

ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION
10th Legislative Day
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

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

Prayer by Rabbi Rachel Isaacs, Beth Israel Congregation, Waterville.

National Anthem by Honorable Tammy L. Schmersal-Burgess, Mexico.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Doctor of the day, Constance Adler, M.D., Chesterville.

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 6:45 in the evening for the purpose of extending to Her Excellency, Governor Janet T. Mills, an invitation to attend the Joint Convention and to make such communication as pleases her.

Thereupon the House voted to concur in the proposal for a Joint Convention to be held at 6:45 in the evening and the Speaker appointed Representative TERRY of Gorham to convey this message to the Senate.

The Journal of Thursday, February 9, 2023 was read and approved.

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

SENATE PAPERS

The following Joint Resolution: (S.P. 242)

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 10, 2023
AS COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
AWARENESS DAY**

WHEREAS, one in every 4 persons over the age of 18 has a diagnosable mental illness, and many other persons experience brief periods of mental illness in their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, both in Maine and nationally, mental illness has been received with a reaction of stigma and fear; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, 42 law enforcement departments in the State responded to over 4,500 calls involving mental illness; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one in 4 persons in the State received treatment for mental health challenges each year, including persons who were incarcerated, residing in a mental health facility, experiencing homelessness and non-English speakers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2021, 160.27 per 10,000 emergency room visits in the State were related to suicidal intent, and for the first 3 quarters of 2022, the figure was 157.36 per 10,000; and

WHEREAS, on February 10, 2023, Legislators throughout the State are invited to visit local mental health care providers and recovery centers to meet clinicians, clients, advocates and

family members who are assisting Maine persons living with mental illness; and

WHEREAS, on February 10, 2023, Legislators are also invited to join community leaders to learn more about mental health and substance use disorder and how to provide support at the local level; 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 February 10, 2023 as Community Mental Health Services Awareness Day, to recognize the impact mental illness has on our emotions, cognitive abilities and conduct and to thank the mental health professionals who are working to eradicate stigma and fear and help persons live happier and healthier lives.

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

READ.

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

Representative **MADIGAN**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to take a moment to recognize this Joint Resolution, being as community mental health services is the field I've worked in for, oh, about 35 years now.

My first job was in a residential program for folks who were exiting the State Hospital and my very first client was a woman who had AIDS, a psychotic disorder and depression. She died of AIDS but the services we provided were crucial to her having some semblance of enjoyment in the last days of her life.

I thought I'd tell a few other stories about folks that have been served by this. Another one of my first clients was a young woman about my age. I was in my 20s, I looked about 12, she looked about the same. Brilliant, beautiful. She had her first psychotic break in her senior year of college. She was hospitalized. She went on to an Ivy League graduate school, got accepted with a full ride, and she had her second psychotic break. And she had command hallucinations asking her to kill her family and no antipsychotic worked for her. And I remember her saying to me once with some of the clients that we worked with that would often laugh and she said I wish I had their hallucinations because at least what they're hearing is funny. And that has always stuck with me.

I've worked in assertive community treatment teams, I've worked in community mental health services for children. As an outpatient therapist, I've done substance use evaluations, mental health evaluations, crisis services. And one of the things I've come away from is mental health touches everyone, touches every family, and if you don't believe that it does, you're not paying attention.

These are crucial services for us to fund. I am grateful for everyone who participated in the community behavioral health tours last Friday. I hope people continue to have this conversation because mental health is health care. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from North Yarmouth, Representative Graham.

Representative **GRAHAM**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to say thank you to the organizations that hosted us on Friday. I had the opportunity to be in Portland visiting Opportunity Alliance, Maine Health, Spurwink, Sweetser, Gateway. It was a very moving day. A day that I felt very positive about after we left. The good works that are happening. Sometimes it's hard as we look around and see all the difficulties, mental health struggles, but these people are boots on the ground, working really hard and I want to thank them for

all their work and I hope we will share our experiences this Thursday night, having pizza with our mental health friends.

So, thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Subsequently, the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED** in concurrence.

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

Non-Concurrent Matter

Bill "An Act Regarding Rental Housing Applications" (H.P. 363) (L.D. 558)

REFERRED to the Joint Select Committee on **HOUSING** in the House on February 9, 2023.

Came from the Senate **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY** in **NON-CONCURRENCE**.

The House voted to **RECEDE** and **CONCUR**.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 68)

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

February 14, 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 Committee has voted unanimously to report the following bill out "Ought Not to Pass:"

Energy, Utilities and Technology
L.D. 175 An Act to Increase the Use of Municipal Waste-to-energy Processes as a Source of Renewable Energy

Sincerely,
S/Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 69)

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

February 14, 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 Committee on Transportation has approved the request by the sponsor, Senator Timberlake of Androscoggin, to report the following "Leave to Withdraw:"

L.D. 38 Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in the Town of Freeport the Matthew MacMillan Memorial Bridge

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the Committee on Transportation has approved the request by the sponsor, Senator Libby of Cumberland, to report the following "Leave to Withdraw:"

L.D. 76 Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to Study the Width of Road Shoulders

Pursuant to Joint Rule 310, the Committee on Transportation has approved the request by the sponsor, Senator Libby of Cumberland, to report the following "Leave to Withdraw:"

L.D. 124 An Act to Ensure the Maintenance of Circular Intersections on State and State Aid Highways

Sincerely,
S/Robert B. Hunt
Clerk of the House

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

The Following Communication: (H.C. 70)

**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A PAID FAMILY AND
MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFITS PROGRAM**

February 13, 2023
The Honorable Troy Jackson, President
Maine State Senate
The Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Speaker
Maine House of Representatives
State House
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross:
Pursuant to Public Law 201, Chapter 635, Part KK, the Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program is pleased to submit its final report. Copies of the full report have been distributed to committees or individuals as directed by law and copies have been placed on file with the Law and Legislative Reference Library. Others may access the full report on-line through the website of the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis at www.legislature.maine.gov/opla.

Sincerely,
S/Matthea E. L. Daughtry
Senate Chair
S/Kristen Cloutier
House Chair

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

PETITIONS, BILLS AND RESOLVES REQUIRING REFERENCE

Bill "An Act Regarding Development of a Program to Assist Farmers Affected by Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination"

(H.P. 383) (L.D. 606)

Sponsored by Representative QUINT of Hodgdon.
Cosponsored by Senator KEIM of Oxford and Representatives: COLLAMORE of Pittsfield, GRIFFIN of Levant, HENDERSON of Rumford, PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft, PLUECKER of Warren, RUDNICKI of Fairfield, SAMPSON of Alfred, SCHMERSAL-BURGESS of Mexico.

Bill "An Act to Allow Open Burning in the Snow Without a Permit"

(H.P. 411) (L.D. 634)

Sponsored by Representative BOYER of Poland.
Cosponsored by Senator BLACK of Franklin and Representatives: ARDELL of Monticello, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BRADSTREET of Vassalboro, CRAY of Palmyra, HALL of Wilton, JACKSON of Oxford, WHITE of Guilford, Senator: BRAKEY of Androscoggin.

Bill "An Act to Include Cats in the Laws Governing Animal Trespass"

(H.P. 421) (L.D. 644)

Sponsored by Representative DOUDERA of Camden.

Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** suggested and ordered printed.

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

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 422) (L.D. 645)

Sponsored by Representative SACHS of Freeport.

Bill "An Act to Provide Appropriations and Allocations for the Operations of State Government" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 423) (L.D. 646)

Sponsored by Representative SACHS of Freeport.

Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Prohibit Government Officials from Maintaining Records Related to Firearms Owners"

(H.P. 401) (L.D. 624)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.

Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BLIER of Buxton, BOYER of Poland, HENDERSON of Rumford, MORRIS of Turner, PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft, WHITE of Guilford.

Bill "An Act to Ensure Rural Law Enforcement Services in Maine"

(H.P. 407) (L.D. 630)

Sponsored by Representative GRAHAM of North Yarmouth.

Cosponsored by President JACKSON of Aroostook and Representatives: MILLETT of Waterford, NUTTING of Oakland, PERRY of Calais, SALISBURY of Westbrook, STOVER of Boothbay, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, Senators: BALDACCI of Penobscot, MOORE of Washington.

Bill "An Act to Amend the Life Safety Code Regarding When Sprinkler Systems May Be Shut Off"

(H.P. 424) (L.D. 647)

Sponsored by Representative GEIGER of Rockland.

Cosponsored by Senator BEEBE-CENTER of Knox.

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 Ensure an Incarcerated Individual's Right to Make Free Telephone Calls Protected by Attorney-Client Privilege"

(H.P. 386) (L.D. 609)

Sponsored by Representative HASENFUS of Readfield.

Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and Representatives: MOONEN of Portland, RANA of Bangor.

Committee on **CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY** suggested.

On motion of Representative SALISBURY of Westbrook, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Create a Green Schools Coordinator in the Department of Education"

(H.P. 389) (L.D. 612)

Sponsored by Representative MALON of Biddeford.

Cosponsored by Senator RAFFERTY of York and Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, BRENNAN of Portland, DODGE of Belfast, JAUCH of Topsham, LaROCHELLE of Augusta, MURPHY of Scarborough, RANA of Bangor.

Bill "An Act to Foster Career and Technical Education in Maine Schools by Creating an Additional Pathway to Certify Industrial Arts Teachers"

(H.P. 394) (L.D. 617)

Sponsored by Representative CARLOW of Buxton.

Cosponsored by Senator BRAKEY of Androscoggin and Representatives: JAVNER of Chester, NESS of Fryeburg.

Bill "An Act to Eliminate Critical Race Theory, Social and Emotional Learning and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion from School Curricula"

(H.P. 395) (L.D. 618)

Sponsored by Representative ADAMS of Lebanon.

