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Emergency bill would restore full MaineCare payments to hospitals

In a last-ditch bid to free up \$118 million that's delayed until June 20, House Democrats fast-tracked a vote on the bipartisan measure. But they bypassed the committee process, risking the bill's fate in the Senate.

By RANDY BILLINGS
Portland Press Herald

AUGUSTA — A bipartisan group of Maine lawmakers launched a last-minute attempt Wednesday to free up \$118 million in MaineCare payments to health care providers that were delayed until late June after a previous proposal collapsed. But the emergency measure

immediately faced an uphill climb. Senate Republican leaders continue to oppose the proposal, and an effort by House Democrats to skip the committee process and public hearings and move right to floor votes generated opposition from Republicans, including a co-sponsor. House Speaker Ryan Fecteau, D-Biddeford, sought to

fast-track the bill, which had three Republican co-sponsors, by suspending the rules that require bills to be referred to a committee for a public hearing and work session before any votes by the full House or Senate. The maneuver caught Republicans by surprise and prompted one of the Republican co-sponsors to object. A

majority of the House members supported the bill, but it was sent to the Senate without the two-thirds support needed to enact the emergency measure and immediately provide the funding. The Senate did not take up the bill Wednesday. "I'm sure there's a lot of confusion happening right now — I know for me there is as well since we were not



Joe Phelan/Kennebec Journal

told anything like this was happening," said Rep. Amanda Collamore, R-Pittsfield, a co-sponsor of the bill. "What is concerning to me is that we are usurping the tradition and the rules of our body by not allowing the public to have a

"The policy matter at hand has already been debated in both chambers," Maine House Speaker Ryan Fecteau said.

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Photos by Shawn Patrick Ouellette/Portland Press Herald

Of about 1,000 Portland International Jetport travelers who boarded planes from 6-10 a.m. Wednesday, 98% had a Real ID, passport or other compliant identification, jetport officials said.

Mainers roll with start of Real ID travel requirements

Jetport traffic was smooth Wednesday as federal rules took effect, with most travelers carrying either passports or licenses complying with the law. But at Maine BMV offices, drivers faced long waits for new identification.

By KELLEY BOUCHARD
Portland Press Herald

Most passengers breezed through identification checkpoints at Portland International Jetport on Wednesday as the federal Transportation Security Administration began enforcing Real ID screening measures nationwide.

Of about 1,000 passengers who boarded planes from 6-10 a.m., 98% showed a Real ID, passport or other compliant identification, said Zachary Sundquist, assistant airport director.

Only 2% of passengers — less than two dozen — were required to undergo additional screening to verify their identity before boarding, he said. Exactly what happened during additional screenings, Sundquist said he didn't know.

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Jeremy Brown, of Monmouth, waits at the Portland BMV on Wednesday. The Real ID rule has been in the works for 20 years.

ALTHOUGH THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION on Wednesday began asking travelers over 18 to show a Real ID or other form of federal ID, such as a passport, the agency is expected to phase in enforcement and allow those with traditional IDs to fly for a period.

LEWISTON MASS SHOOTING

Legislators are urged to sustain support services

Mental health workers and people impacted by the 2023 massacre speak in support of a bill to provide \$3.4 million to the Maine Resiliency Center.

By RACHEL OHM
Portland Press Herald

AUGUSTA — A year and a half after Maine's deadliest mass shooting, survivors of the tragedy in Lewiston and mental health workers told state lawmakers Wednesday that many people are still in the process of healing and need continued support services.

The Maine Resiliency Center in Lewiston opened in the aftermath of the October 2023 mass shooting and has provided individual and group support and resources for survivors, witnesses, family and friends of victims, and first responders.

The center has served more than 600 people since opening but needs additional funding to continue its work. A bill introduced by Sen. Peggy Rotundo, D-Lewiston, would provide \$3.4 million over the next two years to continue and expand services at the center.

"The MRC ... fills our systems' significant gaps, offering support for people who would otherwise fall through the cracks," Rotundo said during a public hearing Wednesday.

Several people who witnessed or lost loved ones in the Lewiston shooting testified in support of the bill

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TODAY'S ALMANAC

May 8, 2025

Today is the 128th day of 2025. There are 237 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 8, 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced in a radio address that Nazi Germany's forces had surrendered, stating that "the flags of freedom fly all over Europe" on V-E (Victory in Europe) Day.

Also on this date:

In 1541, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto reached the Mississippi River, the first recorded European to do so.

In 1846, U.S. forces led by Gen. Zachary Taylor defeated Mexican forces near modern-day Brownsville, Texas, in the first major battle of the Mexican-American War.

In 1886, the first serving of Coca-Cola, which contained cocaine, was sold at a pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia. (The drink became fully cocaine-free in 1929.)

Today's Birthdays:

Biologist/TV presenter David Attenborough is 99. Poet Gary Snyder is 95. Singer Toni Tennille is 85. Pianist Keith Jarrett is 80.

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Maine Trust for Local News

Proposed Old Port tower would be Maine's tallest

A local developer has unveiled plans to redevelop Portland's Canal Plaza Block with a 30-story, 380-foot building.

By GILLIAN GRAHAM and HANNAH LaCLAIRE
Portland Press Herald

A Portland development company wants to build what would become Maine's tallest building in the city's Old Port.

East Brown Cow and Safdie Architects on Tuesday unveiled their design vision for the Canal Plaza Block in the Old Port. The project, known as Old Port Square, would transform a 4-acre site with two new buildings and include retail, restaurants, hotels, residences, offices,

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A proposed tower at 45 Union St. would have residential as well as hospitality space. The highest building in Maine right now is at 201 Federal St. in Portland — over 200 feet tall.

Rendering courtesy of Safdie Architects