

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Record
House of Representatives
One Hundred and Thirtieth Legislature
State of Maine

Daily Edition

First Special Session

beginning April 28, 2021

beginning at page H-200

adults in town, too. She modeled kindness for all and will be greatly missed. Thank you.

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

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

The following item was taken up out of order by unanimous consent:

ENACTORS
Emergency Measure

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021, June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023
(H.P. 156) (L.D. 221)
(C. "A" H-735)

Was reported by the Committee on **Engrossed Bills** as truly and strictly engrossed.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Falmouth, Representative Pierce.

Representative **PIERCE**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the course of the past 16 months, Mainers have come together to weather the storm of the pandemic, ensuring that our family, friends and communities were cared for and safe. In that spirit, the Appropriation and Financial Affairs Committee has come together to present a bipartisan budget for the approval of this Body that sets us on a path of strength as we move past the pandemic into a brighter future for our State. Mr. Speaker, for the people of Maine who worked throughout the pandemic, those Mainers who provided for us with services we needed to get through, this budget provides a \$300 check to more than 500,000 workers who kept our economy afloat. The budget makes historic investments in a number of areas. In the arena of education, it is supporting career technical capital upgrades, preventing tuition increases in our higher educational system, ensuring no Maine child goes hungry at school and it critically funds the State's commitment to Maine schools by funding 55% of K-12 public education costs. This marks the first time Maine has met the 55% threshold since voters passed the referendum in 2004. Importantly, this budget keeps our promises to Maine people on property tax relief and will meet revenue sharing goals, making good on the State's commitment to our municipalities by fully investing in revenue sharing by the end of the biennium. The budget will expand the property tax fairness credit to 83,000 Mainers by providing a boost in maximum benefit, achieving a permanent change in eligibility that will expand the program to provide property tax relief and rent relief to more Mainers. We will bolster the successful Maine homestead exemption program as well.

Maine has a long tradition of working to ensure our environment and outdoor natural resources are the best in the nation. The budget preserves and protects Maine's natural resources, marking a historic \$40 million investment in the Land for Maine Futures program. In addition, it funds PFAS cleanup, mitigating forever chemicals' harmful effects in our communities. The health of Maine people is a critical priority for this Body and we have included funds to close the gap in Mainers' health care and access to long-term care. The budget expands preventative dental care to an estimated 217,000 Mainers. The budget makes sustainable investments in treating substance use

disorder by supporting community treatment options and providing rate increases for recovery services. This budget supports senior living facilities, direct care workers and Mainers with intellectual disabilities, ensuring access to needed services in this State. The people doing this work are the unsung heroes in our State, doing the difficult and important jobs of keeping vulnerable Maine people healthy and well cared for. In addition to all of these investments, we are maintaining strong fiscal responsibility so we ensure that the things we are doing today will be able to be sustained for years to come. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the work of the AFA committee for the unanimous report on this budget and, in particular, I'd like to thank my friend and counterpart, a true statesman, the Representative from Waterford, who brings years of dedication and knowledge to the important work of our committee and always does it with a little touch of humor. This has been a collaboration in every sense of the word. I hope you, Mr. Speaker, along with my colleagues in this Body, will join me in support of this biennial budget. Thank you.

The **SPEAKER**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Waterford, Representative Millett.

Representative **MILLETT**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I would like to echo the words of the good Chair from Falmouth, Representative Pierce, in terms of the contents of this major accomplishment that is now before us. I consider it a major accomplishment in that it was just over two months ago when we had a majority start to the biennial budget. A lot of us, I think, assumed that maybe things were in bad shape and we were not going to be, on my side of the aisle, involved in the rest of this supplemental portion. It is a tribute, I think, to the entire committee that we all kept our optimism and our trusting working relationship and came to this point. To actually put together a budget that achieves as much as this one does and have a unanimous report, I think is no small accomplishment.

Let me just speak to a couple of things that are in it that were very important to me and my members and to my caucus. We are actually distributing over \$500 million of tax relief within this budget. The centerpiece for us, of course, is the COVID relief package for those who worked during calendar 2020 when everything was at risk and people were nervous about even going to work. That \$150 million will result in \$300 payments to all of those 500,000 people who filed an income tax return and actually were year-round residents of Maine. And this will be paid in check form in December and will not be taxable on either the federal or State level. Some people think that's a small token, but I never look aside at \$150 million. Above and beyond that, for the property taxpayers who have been watching what we have done and sometimes not done over the last decade or more, we are going to get to full funding on revenue sharing in the second year, \$100 million above and beyond the Chief Executive's initial budget for that purpose, 187 million for general purpose aid, which gets us to 55% in the second year, well, in both years of the biennium, actually. And, on top of that, there is 70-plus million dollars that came through our policy committee, the Taxation Committee, as part of the Chief Executive's change package wherein we actually conform to a couple of very important pieces of the federal law that occurred during the calendar year, namely the earned income tax credit and the child care credit. We actually improve upon the property tax fairness credit and we actually begin the start to getting to 100% on the reimbursement of the homestead exemption. We're at 70% today, we will get to 73% in the second year and the commitment in Statute will be to get the rest of that 27% over the next nine years.