Bill "An Act to Change the Notification Law for School Truancy"

(H.P. 408) (L.D. 631)

Sponsored by Representative LaROCHELLE of Augusta.

Cosponsored by Representatives: BRIDGE of Augusta, ROBERTS of South Berwick, WHITE of Waterville.

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.

Bill "An Act to Amend the Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program"

(H.P. 409) (L.D. 632)

Sponsored by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle.

Cosponsored by Representatives: ARFORD of Brunswick, DODGE of Belfast, GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, PERRY of Calais, ZAGER of Portland, Senator: RENEY of Lincoln.

Committee on **EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS** suggested.

On motion of Representative BRENNAN of Portland, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Create Equal Opportunity Access to Clean Energy by Removing the 100-megawatt Limit on Clean Energy Sources"

(H.P. 399) (L.D. 622)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.

Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BLIER of Buxton, BOYER of Poland, CYRWAY of Albion, LIBBY of Auburn, WOODSOME of Waterboro.

Bill "An Act to Update the Charter of the Lewiston-Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority"

(H.P. 417) (L.D. 640)

Sponsored by Representative CRAVEN of Lewiston.

Cosponsored by Senator ROTUNDO of Androscoggin and Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, LAJOIE of Lewiston, LEE of Auburn, STOVER of Boothbay.

Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Remove the 5 Cent Fee for Bags in Retail Stores" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 367) (L.D. 572)

Sponsored by Representative LEMELIN of Chelsea.

Bill "An Act to Promote Clean and Affordable Maine-sourced Bioenergy by Amending the Law Regarding Outdoor Wood Boilers and Outdoor Pellet Boilers"

(H.P. 404) (L.D. 627)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.

Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BLIER of Buxton, CYRWAY of Albion.

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.

Bill "An Act Regarding Child Care Subsidy Payments and Eligibility"

(H.P. 368) (L.D. 573)

Sponsored by Representative CRAVEN of Lewiston.

Cosponsored by Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, BOYLE of Gorham, CLOUTIER of Lewiston, LAJOIE of Lewiston, MADIGAN of Waterville, SHAGOURY of Hallowell, STOVER of Boothbay.

Bill "An Act to Improve Conditions for People Living in Recovery Residences by Requiring Approved Discharge and Transfer Policies"

(H.P. 374) (L.D. 597)

Sponsored by Representative MADIGAN of Waterville.

Cosponsored by Senator BALDACCI of Penobscot and Representatives: FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, GRIFFIN of Levant, LaROCHELLE of Augusta, ROBERTS of South Berwick, STOVER of Boothbay.

Bill "An Act to Provide Support Services for a Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Persons"

(H.P. 376) (L.D. 599)

Sponsored by Representative BRENNAN of Portland.

Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and Representatives: ARFORD of Brunswick, CLOUTIER of Lewiston, COLLINGS of Portland, GATTINE of Westbrook, MEYER of Eliot, PERRY of Calais, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, Senator: RAFFERTY of York.

Bill "An Act to Expand Availability of Naloxone Hydrochloride"

(H.P. 377) (L.D. 600)

Sponsored by Representative CRAVEN of Lewiston.

Cosponsored by Representative ZAGER of Portland and Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, DOUDERA of Camden, GERE of Kennebunkport, MASTRACCIO of Sanford, MEYER of Eliot, PERRY of Calais, RIELLY of Westbrook, Senator: ROTUNDO of Androscoggin.

Bill "An Act to Make Electric Breast Pumps More Accessible by Providing for MaineCare Reimbursement"

(H.P. 380) (L.D. 603)

Sponsored by Representative MURPHY of Scarborough.

Cosponsored by Senator BRENNER of Cumberland and Representatives: CRAFTS of Newcastle, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, KUHN of Falmouth, PERRY of Calais, TERRY of Gorham.

Bill "An Act to Ensure Coordination of Care for MaineCare Members"

(H.P. 396) (L.D. 619)

Sponsored by Representative MADIGAN of Waterville.

Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and Representatives: MEYER of Eliot, SHAGOURY of Hallowell.

Bill "An Act to Set Aside Funds from Federal Block Grants for Certain Communities"

(H.P. 402) (L.D. 625)

Sponsored by Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland.

Cosponsored by Representative: DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe.

Bill "An Act to Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to License and Ensure the Quality of Personal Care Agencies"

(H.P. 413) (L.D. 636)

Sponsored by Representative CRAVEN of Lewiston.

Submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 204.

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.

Bill "An Act to Ensure Access to Newly Born Male Infant Circumcision by Requiring MaineCare and Health Insurance Coverage"

(H.P. 392) (L.D. 615)

Sponsored by Representative MURPHY of Scarborough.

Cosponsored by Senator BRENNER of Cumberland and Representatives: CRAFTS of Newcastle, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, PERRY of Calais, TERRY of Gorham.

Bill "An Act to Promote the Use of Free Annual Wellness Visits by Ensuring Proper Medical Billing"

(H.P. 414) (L.D. 637)

Sponsored by Representative MADIGAN of Waterville.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ARFORD of Brunswick, MALON of Biddeford, SHAGOURY of Hallowell, WHITE of Waterville, Senator: DAUGHTRY of Cumberland.

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 Reduce the Shortage of Municipal Emergency Medical Services Personnel by Removing Certain Vaccination Requirements"

(H.P. 378) (L.D. 601)

Sponsored by Representative MORIARTY of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, HENDERSON of Rumford, LEE of Auburn, POIRIER of Skowhegan, RUSSELL of Verona Island, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor, Senator: KEIM of Oxford.

Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** suggested.

On motion of Representative PERRY of Calais, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Protect Health Care Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care Services"

(H.P. 393) (L.D. 616)

Sponsored by Representative KUHN of Falmouth.
Cosponsored by Senator PIERCE of Cumberland and Representatives: GATTINE of Westbrook, MOONEN of Portland, PERRY of Calais, PRINGLE of Windham, SAYRE of Kennebunk, ZAGER of Portland, Senators: BRENNER of Cumberland, CARNEY of Cumberland.

Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS** suggested.

On motion of Representative PERRY of Calais, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **JUDICIARY**, ordered printed and sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Extend the Night Hunting Season for Coyotes to Immediately Following the Muzzle-loading-only Deer Hunting Season"

(H.P. 381) (L.D. 604)

Sponsored by Representative DAVIS of East Machias.
Cosponsored by Senator MOORE of Washington and Representatives: ARDELL of Monticello, SCHMERSAL-BURGESS of Mexico, STROUT of Harrington, UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle.

Resolve, to Improve Outcomes for Participants in the Antlerless Deer Permit Lottery

(H.P. 385) (L.D. 608)

Sponsored by Representative LANDRY of Farmington.
Cosponsored by Representative WOOD of Greene, Senator BLACK of Franklin and Representatives: BLIER of Buxton, CAMPBELL of Orrington, HEPLER of Woolwich, O'CONNELL of Brewer, PLUECKER of Warren, SOBOLESKI of Phillips, THERIAULT of Fort Kent, THORNE of Carmel.

Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Antlerless Deer Permit Process"

(H.P. 390) (L.D. 613)

Sponsored by Representative FOSTER of Dexter.
Cosponsored by Representatives: CARMICHAEL of Greenbush, HAGGAN of Hampden, JAVNER of Chester, SCHMERSAL-BURGESS of Mexico, THORNE of Carmel, WHITE of Guilford, WOODSOME of Waterboro, Senator: BLACK of Franklin.

Bill "An Act to Provide a Free Antlerless Deer Permit to Certain Landowners Who Allow the Public to Hunt on Their Property"

(H.P. 391) (L.D. 614)

Sponsored by Representative WOODSOME of Waterboro.
Cosponsored by Senator BLACK of Franklin and Representatives: CAMPBELL of Orrington, LANDRY of Farmington, SOBOLESKI of Phillips, Senator: HARRINGTON of York.

Bill "An Act to Preserve Maine's Sporting Heritage and Enhance Sporting Opportunities for Maine's Youth by Allowing Maine's Youth to Hunt on Sunday"

(H.P. 403) (L.D. 626)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ALBERT of Madawaska, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, HAGGAN of Hampden.

Bill "An Act to Protect Young Deer Hunters by Prohibiting Wild Turkey Hunting During Youth Deer Hunting Day"

(H.P. 419) (L.D. 642)

Sponsored by Representative TERRY of Gorham.
Cosponsored by Representatives: LANDRY of Farmington, SHAW of Auburn.

Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** suggested and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Ensure That Businesses Do Not Refuse Payment in Person with Cash"

(H.P. 398) (L.D. 621)

Sponsored by Representative PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ARDELL of Monticello, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, POMERLEAU of Standish, WHITE of Guilford.

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 Amend the Laws Governing Working Waterfront Covenants"

(H.P. 369) (L.D. 574)

Sponsored by Representative RIELLY of Westbrook.
Cosponsored by Senator GROHOSKI of Hancock and Representatives: ANKELES of Brunswick, DOUDERA of Camden, HEPLER of Woolwich, JAUCH of Topsham.

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

On motion of Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, the Bill was **REFERRED** to the Committee on **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY** and ordered printed.

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Develop Maine's Entry-level Workforce"

(H.P. 366) (L.D. 571)

Sponsored by Representative DUCHARME of Madison.
Cosponsored by Representatives: COLLAMORE of Pittsfield, LANIGAN of Sanford, LaROCHELLE of Augusta.

Bill "An Act to Expand the 1998 Special Retirement Plan to Include Employees Who Work for the Office of Chief Medical Examiner"

(H.P. 387) (L.D. 610)

Sponsored by Representative HASENFUS of Readfield.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec.

