D 1304 Hearing notice

Senators aren't listening

Knight Ridder News Service

The following editorial appeared in the Orlando Sentinel on March 23:

The sky-high federal budget deficit is now the biggest threat facing the U.S. economy, according to a new survey from the National Association for Business Economics. The group's conclusion echoed Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, who this month also appropriately ranked the deficit as the worst economic problem.

Clearly, U.S. senators aren't listening. In debating a budget plan this month, a majority voted to increase spending, expand tax cuts and reject a 1 percent reduction in projected spending on Medicaid. They added at least $79 billion over the next five years to the deficit, which reached a record $413 billion last year.

Senators also refused to restore rules that would have required the budgetary impact of spending increases or tax cuts to be offset by other spending reductions or tax increases. Those pay-as-you-go rules helped turn chronic budget deficits into surpluses in the 1990s.

In short, senators did almost everything they could to make a bad budget outlook worse.

Florida Sen. Bill Nelson voted with fellow Democrats against the Medicaid cuts, but was

122nd Maine Legislature LEGISLATIVE HEARING NOTICES HEARINGS ON L.D.'s

Legislative committee(s) will hold public hearings as listed below. Please note that there may be additional hearings scheduled for the coming week that appeared in last weekend's edition. For further information, contact the Legislative Information Office: (207) 287-1692.

You may testify at the public hearing or submit written testimony. Written testimony should be sent to the appropriate committee at:

100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Persons with special needs who wish to attend a legislative hearing and require accommodations should notify the Legislative Information Office as soon as possible.

Telephone: (207) 287-1692
TTY: (207) 287-6826
FAX: (207) 287-1580

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Sen. Arthur F. Mayo, III, Senate Chair
Rep. Hannah Pingree, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Tuesday, March 29, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 209 Cross Building.

L.D. 146 Bill "An Act to Repeal the Tax on Private Nonmedical Institutions" (S.P.0052) (EMERGENCY)

L.D. 454 Bill "An Act to Prohibit Private Nonmedical Institutions from Passing Along the Service Provider Tax to Residents" (H.P.0332)

L.D. 687 Bill "An Act to Amend the Hospital Tax" (S.P.0224)

L.D. 699 Bill "An Act to Repeal Tax and Match" (S.P.0236)

L.D. 839 Bill "An Act to Reduce Hardships to Small Community Hospitals Resulting from the Hospital Tax" (S.P.0278)(EMERGENCY)

CONTACT PERSON: Amy Harmon, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-1317.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Sen. Bruce Bryant, Senate Chair
Rep. Thomas R. Watson, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Friday, April 1, 2005, 9:00

L.D. 835 Bill "Resolve, to Establish the Blue Ribbon Commission on the Future of MaineCare" (H.P.0594)

L.D. 863 Bill "An Act to Ensure Wraparound Services for Children in Need of Care" (H.P.0614)

L.D. 168 Bill "An Act to Establish a Statewide Residency Requirement for General Assistance" (H.P.0119)

L.D. 402 Bill "An Act to Require Able-bodied Welfare Recipients to Seek Employment and Work or Volunteer BY REQUEST" (S.P.0126)

L.D. 768 Bill "An Act Regarding General Assistance under Special Circumstances" (H.P.0545)

CONTACT PERSON: Amy Harmon, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-1317.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Sen. Arthur F. Mayo, III, Senate Chair
Rep. Hannah Pingree, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Monday, April 4, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 209 Cross Building.

L.D. 160 Bill "An Act to Ban Smoking in Bingo Halls, Off-track Betting Facilities and Enclosed Areas of Clubs Licensed for the Sale of Food or Alcohol" (S.P.0066)

L.D. 801 Bill "Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Develop Strategies to Reduce Tobacco Use and Improve Public Health" (H.P.0566)

L.D. 941 Bill "An Act to Make an Exception to the Law Regarding Licensing of Fair Vendors Selling Tobacco Products" (H.P.0660) (EMERGENCY)

L.D. 885 Bill "An Act to Discourage Further the Sale of Tobacco to Minors" (S.P.0293)

L.D. 886 Bill "An Act to Promote Parity in the Laws Governing Smoking in the Workplace" (S.P.0294)

L.D. 950 Bill "An Act to Allow the Shipment of Cigars into Maine" (S.P.0325)

CONTACT PERSON: Amy Harmon, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-1317.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Sen. Kenneth T. Gagnon, Senate Chair
Rep. John L. Patrick, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Monday, April 4, 2005, 1:15

L.D. 1364 Bill "An Act to Establish Municipal Cost Components for Unorganized Territory Services to Be Rendered in Fiscal Year 2005-06" (H.P.0947)

CONTACT PERSON: Beth St. Pierre, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-1552.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Sen. Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Rep. Joseph C. Brannigan, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Tuesday, April 5, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 228 State House.

