponsored by Representative CAMPBELL of Orrington. (BY REQUEST)

Cosponsored by Senator LYFORD of Penobscot and Representatives: NUTTING of Oakland, THORNE of Carmel.

Committee on **JUDICIARY** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Fund a Public Defender's Office Through a Tax on University Endowment Income"

(H.P. 841) (L.D. 1328)

Sponsored by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.
Committee on **JUDICIARY** suggested.

On motion of Representative MOONEN of Portland, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Allow a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging to Fund Affordable Housing"

(H.P. 823) (L.D. 1298)

Sponsored by Representative SKOLD of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator CHIPMAN of Cumberland and Representatives: CROCKETT of Portland, DODGE of Belfast, MATLACK of St. George, RANA of Bangor, TERRY of Gorham, WARREN of Scarborough, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor, Senator: BAILEY of York.

Bill "An Act to Exempt Boats and All-terrain Vehicles Purchased for Qualified Commercial Fishing or Commercial Farming from State Sales Tax"

(H.P. 828) (L.D. 1303)

Sponsored by Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor.

Cosponsored by Senator MOORE of Washington and Representatives: CRAY of Palmyra, DAVIS of East Machias, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of Wilton, HEPLER of Woolwich, LANDRY of Farmington, STROUT of Harrington, THORNE of Carmel.

Committee on **TAXATION** suggested and ordered printed. **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Authorize Municipalities to Allow Firefighters to Have Increased Lighting on Their Personal Vehicles"

(H.P. 821) (L.D. 1296)

Sponsored by Representative NESS of Fryeburg.

Cosponsored by Senator BENNETT of Oxford and Representatives: DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, GUERRETTE of Caribou, LAJOIE of Lewiston, MASON of Lisbon, MILLIKEN of Blue Hill, NEWMAN of Belgrade, WHITE of Guilford.

Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Limit the Requirements Regarding Leadership Political Action Committees and to Promote Clean Election Transparency"

(H.P. 840) (L.D. 1327)

Sponsored by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.

Bill "An Act to Allow Delivery of Maine Craft Beer"

(H.P. 842) (L.D. 1329)

Sponsored by Representative ANDREWS of Paris.

Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: BOYER of Poland, HYMES of Waldo, RIELLY of Westbrook, RISEMAN of Harrison, RUDNICKI of Fairfield, SUPICA of Bangor, Senators: HICKMAN of Kennebec, TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin.

Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund"

(H.P. 818) (L.D. 1293)

Sponsored by Representative GATTINE of Westbrook.

Cosponsored by Senator POULIOT of Kennebec and Representatives: BLIER of Buxton, GERE of Kennebunkport, MORRIS of Turner, RANA of Bangor, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, Senators: President JACKSON of Aroostook, PIERCE of Cumberland, VITELLI of Sagadahoc.

Bill "An Act to Implement Certain Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals"

(H.P. 819) (L.D. 1294)

Sponsored by Representative GERE of Kennebunkport.

Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Pursuant to Statute

Administrator of the unorganized territory

Representative PERRY for the **Administrator of the unorganized territory** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 36, section 1604 asks leave to report that the accompanying Bill "An Act to Establish Municipal Cost Components for Unorganized Territory Services to Be Rendered in Fiscal Year 2023-24" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 833) (L.D. 1308)

Be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION** and printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION** and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

Sent for concurrence.

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Refer to the Committee on Judiciary

Pursuant to Statute

Representative MOONEN for the **Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary** on Bill "An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right To Know Advisory Committee Concerning Remote Participation"

(H.P. 837) (L.D. 1322)

Reporting that it be **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 1, section 411, subsection 6, paragraph G.

Report was **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**.

Sent for concurrence.

CONSENT CALENDAR

First Day

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

(S.P. 24) (L.D. 32) Bill "An Act to Update the Maine State Grant Program" (EMERGENCY) Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 265) (L.D. 432) Bill "An Act to Clarify MaineCare Program Requirements Regarding Certain High-risk Health Care Providers" Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** reporting **Ought to Pass**

(H.P. 12) (L.D. 8) Bill "An Act to Increase Support for the Modernization of the Board of Pesticides Control by Increasing the Annual Pesticide Registration Fee" Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-7)**

(H.P. 241) (L.D. 390) Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 25: Standards for Placing Wood into Stream Channels to Enhance Cold Water Fisheries Habitat, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry (EMERGENCY) Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-8)**

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

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

ENACTORS

Emergency Measure

An Act to Authorize the Deorganization of Drew Plantation
(S.P. 41) (L.D. 49)
(C. "A" S-8)

Reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 110 voted in favor of the same and 30 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Emergency Measure