Bill "An Act to Allow a Retired Law Enforcement Officer to Serve as a School Resource Officer Without Affecting That Officer's Retirement Benefits" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 412) (L.D. 635)

Sponsored by Representative CARLOW of Buxton.
Cosponsored by Representatives: BOYER of Poland, COLLAMORE of Pittsfield, GRIFFIN of Levant, NESS of Fryeburg, POIRIER of Skowhegan, THORNE of Carmel.

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 Create the Whole Home Repairs Program"

(H.P. 388) (L.D. 611)

Sponsored by Representative MALON of Biddeford.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, ANKELES of Brunswick, CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham, GATTINE of Westbrook, GOLEK of Harpswell, RUSSELL of Verona Island.

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 Promote Free Trade by Preventing Municipalities from Prohibiting the Sale of Legal Goods"

(H.P. 397) (L.D. 620)

Sponsored by Representative PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ARDELL of Monticello, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, NEWMAN of Belgrade, WHITE of Guilford.

Bill "An Act to Designate Maine Irish Heritage Day"

(H.P. 405) (L.D. 628)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.
Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representative: BABIN of Fort Fairfield.

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 Improve, Protect and Defend the Individual Civil Right to Bear Arms Through Exemption of Firearms and Ammunition from Taxation"

(H.P. 406) (L.D. 629)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.
Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BLIER of Buxton, BOYER of Poland, CYRWAY of Albion, HENDERSON of Rumford, PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft, WHITE of Guilford.

Bill "An Act to Dedicate Revenue from Alcohol Tax to Alcohol Use Disorder Treatment"

(H.P. 410) (L.D. 633)

Sponsored by Representative MADIGAN of Waterville.
Cosponsored by Representatives: SHAGOURY of Hallowell, STOVER of Boothbay.

Bill "An Act to Combat Hunger by Creating an Income Tax Credit for Businesses Engaged in Food Production for Donations to Qualified Organizations"

(H.P. 418) (L.D. 641)

Sponsored by Representative ROBERTS of South Berwick.
Cosponsored by Senator CHIPMAN of Cumberland and Representatives: CROCKETT of Portland, MEYER of Eliot, TERRY of Gorham, Senator: GROHOSKI of Hancock.

Bill "An Act to Promote Research and Development in the State by Increasing the Research Expense Tax Credit"

(H.P. 420) (L.D. 643)

Sponsored by Representative TERRY of Gorham.
Cosponsored by Representatives: CARMICHAEL of Greenbush, KUHN of Falmouth, SHEEHAN of Biddeford.

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

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act Regarding a Seat Belt Exemption for Persons with a Medical Condition"

(H.P. 370) (L.D. 575)

Sponsored by Representative POIRIER of Skowhegan.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ANDREWS of Paris, COLLAMORE of Pittsfield, CYRWAY of Albion, HENDERSON of Rumford, QUINT of Hodgdon, RUDNICKI of Fairfield, THORNE of Carmel, WHITE of Guilford.

Bill "An Act to Require a Vehicle Operator to Notify an Owner or Law Enforcement Officer of an Accident Involving a Dog, a Cat or Livestock"

(H.P. 375) (L.D. 598)

Sponsored by Representative HEPLER of Woolwich.
Cosponsored by Senator GROHOSKI of Hancock and Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, LANDRY of Farmington, PLUECKER of Warren, STOVER of Boothbay.

Bill "An Act to Enhance Commuter-oriented Rail Service"

(H.P. 382) (L.D. 605)

Sponsored by Representative SKOLD of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator CHIPMAN of Cumberland.

Resolve, to Direct the Department of Transportation to Examine the Feasibility of Extending Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley

(H.P. 384) (L.D. 607)

Sponsored by Representative ALBERT of Madawaska.

Cosponsored by President JACKSON of Aroostook and Representatives: ARDELL of Monticello, BABIN of Fort Fairfield, COLLINGS of Portland, GUERRETTE of Caribou, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, THERIAULT of Fort Kent.

Bill "An Act to Modify Maine Motor Vehicle Inspection Standards to Permit Nonstructural Corrosion That Does Not Directly Affect the Passenger Compartment"

(H.P. 400) (L.D. 623)

Sponsored by Representative ARDELL of Monticello.

Cosponsored by Senator STEWART of Aroostook and Representatives: BABIN of Fort Fairfield, BLIER of Buxton, BOYER of Poland.

Bill "An Act to Protect Vehicle Buyers by Limiting Vehicle Document Preparation Fees"

(H.P. 416) (L.D. 639)

Sponsored by Representative ROEDER of Bangor.

Cosponsored by Senator BALDACCI of Penobscot and Representatives: FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor.

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

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

Sent for concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Provide Regional Support to Deliver State and Federal Programs to Cities and Towns in the State"

(H.P. 379) (L.D. 602)

Sponsored by Representative GERE of Kennebunkport.

Resolve, Directing the Maine State Housing Authority to Study Strategies for Improving Abandoned Properties and Developing Housing Infrastructure

(H.P. 415) (L.D. 638)

Sponsored by Representative MALON of Biddeford.

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

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

Sent for concurrence.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wales, Representative Greenwood, and inquires as to his objection.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: My objection is on Item 3-38, the Clerk read it as the Committee on Judiciary. When you hammered it, it went to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Looking for clarification as to where that's going before it leaves this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: The bill is being referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

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

ORDERS

On motion of Representative HEPLER of Woolwich, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 371) (Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and Representatives: CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham, CRAY of Palmyra, DILL of Old Town, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of Wilton, JAUCH of Topsham, O'CONNELL of Brewer, PLUECKER of Warren)

JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2023 AS BROWNTAIL MOTH AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, browntail moth populations in Maine have been in an outbreak phase since 2015, and the browntail moth is not a pest that can be eradicated; and

WHEREAS, most areas of Maine, especially settled areas that have significant host tree populations, including oak, apple, crabapple, pear, birch and cherry trees, are at risk; and

WHEREAS, long-lasting tree defoliation caused by browntail moth caterpillars is a major concern, and browntail moth caterpillars shed microscopic, toxic hairs that can cause a person to have trouble breathing or suffer skin irritation similar to poison ivy; and

WHEREAS, state agencies are committed to coordinating within State Government, with local communities and directly with citizens to respond to the problems posed by browntail moth populations; and

WHEREAS, winter is the best time to clip and destroy browntail moth webs that are safely within reach or to hire licensed arborists or licensed pesticide applicators to reduce populations that are out of reach; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive browntail moth information and tools collected by state agencies and the University of Maine, including research, infestation tracking and the answers to frequently asked questions and other educational resources, can be obtained by dialing 211 or visiting 211maine.org; 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 February 2023 as Browntail Moth Awareness Month and encourage the citizens of the State to learn about browntail moths by dialing 211 or visiting 211maine.org.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Woolwich, Representative Hepler.

Representative **HEPLER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Women and Men of the House, I speak briefly this morning on the reason behind Browntail Moth Awareness Month being February. It's because the most effective way to reduce the number of these invasive pests is to clip the caterpillar nests and destroy them and in the winter months and when the trees are bare, the nests are easily visible against the bright blue sky. So, on this Valentine's Day, do something for the people you love; grab yourself a pole saw; libraries in Blue Hill and Topsham, for example, have them for lending; and get out there clipping. Thank you.

Subsequently, the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED**.

Sent for concurrence.

On motion of Representative FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 373) (Cosponsored by Senator DUSON of Cumberland and Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, BOYER of Poland, CARLOW of Buxton, CLOUTIER of Lewiston, Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, TERRY of Gorham, THERIAULT of Fort Kent, ZEIGLER of Montville)

JOINT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE LIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BLACK MAINE CITIZENS REUBEN RUBY, GEORGE THOMPSON RUBY, MARY DALY DICKSON AND LOIS ANN DICKSON RICE DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHEREAS, Maine's Black history and the story of Maine's Black citizens and their accomplishments and contributions are barely remembered today; and

WHEREAS, Reuben Ruby, a Black man, was born in Gray in 1798; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was the first person in the State to have a taxi, then known as a "hack," and one of his riders was William Lloyd Garrison, who was given a tour of Portland by Mr. Ruby before the Boston abolitionist joined Portland's Black leaders at Mr. Ruby's home for dinner; and

WHEREAS, in the place where Mr. Ruby's hack stand was located, on the corner of Temple Street and Federal Street, there is placed, as part of the Portland Freedom Trail, a stone monument recognizing the business; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was only 29 years of age when he became an agent for Freedom's Journal, the first Black-owned newspaper in the country. In October 1834, he was the only Black person among those representing the City of Portland at the forming of the Maine Anti-Slavery Society in Augusta; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was one of 2 Black persons sent to represent Maine at the Fifth Annual Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Color, held in Philadelphia in 1835. The convention elected Mr. Ruby as its president; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was elected a vice-president of the American Moral Reform Society, a national group led by James Forten, a Black abolitionist from Philadelphia. In 1840, Mr. Ruby was elected president of the Manhattan Anti-Slavery Society in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Reuben Ruby's son, George Thompson Ruby, was the first Black graduate of Portland High School; and

WHEREAS, George Thompson Ruby was elected to the Texas state Senate during Reconstruction and was a delegate to the 1868 Republican National Convention in Chicago and the party's convention in Philadelphia 4 years later; and

WHEREAS, Lois Ann Dickson Rice, a Black woman, was born in Portland and went on to become valedictorian at Portland High School in 1950 and class president of Radcliffe College in 1954. She became national vice president of the College Board and is considered "the Mother of the Pell Grant," a federal financial aid program that benefits millions of students each year; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, her mother, Mary Daly Dickson, was named Maine Mother of the Year, becoming the first Black woman to gain that honor; and

WHEREAS, Lois Ann Dickson Rice's legacy of achievement continues in her daughter Susan Rice, who was United States Ambassador to the United Nations and then National Security Advisor in the administration of President Barack Obama and has been tapped to run the Domestic Policy Council under President Joe Biden; and

WHEREAS, Maine's Black citizens have a long history of accomplishments that should be remembered and celebrated; and

WHEREAS, from the Revolutionary War through the abolitionist movement, to marches from Selma to Montgomery and across America today, and in this State, African Americans in Maine have remained devoted to the proposition that all of us are created equal, even when their own rights were denied; and

WHEREAS, the month of February is officially celebrated as Black History Month, which dates back to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period of time in February to recognize the heritage and achievements of African Americans; 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 honor during Black History Month the contributions of African Americans in Maine's and the nation's history and encourage all people in the State to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped the State and the nation.