L.D. 123 Bill "An Act Concerning Multiple-Item Bond Issues" (H.P.0099)

L.D. 274 Bill "An Act to Raise the University of Maine System Debt Ceiling" (S.P.0094)

L.D. 30 Bill "An Act to Apply a System of Spending Limitations to State, County and Municipal Governments and School Administrative Units" (H.P.0033)

L.D. 292 Bill "An Act to Establish a New Method of Determining the State Budget" (H.P.0217)

L.D. 843 Bill "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Provide for Protected Reserve Funds" (S.P.0282)

L.D. 1278 Bill "An Act Requiring Long-range Budget Planning" (H.P.0875)

L.D. 1311 Bill "An Act to Preserve the Integrity of the Fund for a Healthy Maine" (H.P.0909)

L.D. 663 Bill "An Act to Reduce the Size of State Government by 5%" (H.P.0483)

L.D. 1109 Bill "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Restrict an Increase in the Growth of the State Budget" (H.P.0762)

L.D. 1330 Bill "Resolve, To Lower the Cost of State Government by Approximately $1,000,000 Annually" (S.P.0457)

L.D. 1369 Bill "Resolve, Directing the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of the Budget to Review Unfunded Mandates" (H.P.0955)(EMERGENCY)

CONTACT PERSON: Diane Pruett, 5 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0005. 287-1316 or 287-1635.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sen. Lynn Bromley, Senate Chair

L.D. 833 Bill "An Act to Promote Safe Routes to School" (H.P.0592)

L.D. 960 Bill "Resolve, to Study the Feasibility of Off-road Bike and Walking Paths along the Busiest Commuting Corridors of the State" (H.P.0670)

L.D. 1122 Bill "Resolve, to Establish the Wabanaki Trail" (H.P.0775)

CONTACT PERSON: Kathie Bilodeau, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-4148.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES AND ENERGY

Sen. Philip L. Bartlett, II, Senate Chair
Rep. Lawrence Bliss, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Tuesday, April 5, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 211 Cross Building.

L.D. 711 Bill "An Act to Improve the Energy Efficiency of Buildings to be Owned or Occupied by the State" (H.P.0506)

L.D. 637 Bill "An Act to Allow Qualified Health Centers to Obtain Telecommunications Education Access Funding" (H.P.0470)

L.D. 1259 Bill "An Act to Sustain Maine Schools and Libraries" (S.P.0439)

L.D. 1128 Bill "An Act Directing the State Planning Office to Study Municipal Capabilities to Become Providers of Internet Services" (S.P.0392)

L.D. 1162 Bill "An Act to Permit the Establishment of Regional Water Councils" (H.P.0805)

L.D. 1440 Bill "An Act to Encourage the Implementation of High-speed Internet Access in Rural and Isolated Areas" (H.P.1004)

CONTACT PERSON: Kristen Gottlieb, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-4143.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Sen. Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Rep. Joseph C. Brannigan, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Wednesday, April 6, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 228 State House.

L.D. 404 Bill "An Act to Ensure the State's Continued Commitment to Former Students Who Were Physically or Sexually Abused at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf or the Maine School for the Deaf" (S.P.0128) (EMERGENCY)

Families" (H.P.0790)

L.D. 1209 Bill "Resolve, to Create the Task Force to Study Commercial Lobster Fishing in Offshore Waters" (S.P.0423)

L.D. 1231 Bill "An Act to Require Noncommercial Lobster Fishing License Holders to Participate in the Conservation Efforts of the Commercial Lobster Industry" (H.P.0849)

Bill "An Act to Amend the Lobster Fishing Laws of Maine" (LR 627)

CONTACT PERSON: Rhonda Miller, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-1337.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Sen. Elizabeth M. Schneider, Senate Chair
Rep. Christopher R. Barstow, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Wednesday, April 6, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 216 Cross Building.

L.D. 773 Bill "An Act to Allow Municipalities to Collect Debts through the Placement of Liens on Property" (H.P.0550)

L.D. 991 Bill "An Act to Restore Municipal Authority to Review Development Using Flexible Standards" (S.P.0331)

L.D. 1029 Bill "An Act to Allow Municipalities to Acquire Title to Abandoned Cemeteries" (H.P.0714)

L.D. 1040 Bill "An Act to Prevent the Short-term Rental of Unlicensed Properties BY REQUEST" (S.P.0357)

L.D. 1105 Bill "An Act to Impose Liability for the Illegal Withholding or Transfer of Public Funds or Property" (H.P.0758)

L.D. 1354 Bill "An Act to Amend the Procedure for Auditing Municipalities" (H.P.0937) (EMERGENCY)

CONTACT PERSON: Suzanne M. Armstrong, 100 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0100. 287-1330.

THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Sen. Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Rep. Joseph C. Brannigan, House Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: Thursday, April 7, 2005, 1:00 p.m., Room 228 State House.

L.D. 180 Bill "An Act to Appropriate State Funds to Protect Potato Farmland in Aroostook County from Blight and Other Diseases That Could