

February 9, 2017

2017 Leadership Summit makes policy discussion front and center

*Roundtable topics center on taxes, this fall's referendums,
workforce needs, and energy and infrastructure*



For the past 18 years, the Maine State Chamber's annual Leadership Summit has provided board members and business leaders an opportunity to discuss critical public policy issues with key public officials from both sides of the aisle, as well as with administrators and representatives of the executive branch. Again this year, the Chamber's board of directors and key business leaders gathered with legislative leaders and Governor Paul LePage along with members of his administration and cabinet on Thursday and Friday, February 2-3 at Sunday River with the shared goal of finding ways to move Maine forward.

The Leadership Summit becomes increasingly popular each year, and this

year's was especially so – with our largest turnout yet at approximately 130 participants. Participants gathered to discuss some of the challenges affecting Maine's economy and relevant legislation facing the second regular session of the 128th Legislature, as well as to identify common policy priorities, all in an effort to move our state ahead.

The summit began with a reception attended by invitees as well as members of the legislature and leadership and Governor LePage, who provided attendees with a preview of his state of the state goals and priorities. After dinner, Senate President Michael Thibodeau (R-Waldo) and Speaker

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Chamber testifies in support of BETR conversion

On Tuesday, February 7, the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriation and Financial Affairs and Taxation held a joint public hearing on the Governor's proposal to convert property held under the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program to the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) program. The hearing was part of a series of hearings held this week on the tax provisions in the Part I biennial budget for fiscal years 2018-2019.

Linda Caprara, senior government relations specialist in taxation for the Maine State Chamber, testified in support of the BETR/BETE conversion proposal, which would be accomplished during a four-year period. Four years ago, the Legislature appointed a special commission to study the transition of property held under BETR to BETE. This conversion was one of the recommendations of that commission. Caprara testified in support of the conversion, but in opposition to two other proposals that would eliminate retail from qualifying for BETR/BETE and the other to reduce the BETR reimbursement from 100 to 90 percent and making that change permanent.

The Taxation committee is expected to hold work sessions on this proposal within the next few weeks. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

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About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce: Since 1889, the Maine State Chamber has been fighting to lower your cost of doing business. Through our Grassroots Action Network and OneVoice program, we work with a network of approximately 5,000 companies statewide who see the value in such a service and provide the financial support that keeps our access, advocacy, and assistance efforts going strong. As Maine's Chamber, we make sure that the business environment of the state continues to thrive. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce advocates on behalf of their interests before the legislature and regulatory agencies and through conferences, seminars, and affiliated programs.

A message from the president...

"It's all about keeping Maine competitive..."

by Dana Connors



As you may have heard, a truly bi-partisan coalition – Keep Maine Competitive – has been formed through the Maine Chamber to lead an effort to remove the 3% surcharge. The Maine State Chamber hosted a press conference on Thursday, February 9, with more than 60 business and economic representatives present to request that the legislature, through the budget process, remove this economically-damaging income tax increase imposed by referendum Question 2 last fall.

The resulting 10.15% income tax rate will forever keep Maine in the economic wilderness. Kicking in where it does, at the \$200,000 level, gives us the second highest income tax rate in the entire country. Its chilling effect on our economy is already self-evident.

It's imperative that we save, and grow, Maine's economy and don't make our beautiful state anymore of an outlier than it is already considered by some. We do support education – in fact we support more funding for education – but we must have a competitive business climate to provide jobs for our graduates as well as money for our schools and teachers.

Our press conference showed there are real world consequences for individual employers, citizens and our state if we fail to act this year while the legislature is in session. Our members are committed to repeal of the 3%, but we are also stand ready to work with lawmakers and the Governor to find a better way to get funding to our schools and our teachers. Now is the time to begin that work in earnest, ☐

Statewide coalition of Maine businesses urges repeal of 3% tax surcharge

Tax would have many far-reaching and negative impacts on Maine's economy and competitiveness



At a Thursday, February 9 press conference, a statewide, bi-partisan coalition of Maine businesses called “Keep Maine Competitive” urged Maine legislators to repeal, through the state budget process, the recently-passed three percent tax surcharge on businesses and families. While Maine businesses believe all state public schools need to be adequately funded, this tax would have many far-reaching and negative impacts on Maine’s economy and competitiveness.

The tax, which would raise an estimated \$157 million from families and businesses earning more than \$200,000 annually, would make Maine the second-highest marginal tax rate state in the country with a rate over 10 percent. Not only does the tax target small business owners, but it would make it harder for Maine to attract professionals and entrepreneurs and retain successful businesses and professionals. It would have a detrimental effect on Maine’s economy, and make it more difficult for Maine to compete economically with other states.