READ.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Winter Harbor, Representative Faulkingham.

Representative **FAULKINGHAM**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I thought it was important to recognize the mostly unrecognized and unremembered Black history the State of Maine has and I rise this morning to share one of those stories that few people know about but I've known about and I wanted to share it with you.

The first colonial settler of the Town of Winter Harbor was a man named Thomas Frazier, a free Black man. He lived in what is now Acadia National Park. In 1780, he joined Captain Henry Dyer's company of Rangers in Frenchman Bay. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. He lived in Winter Harbor with his wife, Mary. Some say that Mary was a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe who also lived in that same spot until around 1900. They had seven children. And I thought it was pretty interesting to note that the first settler in Winter Harbor was a free Black man. Not many people know that and when I did a little digging for this Resolution, I found out that Maine actually has a lot of great Black history that most of us don't know about and during this month that we celebrate Black history, I encourage people to dig into it and learn these stories. Learn about things like the Underground Railroad where there's a monument in Brewer, celebrating how Maine was a big part of the Underground Railroad and was full of abolitionists throughout that time. And Maine continues, you know, the Republican party was born out of abolitionists and Abraham Lincoln and Maine was a Republican State from the Civil War until the mid-70s, with people fighting for the civil rights of Black people and we have a rich history in that and I encourage people to dig into that history that we have during this month and celebrate it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from South Portland, Representative Reckitt.

Representative **RECKITT**: Good almost afternoon. I want to thank Representative Faulkingham for introducing this resolution but wanted to toss in another piece of history that I happen to know because I bought a house for a second shelter for Family Crisis Services in Bath, Maine, back in; I can't remember what year. But when we explored the house, we discovered that the whole entire top level was a transition for the Underground Railway and nobody knew about it, when we dug into it, it was a really important piece of information for the City of Bath. And I just wanted to bring that up to folks and let you

know and, again, thank Representative Faulkingham. Thank you.

Subsequently, the Joint Resolution was **ADOPTED**.
Sent for concurrence.

On motion of Representative DUCHARME of Madison, the following Joint Order: (H.P. 372)

ORDERED, the Senate concurring, that the Joint Select Committee on Housing, referred to in this order as "the committee," shall study the foreclosure process in the State and examine methods by which the process may be shortened without losing consumer protections.

1. Study. In conducting the study, the committee shall consult with state agencies, representatives of the banking and mortgage industries and other appropriate stakeholders and shall consider:

A. The laws and state agency rules governing the foreclosure process, the various timelines of specific procedures in the foreclosure process and how those timelines affect the availability of foreclosed properties for affordable housing;

B. The effect on the foreclosure process of mortgages sold in the secondary mortgage market by large financial institutions and the ability of small financial institutions in the State to work to keep property owners out of foreclosure and to make foreclosed property available for sale quickly; and

C. How problems in the foreclosure process can be mitigated without losing existing consumer protections.

2. Report. The committee shall submit a report by December 6, 2023 based on its evaluation in section 1 for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature. The committee is authorized to report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

READ.

On motion of Representative DUCHARME of Madison, **TABLED** pending **PASSAGE** and later today assigned.

SPECIAL SENTIMENT CALENDAR

In accordance with House Rule 519 and Joint Rule 213, the following items:

In Memory of:

Robert Howard Kimball, of Sangerville. Mr. Kimball had a long career in the insurance industry, establishing Kimball Insurance in 1999. He also served on a variety of local boards and was a member of the Kiwanis Club, a Mason and a member of the Big Pine Gun Club. Mr. Kimball will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family and friends and all those whose lives he touched;

(HLS 49)

Presented by Representative WHITE of Guilford.

Cosponsored by Senator GUERIN of Penobscot.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative WHITE of Guilford, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Guilford, Representative White.

Representative **WHITE**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the 131st Legislature and Honored Guests. I want to share just a little more about my friend, Bob Kimball. On the surface, most would say Bobby lived the American Dream of starting at the bottom and finishing life prosperously. But there's so much more to the story. Yes, Bobby had an incredible work ethic. At an early age, he would

get up before dawn, work in the family slaughterhouse before school and after school when he got home. But that was only part of his motivation and I think what defined Bob was his passion for everything that he did. If you got to know him, it wasn't long before you knew how his grandchildren were, what their last game was and how it turned out, and how the last year of turkey season turned out and who harvested what.

Bob never forgot to give credit to those that helped him along the way, like his lifelong friend, Tom. Bob helped others with a hand up and never a handout. I remember Bob asking a family to help him with firewood in exchange for wood to heat their home, even though he was years ahead on his own firewood. Bob taught his children and his grandchildren a love for the land and the blessings of the harvest. Bob loved to be in the woods, hunting or just managing the woodlot. But the most important lesson that all who knew him never missed is the love and devotion that he shared with his wife, Tylene. From childhood sweethearts until the day Bob left, his eyes lit up at the mention of her name. That devotion is the underpinning of the inspiration that Bobby Kimball and his memory will be for generations. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** and sent for concurrence.

In Memory of:

William Sawtell, of Brownville. Mr. Sawtell was a veteran of the United States Army, serving in Thailand during the Vietnam War. He tutored and coached basketball in Quebec, Canada for five years before returning to Brownville, where he wrote over 50 books documenting local histories and biographies and some sports articles for local newspapers. He was a member of the American Legion and an active member of the Brownville Historical Society. He was devoted to the local schools, where he volunteered for years giving special history talks, also regularly volunteering at a local nursing home. In 2007, he was named Brownville's Citizen of the Year. Mr. Sawtell will be long remembered and sadly missed by his family and friends and all those whose lives he touched;

(HLS 50)

Presented by Representative PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft.

Cosponsored by Senator GUERIN of Penobscot.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Dover-Foxcroft, Representative Perkins.

Representative **PERKINS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, fellow Members of the House. I just want to take a short moment to recognize the life of Billy Sawtell. Citizen of Brownville, a man who dedicated himself to the people of Piscataquis County and their stories. Bill was an Army veteran who served our nation during the Vietnam War while he was in Thailand and upon his return, he did graduate from the University of Maine. He then spent a few years teaching in Quebec, playing basketball and coaching before returning to his beloved town of Brownville.

Bill then spent his life devoted to recording the stories of the people and places of Piscataquis County and he wrote over 50 books, including Katahdin Iron Works and Gulf Hags Before and Beyond and The Wall, A Milo Man's Experience in Vietnam.

For years, Bill was a regular feature at the local schools and you'd see him often giving local history lessons to the school children and he volunteered on a weekly basis at the local nursing homes. Bill was extremely active in his historical society

and he was a member of the American Legion. Bill's dedication to his community is an example to be emulated and it led to him being named Brownville's Citizen of the Year.

Bill was my brother-in-arms and my friend and we are all lessened by the loss of his presence and his stories. Thank you.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** and sent for concurrence.

CONSENT CALENDAR

First Day

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

(H.P. 14) (L.D. 10) Bill "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Invasive Aquatic Plants" Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** reporting **Ought to Pass**

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

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

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

SENATE PAPERS

Bill "An Act to Support Farmland Conservation and Transition Planning for Farmers"

(S.P. 247) (L.D. 579)

Bill "An Act to Require Major Substantive Rulemaking for the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund"

(S.P. 263) (L.D. 595)

Bill "An Act to Improve Maine Agriculture and Food Systems"

(S.P. 267) (L.D. 650)

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 Enhance Certain Penalties for Possession of Firearms by Prohibited Persons"

(S.P. 250) (L.D. 582)

Bill "An Act to Promote Public Safety and Retain Essential First Responders by Funding the Maine Length of Service Award Program"

(S.P. 256) (L.D. 588)

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.

Bill "An Act to Ensure That the Maine Electric Grid Provides Additional Benefits to Maine Ratepayers"

(S.P. 257) (L.D. 589)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Exempt Certain Conservation Lots from Municipal Subdivision Review"

(S.P. 264) (L.D. 596)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Permit the Conduct of Open Air Cremation at Designated Sites"

(S.P. 252) (L.D. 584)

Resolve, to Automatically Increase a Residential Care or Nursing Facility Resident's Personal Needs Allowance Under the MaineCare Program When the Consumer Price Index Increases

(S.P. 255) (L.D. 587)

Bill "An Act to Amend the Law Governing MaineCare Coverage of Chiropractic Treatment"

(S.P. 260) (L.D. 592)

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.