An Act to Remove the Requirement for Wild Blueberry Transportation Permits

(H.P. 183) (L.D. 285)

Reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed. This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken. 107 voted in favor of the same and 0 against, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Acts

An Act to Allow the Commissioner of Transportation to Reduce Speed Limits at Construction Sites with Input from Municipalities and Utilities

(S.P. 23) (L.D. 31)

An Act to Clarify Coverage for Retired County and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Municipal Firefighters Under the State Employer Group Health Plan

(S.P. 169) (L.D. 362)

Reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed, **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

Resolves

Resolve, to Name a Bridge in the Town of Canaan After Staff Sergeant Richard Gerald Salsbury

(S.P. 152) (L.D. 331)

Reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed, **FINALLY PASSED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

SENATE PAPERS

Bill "An Act to Extend Funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program"

(S.P. 522) (L.D. 1285)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Invest in Maine's Fire Service Training Facilities"

(S.P. 517) (L.D. 1280)

Bill "An Act to End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program"

(S.P. 527) (L.D. 1290)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** in concurrence.

Resolve, to Reestablish the Task Force to Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System (EMERGENCY)

(S.P. 520) (L.D. 1283)

Bill "An Act to Require Personal Finance to be Taught as a Separate Course to Obtain a High School Diploma"

(S.P. 521) (L.D. 1284)

Bill "An Act to Require Instruction in Schools on Substance Abuse Prevention and Administration of Naloxone Hydrochloride"

(S.P. 533) (L.D. 1315)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Streamline Income Verification Requests for Income Supplementation and Assistance Programs"

(S.P. 519) (L.D. 1282)

Bill "An Act to Establish an Appeal Process for Child Care Providers"

(S.P. 524) (L.D. 1287)

Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Promote the Integration of Human Health and Environmental Health

(S.P. 536) (L.D. 1317)

Bill "An Act to Address Income Disparity in Health Care by Limiting the Compensation of Hospital Executives"

(S.P. 540) (L.D. 1321)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** and ordered printed.
REFERRED to the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Exempt Certain Boat Operators from Having to Become Maine Guides" (EMERGENCY)
(S.P. 538) (L.D. 1319)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** and ordered printed.
REFERRED to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Protect Economic Competitiveness in Maine by Extending the End Date for Pine Tree Development Zone Benefits"

(S.P. 518) (L.D. 1281)

Resolve, to Establish the Blue Economy Task Force to Support Maine's Emergence as a Center for Blue Economy Innovation and Opportunity in the 21st Century (EMERGENCY)
(S.P. 523) (L.D. 1286)

Bill "An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Provide for Statewide and Equitable Access to Experiential Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education"

(S.P. 528) (L.D. 1291)

Resolve, Directing the Maine Technology Institute to Review Targeted Technology Sectors and Industry Clusters

(S.P. 537) (L.D. 1318)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Strengthen Maine's Child Protection Laws by Limiting Contact with Violent Offenders"

(S.P. 516) (L.D. 1279)

Bill "An Act to Limit the Immunity of Charitable Organizations"

(S.P. 530) (L.D. 1312)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Establish a Minimum Salary for Educational Specialists, Educational Technicians and School Teaching Professionals"

(S.P. 532) (L.D. 1314)

Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** suggested and ordered printed.

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Require Auditing for Work Search Requirements of Claimants of Unemployment Compensation"

(S.P. 534) (L.D. 1316)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **LABOR AND HOUSING** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Amend the Tax Credit for Major Business Headquarters Expansions Regarding Employees' Location and Time of Hire for Purposes of the Credit"

(S.P. 531) (L.D. 1313)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TAXATION** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **TAXATION** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Create a 2-year Motor Vehicle Registration"

(S.P. 525) (L.D. 1288)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Increase the Prize Limits Allowed for Raffles"

(S.P. 529) (L.D. 1292)

Bill "An Act to Improve Signature Requirements for Candidates by Allowing Unenrolled Voters to Sign Petitions for Party Candidates"

(S.P. 539) (L.D. 1320)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Facilitate Property Redevelopment and Encourage Affordable Housing by Allowing the Conveyance of Unfinished Commercial Condominium Units"

(S.P. 526) (L.D. 1289)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING** in concurrence.

The following Joint Order: (S.P. 535)

ORDERED, the House concurring, that when the Senate and House adjourn, they do so until Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at 10:00 in the morning, or until the call of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, respectively.

Came from the Senate, **READ** and **PASSED**.

READ and **PASSED** in concurrence.

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

On motion of Representative CRAVEN of Lewiston, the House adjourned at 12:53 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 28, 2023, or until the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, respectively, pursuant to the Joint Order (S.P. 535) and in honor and lasting tribute to Raymond Ludger Tetreault of Harpswell.