“‘Keep Maine Competitive’ believes all of Maine’s public schools need to be adequately funded, but we must make sure we do so in a way that does not harm our state’s economy, impact our ability to compete, make Maine less attractive to professionals and new business, or put an unfair burden on so many of our state’s small and family-owned businesses,” said

Maine State Chamber of Commerce President Dana Connors. “We urge Maine lawmakers to repeal this new tax, as a competitive business climate is critical for economic growth in Maine.”

“While the intent of the tax is well-meaning, if enacted, it would have many far-reaching and negative effects on Maine’s already fragile economy,” said Peter Anastos, co-founder and principal of Maine Course Hospitality Group. “Maine students deserve a growing, thriving economy with good jobs waiting for them when they graduate and are looking to start their careers, but this tax would have the opposite effect by weakening our economy and undermining our ability to raise necessary revenues for effective investments in education.”

The three percent tax surcharge would apply to Maine businesses that pass their income through the owner’s individual income tax form, including sub-chapter S corporations, Limited Liability Partnerships, and other pass-through entities. It would apply to individuals and joint filers, reinstates the marriage penalty, and two-thirds of taxpayers targeted by this extra income tax are small business owners. It would make Maine the second highest marginal tax rate state in the country after California, making our state even more of an outlier, and creating more disincentives to start, grow, or keep businesses – and jobs — in Maine. □

Maine State Chamber opposes elimination of Board of Tax Appeals

The Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Taxation will be rescheduling its February 9 (inclement weather) public hearing on the Governor’s biennial budget for fiscal years 2018-2019 relating to the elimination of the Board of Tax Appeals. MSCC staff Linda Caprara will testify in opposition to the elimination of the board.

The Maine State Chamber supports the board, which was established back in 2012, because it provides taxpayers with an independent voice, a fair system to resolve disputes with Maine Revenue Services (MRS) regarding determinations made by MRS on sales, income and estate, business taxes, franchise taxes and special taxes. The board ultimately provides taxpayers with the ability to have a fair and just, timely, and inexpensive hearing.

The Maine State Chamber believes that the entity (MRS) that renders a decision on a tax case should not be the same entity that decides the outcome of an appeal on that case. After all, Maine Revenue Services is the entity responsible for levying taxes, making determinations regarding appeals involving taxes, and administering the law. The Maine State Chamber also believes that having an independent board to review appeals made by taxpayers, after receiving reconsideration determinations by MRS, is only fair.

If the board was eliminated, taxpayers would have to live with any appeals decisions made by MRS, the same entity that rendered the decision in the first place or would have to appeal their case directly to Superior Court. Appeals made to the court can be very costly for Maine businesses and would be well out of reach financially for most taxpayers. In addition, decisions made before the board are timely. On average cases that are heard by the Board take about 7.5 months, compared to the 24.8 months if the same case is heard before Superior Court.

The work session on this budget proposal will be scheduled before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation after the public hearing occurs. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

Leadership Summit... (Continued from Page 1...)

of the House Sara Gideon (D-Freeport), along with Senate Minority Leader Sen. Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook), and Assistant House Minority Leader Rep. Eleanor Espling (R-New Gloucester) discussed the Legislature's priorities in the coming months. Legislative leadership also provided Maine State Chamber board members and guests with their thoughts on a variety of policy issues, including the concerns over the fallout over the passage of Question 2 and the resulting 3% surtax, tax reform, economic development efforts, education reform and funding, the referendum process, and workforce development issues.

Friday morning continued the long-standing tradition of roundtable breakout sessions. Because of the number of critical issues likely to be debated this session, a fourth breakout session was added: tax policy and the budget, education and workforce development needs now and moving forward; energy and infrastructure policies; and, the referendum process, including fallout from the 2016 election cycle and strengthening the referendum process. Each of the one-hour sessions resulted in thoughtful and meaningful dialogue between business leaders and policy makers that hopefully will help shape the discussions in the Statehouse this session as well as going forward.

The success of the 2017 Leadership Summit is centered on the highly-engaged participation of legislators, cabinet officials and leadership. Including President Thibodeau, Speaker Gideon, Sen. Jackson, Rep. Espling, others members of Senate and House leadership, 26 legislators from key joint standing committees, and five administrators from critical departments joined us, including:

- Sen. Cathy Breen (D-Cumberland) member of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- Sen. Andre Cushing III (R-Penobscot County), Assistant Senate Majority Leader;
- Sen. James Hamper (R-Oxford), Senate chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- Sen. Dawn Hill, member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary;

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Leadership Summit... **(Continued from Page 4...)**