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Health Care

(S.P. 258) (L.D. 590)

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

REFERRED to the Committee on **HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Increase the Bag Limit for Smelts for Personal Use from 2 Quarts to 4 Quarts"

(S.P. 261) (L.D. 593)

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 Provide for Municipalities to Allow Grocery Stores up to 10,000 Square Feet to Open on Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas"

(S.P. 251) (L.D. 583)

Bill "An Act to Address Staffing Shortages in Critical Public Safety Jobs Through Economic Incentives"

(S.P. 265) (L.D. 648)

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 Facilitate Communication Between Pro Se Defendants and Assistant District Attorneys"

(S.P. 244) (L.D. 576)

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Concerning the Publication of Maine Indian Treaty Obligations

(S.P. 246) (L.D. 578)

Bill "An Act to Improve Family Court Procedure"

(S.P. 248) (L.D. 580)

Bill "An Act to Allow Equitable Tolling of Post-conviction Review Filings"

(S.P. 253) (L.D. 585)

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 Address the Shortfalls of the Current Resource Parents' Bill of Rights Policy"

(S.P. 262) (L.D. 594)

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

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 Promote Water Conservation and Water Quality and Create Habitat for Wildlife, Including Pollinator Species, by Protecting Low-impact Landscaping"

(S.P. 266) (L.D. 649)

Bill "An Act to Support Constitutionally Required Public Defense by Creating the Maine Office of Public Defense Services"

(S.P. 270) (L.D. 653)

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 Require the State to Pay Medicare Premiums for Certain Retired State Employees"

(S.P. 259) (L.D. 591)

Bill "An Act to Amend the Standards for Manufactured Housing to Comply with United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Standards"

(S.P. 268) (L.D. 651)

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 Assist Municipal Shellfish Conservation Programs"

(S.P. 249) (L.D. 581)

Bill "An Act to Protect Maine Fisheries from the Effects of Industrial Recirculating Aquaculture Operations"

(S.P. 254) (L.D. 586)

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

REFERRED to the Committee on **MARINE RESOURCES** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Increase Availability of Election Information on Local Government Websites"

(S.P. 245) (L.D. 577)

Bill "An Act to Address Climate Change by Reducing Carbon Emissions from State Vehicles"

(S.P. 272) (L.D. 655)

Came from the Senate, **REFERRED** to the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** and ordered printed.

REFERRED to the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** in concurrence.

Bill "An Act to Allow the Reinstatement of Certain Commercial Driver's Licenses"

(S.P. 269) (L.D. 652)

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

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

Resolve, Directing the Finance Authority of Maine to Establish a Pilot Program to Encourage the Development of Accessory Dwelling Units

(S.P. 271) (L.D. 654)

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.

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

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 First Family of the State of Maine, inviting them to attend this Joint Convention now assembled in the Hall of the House for the purpose of extending to Governor Janet T. Mills, an invitation to attend and make such communication as she may be pleased to make.

The Chair appointed:

The Sen. from Cumberland, Senator PIERCE
The Sen. from Sagadahoc, Senator VITELLI
The Sen. from Kennebec, Senator POULIOT
The Rep. from Kennebunkport, Representative GERE
The Rep. from Boothbay, Representative STOVER
The Rep. from Portland, Representative LOOKNER
The Rep. from Westbrook, Representative GATTINE
The Rep. from Bangor, Representative RANA
The Rep. from Harpswell, Representative GOLEK
The Rep. from Vassalboro, Representative BRADSTREET
The Rep. from Turner, Representative MORRIS
The Rep. from Orrington, Representative CAMPBELL
The Rep. from Buxton, Representative BLIER

Subsequently, Senator PIERCE, for the Committee, reported that the Committee had delivered the message with which they were charged and were pleased to report that the First Family of the State of Maine would attend forthwith.

At this point, the Chair welcomed the First Family and friends of the State of Maine.

On motion of Senator VITELLI of Sagadahoc, it was ORDERED, that a committee be appointed to wait upon the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine and Associate Justice Andrew M. Mead, extending to them an invitation to attend this Convention and to extend to Governor Janet T. Mills an invitation to make such communication as she may be pleased to make.

The Chair appointed:

The Sen. from Androscoggin, Senator ROTUNDO
The Sen. from Cumberland, Senator DUSON
The Sen. from Oxford, Senator BENNETT
The Rep. from Freeport, Representative SACHS
The Rep. from Raymond, Representative FAY
The Rep. from Portland, Representative COLLINGS
The Rep. from St. George, Representative MATLACK
The Rep. from Cape Elizabeth, Representative MILLETT
The Rep. from Westbrook, Representative GATTINE
The Rep. from Waterford, Representative MILLETT
The Rep. from Madison, Representative DUCHARME
The Rep. from Buxton, Representative BLIER
The Rep. from Buxton, Representative CARLOW

Subsequently, Senator ROTUNDO, for the Committee, reported that the Committee had delivered the message with which they were charged and were pleased to report that the First Family of the State of Maine would attend forthwith.

The Chair recognized in the House Gallery the Constitutional Officers and State Auditor of the State of Maine: The Honorable Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State; the Honorable Aaron Frey, Attorney General; the Honorable Henry Beck, Treasurer; and the Honorable Matt Dunlap, Auditor.

The Chair further recognized in the House Gallery, members of the Judicial Branch: Chief Justice Robert Mullen of the Maine Superior Court and Chief Judge Brent Davis of the Maine District Court.

The Chair also recognized in the House Gallery, Maine's Tribal leaders: Chief Edward Peter Paul of the Mi'kmaq Nation; Chief Clarissa Sabattis of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians; Chief William J. Nicholas, Sr. of the Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township; Chief Rena Newell of the Passamaquoddy Tribe of Sipayik; and Chief Kirk Francis of the Penobscot Nation.

The Chair further recognized in the House Gallery, leaders of higher education for the State of Maine: Dannel Malloy, Chancellor of the University of Maine System; Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President of the University of Maine; David Daigler, President of the Community College System; and Jerry Paul, President of the Maine Maritime Academy.

The Chair further recognized in the House Gallery, members of the Governor's Cabinet, Commissioners and Department heads: Judy Camuso, Douglas Farnham, Kirsten Figueroa, Laura Fortman, Heather Johnson, Patrick Keliher, Jeanne Lambrew, Randall Liberty, Melanie Lozrim, Pender Makin, John Rhode, Mike Sauschuck, Dr. Nirav Shah and Bruce Van Note.

Subsequently, Senator ROTUNDO, for the Committee, reported that the Committee had delivered the message with which they were charged and were pleased to report that the Honorable JANET T. MILLS, Governor of the State of Maine, accompanied by Associate Justice Andrew M. Mead, would attend forthwith.

The Chair welcomed to the Joint Convention Governor Janet T. Mills, accompanied by Associate Justice Andrew M. Mead.

The Chair recognized the evening's Herald, Maine Air National Guard Senior Airman Mathew Hamel.

The Chair welcomed the Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine, to the rostrum.

Governor Mills then addressed the Convention.

Governor **MILLS**: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President and Madam Speaker, Mr. Associate Justice, Mr. Attorney General, who I believe is up there, and the Treasurer, Henry Beck, and Secretary of State, and Members of my extraordinary Cabinet and Members of the 131st Legislature and esteemed guests.

We come together for the annual time-honored tradition of a Governor's Address to you, the peoples' Representatives, on the same day as another time-honored tradition; Valentine's Day, as luck would have it. I know one of these time-honored traditions is more fun than the other but I'm grateful for your willingness to be here this evening and I know you do it out of a sense of duty and responsibility for our State. And I'm grateful for the love you have for the people of Maine and for the honorable pursuit of public service that, despite our varied ideological beliefs and positions, unites us in pursuit of a common noble cause; to improve the lives and livelihoods of Maine people. And as my Valentine's Day gift to you, when you leave the Chamber, you will find chocolate lobster treats from

our friends at Wilbur's of Maine in Freeport; a treat I hope that tastes much sweeter in the wake of our victory in Congress to pause the unfair right whale regulations imposed by the federal government on our lobster industry.

So, we'll raise a chocolate lobster toast to our lobster fishermen. Right, Billy Bob? Where is he? Of course, you're over there. The corner. That corner.

Okay, so, as we look to the future, it is my pleasure to report that Maine's budget is in a stable and secure position. We have taken a cautious approach to budgeting during these uncertain times and have made investments in key areas such as education, infrastructure, and health care to support economic growth and stability. Well, at least that's what ChatGPT tells me I should say. Seriously, you punch it up, that's what they come up with.

Actually, on a serious note, though, those words aren't far from my own. But our State stands on a solid fiscal footing and we are prepared to weather whatever economic challenges may come. The state of our budget is strong.

We approach the end of the 2023 fiscal year in the black, with a substantial surplus. Like surpluses before it, with your bipartisan support, last month we are returning money to the people of Maine to provide some small measure of relief from high energy prices right now. Those checks are in the mail right now and by the end of next month, every eligible Maine taxpayer will receive one.

Looking forward, our revenue outlook for the next two fiscal years is also strong. According to the independent nonpartisan Revenue Forecasting Committee comprised of experts in the economy, the State may anticipate a total of \$10.5 billion in revenue over the next two years. That's \$1.1 billion more than the current baseline budget. On top of that, for the following two fiscal years, '26 and '27, the Revenue Forecasting Committee projects approximately \$11.6 billion in revenue. These strong revenue projections did not just happen by themselves. They are the direct result of a strong economy, created by federal support and deliberate policy and financial choices we have made in State government to fuel our recovery from the pandemic and create the conditions necessary for sustained economic growth. And today, despite years of pandemic-driven turmoil and even with the possibility of a recession on the horizon, our economy does remain strong.

Since 2019, our Gross Domestic Product, an important measure of growth, as you know, rose by 10.1%. The ninth-best growth rate in the nation and the best in New England. In fact, Maine experienced more economic growth over the last four years than it did in the entire preceding 15 years. And wages are up substantially. Even when adjusting for inflation, Maine people are earning about 8% more than they were just a few years ago. Nationally, new businesses are starting at some of the fastest rates on record and last year alone, nearly 14,000 new businesses registered with the Secretary of State, the State of Maine's Secretary of State. Our unemployment rate stands at 3.8, down from 4.1 a year ago. Our State's credit ratings are in good shape, reaffirmed during the pandemic when other states experienced downgrades. Our Unemployment Trust Fund remains solvent, where other states had to borrow from the federal government and then repay that money with great interest. And, with your help, we built up Maine's Rainy Day Fund to a record high of more than \$900 million. Not bad.