All of that will give the local people a chance to reduce their property taxes. We can't guarantee it, but we know that they will have what we have promised in Statute in years past. There are other critical pieces of this budget that I think we, again, could not have gotten to without being willing to work together. In the nursing home, long-term care and direct care worker category, we've come together to form two \$20 million investments that generate federal money in match that will actually translate into over \$200 million of additional money in the biennium going to those who work in those provider settings and in the care of many different clientele of the State who worked under duress during the pandemic as well. We also have maintained a spending cap, which for me and our caucus was important. And I want to just say that \$8.5 billion was achieved without; it could not have been achieved, without a willingness to work together toward that goal. There are other things that the good Chair from Falmouth mentioned that I won't go into more detail, but I think she covered it and I wanted to just make sure that all of you knew that we did this together. And I would like to acknowledge that I think it was last Thursday, Mr. Speaker, when you entertained us in your suite and it was a unique opportunity for my two leaders, Representative Dillingham and Senator Timberlake from the other Body and you and your cohort, President Jackson and the chairs and lead. And we worked on what are the game plans, how do we get this done on the rest of the weekend that followed. We could not have done it without you. I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your role and Representative Dillingham for always being there and hope that all of you will see this as an accomplishment that could not have been done without joint effort. Thank you.

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

Representative **WARREN**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to this motion. I see the word emergency appear on the board and that reminds me of what sent me here, what I think should be a primary issue for every one of us in this institution, Mr. Speaker, it's climate change. I think this budget doesn't go far enough; I don't think it thinks big enough. I think that if we can come out of a global pandemic and not provide MaineCare for all adult immigrants, Mainers in this State, we're not prepared to deal with the serious urgent emergencies of this State and its people. I think if we cannot provide full mental health care for children in this State after the traumatic, difficult year being out of school, away from friends, we're not prepared to deal with the serious crises of Maine people. And I appreciate that there was a significant amount of collaboration and bipartisanship but, frankly, not all of us are part of that. And I appreciate those with experience and a certain amount of power in this Body, but I think there's a diversity of perspective and a way from my perspective, as a young adult here in the State of Maine, looking to the future, I just can't imagine that this Body is yet prepared to meet the scale and scope of the climate crisis that we face and so I can't support this budget and I feel it's not practical, it's not realistic. This is the hottest year on record, we are in the middle of a heatwave. Over the weekend there were rolling blackouts even in my community. We're the oldest State in the nation, we're very rural, I just appreciate the form of this budget, I appreciate the bipartisanship, but its function is the most important thing and the function of this budget is to not make the structural change or begin to do so that I think we need to make that I believe I was sent here to be a part of. And so, I hope that you'll follow my light. There is an enormous emergency, but this does not meet it. Thank you.

Representative **PIERCE** of Falmouth **REQUESTED** a roll call on **PASSAGE TO BE ENACTED**.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Passage to be Enacted. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

This being an emergency measure, a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to the House being necessary, a total was taken.

ROLL CALL NO. 406

YEA - Alley, Arata, Arford, Austin, Babbidge, Bailey, Bell, Bernard, Berry, Bickford, Blier, Blume, Bradstreet, Brennan, Brooks, Bryant, Caiazzo, Cardone, Carlow, Carmichael, Cloutier, Collamore, Collings, Connor, Copeland, Corey, Costain, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Cuddy, Dillingham, Dodge, Dolloff, Doore, Doudera, Downes, Drinkwater, Dunphy, Evangelos, Evans, Fay, Geiger, Gere, Gifford, Gramlich, Griffin, Grohoski, Haggan, Hall, Harnett, Hasenfus, Head, Hepler, Hutchins, Hymanson, Kessler, Kinney, Landry, Lookner, Lyman, Madigan, Martin J, Martin R, Martin T, Mason, Mathieson, Matlack, McCrea, McCreight, McDonald, Melaragno, Meyer, Millett H, Millett R, Morales, Moriarty, Morris, Nadeau, Newman, O'Connell, O'Neil, Ordway, Osher, Parry, Pebworth, Perkins, Perry A, Perry J, Pickett, Pierce, Pluecker, Poirier, Reckitt, Rielly, Riseman, Roberts, Roche, Roeder, Sachs, Salisbury, Sheehan, Skolfield, Stearns, Stover, Supica, Sylvester, Talbot Ross, Tepler, Terry, Theriault, Thorne, Tucker, Tuell, Underwood, Warren, White B, White D, Williams, Wood, Zager, Zeigler, Mr. Speaker.

NAY - Andrews, Cebra, Faulkingham, Fecteau, Foster, Greenwood, Grignon, Hanley, Harrington, Javner, Johansen, Lemelin, Libby, Lyford, O'Connor, Prescott, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Stanley, Stetkis, Wadsworth, Warren.

ABSENT - Ducharme, Kryzak, Paulhus, Sharpe, Tuttle. Yes, 123; No, 23; Absent, 5; Excused, 0.

123 having voted in the affirmative and 23 voted in the negative, with 5 being absent, and accordingly the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENACTED**, signed by the Speaker and sent to the Senate.

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

ORDERS

On motion of Representative **TEPLER** of Topsham, the following Joint Resolution: (H.P. 1296) (Cosponsored by Senator **SANBORN** of Cumberland and Representatives: **ARFORD** of Brunswick, **BROOKS** of Lewiston, **EVANS** of Dover-Foxcroft, **MATHIESON** of Kittery, **MELARAGNO** of Auburn) (Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 214)

JOINT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO FIX THE SO-CALLED FAMILY GLITCH IN THE FEDERAL AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

WE, your Memorialists, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Maine now assembled in the First Special Session, most respectfully present and petition the President of the United States and the United States Congress, as follows:

WHEREAS, under the federal Affordable Care Act, individuals receive subsidies to reduce premium costs for health plans purchased through the marketplace and, in addition, the