And Maine has become a top destination for people relocating in New England. Between July 2019 and July 2021, we boasted the seventh-highest in-migration rate in the nation. We're reversing that brain drain thing we all grew up hearing

about, right? And in 2021, we experienced the largest population gain from net migration since the 1950s. In the last two years, a net 34,237 people moved here; maybe a couple more since yesterday, I don't know; about 31,000 of them coming from other U.S. states. Well, this is all welcome news. Maine is not within its challenges, however. Even with our strong influx of people, new people, we face an alarming shortage of workers and high costs. Right now, as elsewhere across the nation, there are two jobs for every unemployed person in Maine. "Help Wanted" signs hang in the front windows of shops and factories across the State. And this shortage is taking its toll. Some schools have canceled classes because too many teachers and bus drivers are out sick. Police and firefighters are working extra shifts to fill gaps in coverage. Shops and restaurants are closing early, some closing altogether because of staff shortages.

So, how do we address this? Well, my guiding belief as Governor is that the foundation of Maine's economy is our people, and I firmly believe that if we are to build a stronger, more prosperous State where opportunity will be available to everyone, then we have to invest in the people of Maine. That's why my budgets and my Jobs Plan have focused on investing in health and education and in the infrastructure working people need; housing, child care, and broadband, for instance.

Two years ago, you enacted my Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan. We invested nearly a billion dollars in federal American Rescue Plan funds to improve the lives of Maine people and families, to help businesses create and fill good-paying jobs and to build an economy that is poised for future prosperity. Well, since that bill took effect, we've delivered direct economic relief to a thousand small businesses. We've supported more than a hundred infrastructure projects around the State to create jobs and revitalize communities. We've invested \$300 million of those funds to support our workforce in everything from job training to business supports to housing to child care. These critical investments are helping tens of thousands of people acquire skills and find good-paying careers in health care, in the trades, in teaching, and in paid apprenticeships for all sorts of employers so that people with skills may quickly enter and remain in our workforce.

Our investments are also connecting 6,000 high school students with paid, hands-on work experience with Maine employers throughout the State through our Maine Career Exploration Program. Since last fall alone, more than 2,000 people, young people, have signed up to gain skills and work with local employers so they can discover good careers right here in Maine and provide a little extra help to Maine businesses at the same time. There are more slots available, so if there's a teenager in your family who would like to explore a career, please ask your school about this program.

In addition to job training, the Jobs Plan has invested in child care, in housing, and in reliable broadband, making about 68,000 connections in the last couple years, I believe. These are the things people tell us they need to enter and remain in the workforce.

So, the new biennial budget proposal complements the budgets we enacted in the last legislative session. Lest anybody forget, we actually got a lot done in those budgets, you and I. We achieved 55% funding for education for the first time in Maine history. There are a few teachers out there. You did that. We did that. We put funds directly into the classroom to benefit Maine kids regardless of their ZIP Code. We became the second State in the nation, barely; almost the first; but the second State in the nation to provide universal free food in the

public schools and erase the shameful divide between the haves and the have-nots in the lunch line. We delivered two years free community college to recent high school grads, driving enrollment up by a record 12% and restoring the dreams of higher education that so many young people gave up on during the pandemic. We restored, you and I, municipal revenue sharing back to 5%, sending nearly \$700 million of our State revenues back to the towns to reduce the property tax burden and to fund services like fire and police. You/we provided significant tax relief as well, reducing income taxes for retirees and property taxes for seniors.

Bipartisan progress on issues critical to Maine people became the foundation for the biennial budget before you now.

Of course, I have long said that we cannot have a healthy economy without healthy people. It's pretty darn hard to hold a job, support a family, or pay attention in school if you are sick or suffering. Having health care enables you to shape your future and contribute to your economy and to your community and our economy, as it did for one woman who approached me at the polls back in November to tell me that MaineCare expansion allowed her to get that much-needed heart surgery finally that saved her life.

More than 100,000 more people, Maine people, receive treatment now for accidents and illnesses, prescriptions and procedures, and now dental care just through the Medicaid expansion. And now, independent of Medicaid, we're also providing dental care, free dental care, to hundreds of Maine veterans who couldn't otherwise afford to see a dentist through a partnership between my administration and Northeast Delta Dental, supported by members of Maine's Masonic Lodges and others. And if you know a veteran who could benefit from this, please contact our Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services. And we established CoverME.gov to help 63,000 people get health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. People like Pamela Gray of Gorham, a cancer survivor who is now finally getting the health care she needs thanks to affordable coverage through CoverME.gov.

And together, all together, we have reduced our uninsured rate from 8% in 2019 to 5.7% in 2021. That's the largest decline of any State in the nation. And we've made sure that Maine people will not be charged more or denied coverage based on some preexisting condition thanks to the law you've passed three years ago. But there's more we can do to make Maine a healthier State and I propose focusing on some of our most vulnerable and valued residents. Last year, you know, I signed an Executive Order creating the Cabinet on Aging to mobilize State government, get rid of the silos, to keep making strides in taking care of older Mainers. This year, I'm proposing \$144 million in federal and State dollars combined to expand and improve services that will allow older Mainers to age safely in their homes and communities. We'll use that money to deliver home meals, home delivered meals and with programs that reduce abuse and neglect and exploitation and the like.

We're also investing in the health and well-being of people with disabilities. You know, I'm the grandmother of a beautiful young man, a loving child with autism. I understand the difficulty that parents of children with disabilities face on a day-to-day basis, especially when it comes to getting through the bureaucracy and finding consistent help to support the needs and strengths of that child. So, my budget proposes \$84 million in combined State and federal funds to improve access to services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those in urgent need of comprehensive residential care through Section 21 and eliminate the waitlist for

daycare and work support services known as MaineCare Section 29. Eliminate the waitlist.

We can do better by people with disabilities. Many of the individuals on waitlists are children whose parents have reserved a spot years in advance, anticipating the more intensive services the children will need as they grow into adulthood. And when it comes time to move these children into adult services, our system of care right now leaves those families with abrupt and burdensome paperwork and transitions. A woman named Carrie Woodcock, Executive Director of the Maine Parent Federation described her experience of caring for her child with a developmental disability as episodic. She said it was so much work just to keep up with her child's case that she became fluent in filling out eligibility paperwork. That's not right. And it's why my budget proposes a fundamental reform in how we deliver those services. We're proposing a lifespan waiver that flips the system to focus on the services individuals need, not on the bureaucracy that provides those services. With a lifespan waiver, people can get the services that are tailored to their preferences, their ages, their needs, along with help finding a suitable job and a plan for their future that can be updated as circumstances change. I ask you to approve this initiative. Individuals with disabilities and their caregivers deserve the peace of mind of a system that is adaptable and provides individual supports.

Well, education also remains a central piece of this budget. We recognize that education is a great equalizer in our society and that every child, regardless of where they live, deserves a world-class education here in this State. An education that will prepare them for successful adulthood. And we recognize and applaud the talented support staff and the educators who step into the classroom every day with our students. Well, as I mentioned, two years ago, we met the State's obligation to provide 55% of local education costs for the first time since 2004 when the people told us to do so. My budget includes \$101 million to continue that commitment, to keep it at 55%, investing directly in our schools, teachers, and staff and helping our communities hold the line on property taxes.

Two years ago, you passed and I signed nation-leading legislation spearheaded by Senate President Jackson to ensure that no child in Maine goes hungry during the school day. My budget continues this crucial program to ensure that no kid has to try to learn on an empty stomach.

And last year, we worked together to make two years of community college free for recent high school graduates impacted by the pandemic. We believed that it would not only help students pursue debt-free education, but it would make ready a trained workforce in much-needed sectors of our economy and it's worked. Students like Elisabeth "Tip" Ackerman, who was able to go back to school because of this initiative. Tip will soon graduate with a degree in early childhood education and help fill our work need, our need for more child care workers, especially. Students like Zim Cunningham, who says that while he struggled academically in high school, he's now excelling at Washington County Community College and will soon enter the workforce without college debt, trained to become a powersports and small engine technician. And students like Margarida Celestino, who last year told her advisor she'd have to drop out because she needed to earn more money to stay in school. Free community college has allowed her not only to stay in school but to enroll full-time instead of just picking up a course here and there when she had enough saved up. Well, because of your initiative, Maine's community colleges experienced record enrollment last year and now, students like these can spend less time worrying about how to pay for college

and more time focused on earning the credential or degree they need to succeed in Maine's workforce and we need them there. Free community college is working. Let's keep it up for another two years.

My budget also includes \$71 million for the University of Maine, the Maine Community College System, and Maine Maritime Academy, which includes a 4.5% across-the-board increase for operational costs along with \$10 million to boost the Maine State Grant program. That will increase the maximum grant award to needy student to \$3,000, help more student afford the cost of college, and if you approve, we will have doubled the Maine State Grant award over the past four years. And I think that's worth doing.

This biennial budget also proposes one of the largest investments in our roads, bridges, and other multimodal infrastructure, the largest increase in history. For years, you know, we've been playing catch-up when it comes to upgrading the critical infrastructure that we rely on every day to go to work, to go to school and just to get around. A lack of resources has forced the Maine Department of Transportation to operate in what Commissioner Van Note has called MacGyver Mode; stretching each dollar as far as it can go to fix problems when and as they arise. Well, Maine DOT and all of State government should always aim to get the most value out of every dollar, but addressing problems only when they become critical costs us more over the long term and makes our roads and bridges and highways and the people who travel over them much less safe.

In 2020, the American Society of Engineers gave Maine a C; C-minus, actually, for our infrastructure and a D for our roads, in particular. The average age of bridges, you know what it is? It's about 55 years. Average age of our bridges. That's unacceptable and it's dangerous and it's costing all of us in repairs and wear and tear on our cars and our trucks every year. Well, the good news is in 2021, the United States Congress, with support from our four members of Congress, passed and President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which makes available historic levels of federal funding for infrastructure projects. Now, much of this new funding requires a match from the State, so we have to contribute. So, my budget proposes making \$400 million available to Maine DOT in order to leverage hundreds of millions of additional dollars in federal funds to make long-term investments in our roads, bridges, highways and in our iconic villages and downtown areas. Making them safer for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists as well. If you approve this proposal, these federal dollars along with our State match will allow Maine DOT to pave more than 3,000 miles of road, reconstruct 271 miles of highway, and fix 302 bridges, on top of many other worthy multimodal projects. That's a thing that we should do. It's February 14th. Pothole season is right around the corner. So, as my friend Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan likes to say; let's fix the damn roads. Do it.

Look, protecting our environment is also a priority. And I'm especially proud of the important bipartisan progress we've made over the past four years. Together, we've reinvigorated the Land for Maine's Future program, which has already conserved 37 new projects, preserving working waterfront, working farmland, working forests and the largest deer wintering areas ever. And we've led the nation in combatting PFAS contamination, which is devastating many communities in Maine, forcing some schools to switch to bottled water, leaving some farmers in financial shambles, and fishermen and hunters questioning whether the wildlife they're harvesting might be contaminated. In all, with your help, we've dedicated more than \$100 million over the past two years to address PFAS; funding environmental testing and remediation, creating a trust fund to

assist farmers, installing more than 300 drinking water treatment systems, and establishing temporary standards to protect drinking water. Now I'm asking you to approve an additional \$6 million in State and federal funds to further strengthen our ability to detect, test, and mitigate PFAS, including sampling and continued testing of wells, of soils and wildlife. It's a continuing process. We're going to do everything we can, continuing the good work that you instituted these last few years.

Now, of course, one of the greatest threats, if not the greatest threat to our environment, is climate change, which the United Nations scientists called a code red for humanity. In 2019, I was privileged to stand before the United Nations General Assembly and tell the world that when it comes to climate change and action, Maine will not wait. Our environment, our people, and our infrastructure remain at serious risk from climate change and it's our communities that are on the front lines of this battle. Communities that are reeling from storms that are growing more severe and more frequent, damaging more infrastructure and threatening our safety. If you remember, just two days before Christmas, a winter storm battered our coast like none we'd seen in years, with heavy rains and high winds that caused extensive flooding and power outages. We have to make our communities more resilient to the impacts of storms like these. So, our Community Resilience Partnership has been providing grants and assistance to more than 130 communities across Maine to reduce their carbon emissions, transition them to clean energy and protect them from rising seas and extreme weather events. For example, we provided \$41,000 to the Town of Paris to install a solar array on the roof of the police station, with a goal of integrating battery storage and ensuring that the police station remains operational during power outages. The City of Rockland is using a \$50,000 grant to redesign the piers and seawall of its downtown waterfront, which is increasingly vulnerable to more powerful storm surges. So, I'm proposing \$3 million more to continue this important work and to ensure that our communities are better prepared to protect our people from the impacts of climate change. I hope you agree.

Fighting climate change also requires us to embrace clean sources of energy, which will help us rein in outrageous energy prices as well. Whether it's the cost of heating fuel or electricity, the price of energy in Maine is simply unaffordable and it discourages people from staying here and businesses from coming here in the first place. We know what the problem is; it's the stranglehold that fossil fuels and their companies have on our State and on our people. We are the most heating oil dependent State in the nation, as you know, with nearly 60% of our homes relying on heating oil or kerosene to stay warm. Sixty percent, when the national average is just 4%. The electricity from our grid which we share with the rest of New England is overly-reliant on natural gas and the price of natural gas has shot through the roof in large part as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Every year, Maine people, Maine families send more than \$4 billion out of State to line the pockets and the profits of big fossil fuel companies; money that could and should stay here at home; while our families and our environment remain at the mercy of those large companies. Enough is enough.

We're making unprecedented strides to embrace renewable energy, to weatherize more homes and businesses, and to install more efficient heating and cooling technologies like heat pumps. And it's working. Maine is now among the nation's leaders in energy efficiency. In 2019, you remember, I set a goal of installing 100,000 heat pumps by 2025. Well, today we're well on our way, with more than 82,000 new heat pumps already installed. Making progress. And Maine people are recognizing

the value of these measures not only for their own wallets but for our environment and for our economy.

The Washington Post did a story recently and they asked a woman named Marianna from Freeport, Maine, if she missed her propane furnace after installing a heat pump. She said; oh, hell, no. She went on to say that her heat pump is comfortable, quiet and a really good system. Quote, I'm excited, she said, our State is so forward-looking and we have to be, she said, because we live in a drop-dead gorgeous part of this country and we're invested in keeping it that way, end-quote. And to that, I say, hell, yeah, Marianna.

To bring down the cost of electricity for Maine's people, to protect our environment from harmful carbon emissions, and to create new and exciting jobs that attract young people to Maine, we have to loosen the stranglehold that fossil fuel has on our State. We must diversify our energy sources. In 2019, I signed into law a bipartisan bill that required our State to achieve 80% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2030. The resulting low-cost energy contract saved Maine ratepayers more than \$68 million last year. Today, 48% of our electricity comes from renewable sources. We expect that to be 53% by the end of this year. But the time has come to be bolder. I'm announcing tonight that I'm directing the Energy Office to draft legislation requiring that 100% of our electricity come from clean energy by 2040. Let's get moving down this path. By accelerating our pace towards 100% clean energy, we will reduce costs for Maine people, create new jobs and career opportunities that strengthen our economy and protect us from the ravages of climate change.

Something else that has become unaffordable is housing. It's just too scarce and too high-priced for too many. More competition within the housing market has driven up rents and home prices here and around the country. When combined with higher interest rates, home affordability has soared out of reach for far too many people. The problem cuts across nearly every facet of our society, contributing to homelessness and limiting our ability to expand our workforce. Bath Iron Works, for instance, one of our largest employers, said their main problem is not actually finding workers but instead finding those skilled workers places to live. The company hired 400 people in 2021 and 2022 who needed to relocate to take those jobs. When all was said and done, a quarter of those people, a hundred of them, couldn't take the job because they couldn't find housing. That is unacceptable. But it's all too common a story I hear when traveling all across the State. Maine Housing has told us we need more than 20,000 new housing units to meet demand. That's why we made the largest investments in housing in our State's history, signing the long-overdue senior housing bond, enacting the affordable housing tax credit, renewing the historic rehabilitation tax credit and committing \$50 million to housing through my Jobs Plan. You all did that. And all combined, these actions have resulted in more than 1,500 new residential units that are built or on their way to being built, with hundreds more in the pipeline.

But we have our work cut out for us. In my budget, I propose an additional \$30 million to build more housing, especially in rural Maine. Fifteen million of that funding would recapitalize the rural rental program established in my Jobs Plan. In 2021, we dedicated \$20 million of that very popular program and now because of that, there are more than 130 units of affordable housing being built in towns from Norway to Madison to Presque Isle. The other 15 million will build on another Jobs Plan program to leverage matching federal housing tax credits. With the money we've already provided through the Jobs Plan, we've added more than 325 affordable

housing units in that program in communities from Hartland to South Portland to Bridgton. I ask you tonight to approve this additional funding so we can continue to ensure that Maine people are housed across our State. And I also understand that there's a proposal before you to espouse the concept of housing first. Well, now, housing first has proven to be a very successful and cost-effective approach to addressing the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness, many of whom are struggling for stability while suffering from acute mental illness and/or substance use disorder. This bill would create a path to ending chronic homelessness in Maine by expanding the housing first model Statewide. Under this legislation, Maine would provide permanent supportive housing for hundreds of Maine people, providing communities across Maine with desperately needed resources to address chronic homelessness, reduce health care and public safety costs as well. I think the time for this legislation has come and tonight I call on the Legislature to send that bill to my desk and I will sign it. I'm also aware that Senate President Jackson and Speaker Talbot Ross and this Legislature have established a Joint Select Committee on Housing. My administration looks forward to working with Committee Chairs, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, along with Republican Leads, Senator Pouliot and Representative Bradstreet as you address homelessness, build and preserve workforce and affordable housing and support reasonable zoning and land use changes that will expand housing opportunities across our State. Thank you for that. Because housing is not a partisan issue; it's an issue that cuts to the core of our identity. A home is not simply a place where we live. A home is where my late-husband Stan and I raised five daughters, where we gathered for holidays and sat around the table with loved ones, where we laid our heads to rest at night, knowing we were safe and together. We can and will work together across the aisle to make sure that every person in our State has a safe, secure and affordable place to call home.

Many of those who are unhoused are struggling with substance use disorder. The scourge of addiction continues to reach into every corner of our State, rural and urban, robbing us of friends, family, and loved ones, diminishing our sense of community, our workforce and our future. Since 2019, we've taken some significant actions to respond to this crisis, addressing the three-legged stool of prevention, interdiction and treatment. We began by expanding Medicaid, which has provided substance use disorder treatment to more than 25,000 individuals in Maine, leading them back into productive lives. We sharply increased access to the life-saving overdose medication naloxone, distributing more than 276,000 doses, which were used to reverse more than 7,100 overdoses that otherwise would have been fatal. We increased access to treatment and recovery, adding 140 residential treatment beds and detox beds and I've directed the Department of Health and Human Services to invest another \$2 million to further increase the availability of those beds across Maine. They are sorely needed. Meanwhile, in the Maine State Prison System, we provided substance use disorder treatment to more than 2200 incarcerated individuals, a nationally-recognized strategy that has reduced assaults and self-harm and overdoses, a strategy that should be expanded to every county jail in Maine and it reduces recidivism. And last year, working closely with Democrats and Republicans, we enacted one of the best Good Samaritan laws in the country to encourage people to call for help when and if they witness an overdose.

This work is good, it is important, it is necessary. It is not enough. Last year alone, there were more than 10,000 overdoses in Maine and out of those 716 were fatal. In

December alone, there were 928 overdoses, with 75 people dying. The highest number of deaths of any month on record. This is a crisis and right now it is driven by the ever-increasing prevalence of fentanyl, the highly lethal and highly addictive synthetic opioid, often mixed with heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines and pills consumed by unknowing users. In Maine, as in the rest of the nation, fentanyl is now not only the leading cause of overdoses, it is responsible for nearly 80% of all drug deaths. Eighty percent.

Last year, law enforcement in Maine seized more than 36 pounds of fentanyl in Maine, nearly 60% more than in 2021. That's pounds, ladies and gentlemen. It's enough fentanyl to kill every man, woman, and child in the State of Maine and then some, and that's just the part we got off the streets. There's so much more out there. You know it. The prevalence of fentanyl along with methamphetamines and now this xylazine contributes to deadly traffic accidents, police involved shootings and the health and safety and academic performance of our children. It's sneaking into every community and stealing the lives and livelihoods of valued citizens. So, what can we do?

First of all, I'm announcing tonight that we will increase the State's purchase and distribution of naloxone by 25%. It's a strategy that has contributed to a 93% survival rate among those who experience an overdose. We start by saving lives, pure and simple. And then, with nontaxpayer funds committed by Attorney General Aaron Frey, we will double the number of trained individuals to join law enforcement on calls related to substance abuse and who can lead people to treatment and recovery services. Last December, these OPTIONS liaisons, so called, responded to dozens of calls with law enforcement officers and got nearly 100 people into treatment. OPTIONS is working and by expanding it, we will save more lives and Attorney General Frey, thank you for helping us provide this life-saving program to more and more people. Thank you, Aaron.

As part of this budget, I'm also proposing an historic \$237 million dollars in combined State and federal funding for substance use disorder and mental health services to include an increase in rates to providers. This will allow, for example, a 48% increase for methadone treatment and an 8.2% increase for intensive outpatient services, which are pretty successful. To complement an increase in recovery residences and the 24/7 drop-in center. And, recognizing that the pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of Maine people, including our children, our budget strengthens Maine's mental health system, proposing rate increases starting at 15% in crisis residential services, 30% in school and community-based services, and other improvements as part of our commitment to also end the 30-plus-year-old AMHI consent decree. I ask you, please approve all of these much-needed investments. Please.

Look, there isn't anybody in this room that hasn't been touched somehow by the scourge of substance use disorder. There are people like the family of Hannah Flaherty of Eustis, 14 years old, a straight-A student, no history of drug use. A kid who was loved by her community who died after ingesting what she evidently thought was cocaine. It was pure fentanyl. Then there was the 11-month-old baby girl in Corinna who overdosed on fentanyl, some fentanyl that her parents had left lying around. She was saved by naloxone and by the heroism of first responders. The police found traces of fentanyl in her crib and on her teddy bear. And then, of course, there was 3-year-old Hailey Goding of Old Town, which you've read about, whose mother is now serving 19 years in prison for the fentanyl overdose of that little girl.

We must acknowledge that the drug epidemic is jeopardizing the safety, security, and welfare of our youngest children as well as our adults, our families and our workforce. Prevention programs in our schools and communities are also key but we must protect children at risk first and foremost. Substance use disorder, in fact, is identified as a risk factor in 53% of the cases where a child is removed from the home. To improve the safety of our children, we have to recognize that Maine's drug epidemic is a grave threat to the safety of our children. And tonight, I'm announcing a series of new actions to address both issues.

First, we will partner with the Maine Child Welfare Action Network to develop a new comprehensive plan to keep children safe by keeping families strong. By ensuring kids have healthy food, safe housing, child care, and supporting parents with job training and education and mental health and substance use services. If we keep families healthy, we can keep children safe.

Secondly, I'm directing the Department of Health and Human Services to embed a clinical expert in substance use disorder in every child welfare district in Maine to better recognize the influence of substance use, to navigate the risks posed to children, and to steer parents into treatment and make sure they get there. We know this strategy works because we've done it before; providing experts, for instance, in domestic violence to help caseworkers identify and confront abuse in the home and combat its profound effects on children, in particular.

Thirdly, I have directed the Department of Health and Human Services to engage recovery coaches with lived experience to assist parents who are struggling with substance use disorder. Remember that the opposite of addiction is not simply sobriety, but connections. These people can share their own experiences with parents and walk them along the road to recovery while also making sure that children are protected.

And lastly, I want to expand the number of Family Recovery Courts in Maine. These specialty courts work with families whose children are at risk because the parents are struggling with substance use disorder. I intend to engage with the Chief Justice, with the Attorney General, and with others to expand these courts and promote them aggressively as an effective means to get parents into treatment and to keep them there and closely monitor their progress and ultimately reunite them with their children only when it is appropriate to do so. This approach recognizes that the safety of our children is deeply entwined with the safety of our families and our communities and that each of those is threatened by the growing prevalence of dangerous, deadly drugs.

It also complements the significant action taken by my administration and by the last Legislature to improve our child welfare system. Enacting bipartisan legislation to strengthen the Office of the Child Welfare Ombudsman, investing more than \$30 million to bridge the gaps in our child welfare workforce and improving our policies and practices in child welfare. To date, we've increased caseworker positions by 29%. We've increased the number of resource or foster homes by 31%. And we've replaced an outdated child welfare information system. We've created a new unit to respond 24/7 to emergency reports of suspected abuse or neglect. We can't let those calls linger. And we've improved our intake systems for reports of abuse, including launching an online reporting system for school personnel, medical personnel and law enforcement who suspect abuse or neglect. And tonight, I also ask the Legislature to approve my request for nearly \$15 million for foster care and adoption assistance so we can support those who care for our children in custody. I welcome the Legislature's continued

oversight of child welfare. Every death of any child in any way connected to the child welfare system should be scrutinized for ways to improve and strengthen our system while preserving the ability of prosecutors to prosecute and put behind bars anyone who caused that child's death.

As we talk about ways to improve our child welfare system, we must also have a robust debate about all the ways we can improve the overall wellbeing of all children and families. I pledge to you that my administration will not shy away from any good, effective idea to ensure that every child in Maine is happy and healthy. We cannot and shall not rest in this fight. And to that same end, we need the assistance of the courts who are facing an unprecedented backlog of cases stemming from the disruption of the pandemic. In this budget, I am proposing \$15 million to allow the courts to hire additional marshals and clerks to enable them to operate safely and more efficiently. And to build on this investment, I am also announcing that I will propose an additional four district court judgeships to relieve the backlog of cases in our courts, allow the courts to prioritize the most urgent matters such as domestic violence, serious crimes, and child protection cases and intensive but effective specialty courts such as the Family Recovery Courts.

And I know the Legislature is concerned about our Constitutional obligation to provide legal counsel to low-income Maine people. I am, too. I've proposed funding to 10 new public defenders, building on the five positions established during the last legislative session. I ask you to approve these positions. And to complement this effort, I've written to dozens of law firms across the State, asking them to designate one or more attorneys in their firms to join the roster of counsel available to accept indigent legal cases. It's good for the firms, it's good for the courts, it's good for the people.

This problem will require a comprehensive effort inside and outside of government, including first and foremost reducing the backlog in our courts as the rising number of cases itself discourages many lawyers from accepting court-appointed matters. That, in turn, increases the backlog. But I look forward to working with the Legislature throughout the budget writing process to discuss what steps we can take to strengthen our legal system and make sure we deliver justice to all Maine citizens.

My friends, this budget proposal is strong, it is balanced, it lives within our means, it does not raise taxes, it makes meaningful investments in the things people rely on every day while maintaining our record Rainy Day Fund to protect us against an economic downturn. You know, 18-time baseball All-Star Yogi Berra once said; if you don't know where you're going, you might not get there. Well, we know where we're going and this budget is our blueprint to get there.

You know, I have never wavered in my fundamental belief that the people of Maine are our greatest asset. We've weathered long winters, terrible storms, wars, floods, famines, recessions, and yes, pandemics. We've taken to deep coastal waters to haul lobsters, we've worked the fields in the County to harvest potatoes, we've ventured far into the Maine woods to fell trees. Some have traveled from away, braving the daunting prospect of change and, in some circumstances, even risking life and limb to come to this beautiful place we call home. In each of these acts is unshakable courage, a spirit of independence and self-reliance, a fortitude that is as fearless as it is inexhaustible. That is the inherent character of Maine people. Our job, our responsibility, is to foster that character. If we provide the human infrastructure; a strong health care system, good schools, housing, roads, child care, broadband;

then the people of Maine will do the rest. And that is what this budget does; it carries forward what we promised the people of Maine. With it, we will unlock our vast potential.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming months to enact a strong bipartisan budget that is worthy of the people we serve and that addresses our most pressing needs.

As always, it is a privilege to be here in this historic Chamber with all of you and I want to wish you all happy Valentine's Day from me to all of you. Thank you.

At the conclusion of the address, Governor Janet T. Mills withdrew amid the applause of the Convention, the audience rising.

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

(After the Joint Convention)

The House was called to order by the Speaker.

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

On motion of Representative ARATA of New Gloucester, the House adjourned at 8:11 p.m., until 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 16, 2023, in honor and lasting tribute to Robert Howard Kimball of Sangerville and William Sawtell of Brownville.