- Rep. Brian Hubbell (D-Bar Harbor), member of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- Sen. Roger Katz (R-Kennebec), member of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- Sen. Brian Langley (R-Hancock), Senate chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs;
- Sen. Nate Libby (D-Androscoggin), Assistant Senate Minority Leader;
- Sen. Garrett Mason (R-Androscoggin County), Senate Majority Leader;
- Rep. Matthew Pouliot, (R-Augusta) member of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation;
- Sen. Kimberly Rosen (R-Hancock), Senate chair of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety;
- Rep. Tom Winsor (R-Norway), member of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- Sen. David Woodsome (R-York), Senate Chair Energy, Utilities and Technology;
- Rep. Susan Austin (R-Gray) member of the Joint Standing Committee of Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development;
- Rep. Ryan Fecteau, House Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development;
- Rep. Jared Golden (D-Lewiston) Assistant House Majority Leader;
- Rep. Martin Grohman (D-Biddeford), member of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety;
- Rep. Andrew McLean (D-Gorham), House chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation;
- Rep. Wayne Parry (R-Arundel), member of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation;
- Rep. Nathan Wadsworth (R-Hiram), member of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology;



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Leadership Summit...

(Continued from Page 5...)

- Mr. David Bernhardt, commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation;
- Ms. Kathleen Newman, deputy chief of staff in the Office of Governor Paul LePage;
- Ms. Jeanne Paquette, commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor;
- Mr. Richard Rosen, commissioner of Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services; and,
- Mr. Paul Sighinolfi, Executive Director, Maine Workers' Compensation Board.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to travel to Sunday River for our 2017 Leadership Summit and participate in the event. We especially wish to thank legislative leaders, administrators, legislators, and our board members for their participation. Without their willingness to engage in a constructive and frank dialogue, this event would not be the success it is each year.

We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude for the generosity of our sponsors:

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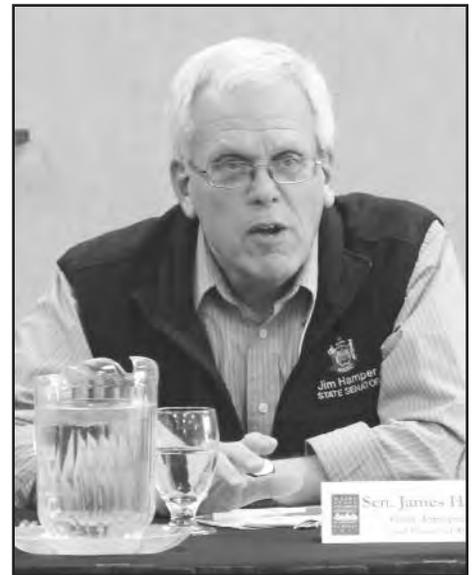
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Governor Lepage presents State of the State address



EDITOR'S NOTE: On Tuesday, February 7, 2017, Governor Paul LePage delivered his State of the State address, outlining his last biennial budget, to a joint convention of the Maine Legislature and many invited guests, administrators, and dignitaries. Below is the text of Governor LePage's address, as prepared for delivery, for your review and consideration.

Members of the 128th Legislature, distinguished guests, and my fellow citizens:

Let me begin by first recognizing a few individuals. To my lovely wife Ann and my children—I would not be here tonight without you. Ann, you have made Maine proud as our First Lady.

Allison Salsbury of Bar Harbor is here tonight with her daughter, Kathy. She is an elderly widow, and she knows about the hardships Mainers are facing.

To Technical Sergeant Christopher Ludden, the military herald this evening, thank you for your courageous service to our state and nation. Ann and I are so grateful to all of our military and their families for their service.

I'm here tonight to speak to the Maine people about the future of our state. Our economy and our way of life are under attack.

Older Mainers who have worked their entire lives are losing their homes because of tax or utility bills—and many local governments condone it. Sadly, Maine Municipal Association defends it.

The taxes Mainers have paid all their lives fund the organization that throws them on the street. It has to stop. We must protect our elderly!

We must also protect younger Mainers. Our families are losing good-paying jobs. It's all because of a faulty ideology.

Maine was once renowned for its rugged individualism. Liberals are now trying to transform our state into a social-ist utopia.

Utopia is an ideology—no amount of taxpayers' money can make it a reality.

We have made great strides in shrinking state government, but liberals continue to provide all things to all people free. "Free" is very expensive to someone.

As Franklin D. Roosevelt said during his Annual Message to Congress in 1935:

"The lessons of history, confirmed by the evidence immediately before me, show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber.

"To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit. It is inimical to the dictates of sound policy. It is in violation of the traditions of America."

It was true in 1935, and it is true in 2017. Liberals have not learned from history. They have just changed tactics.

They are doing an end run around the Legislature by highjacking the citizens' referendum process.

They say they are helping low-income Mainers by raising the minimum wage and taxing the so-called "rich." But they are harming our economy. We are losing doctors, dentists, psychiatrists and other professionals we so badly need. They are harming small family businesses. They are harming low-income workers. Even worse, they are harming our elderly.

Successful people are not the problem; they are the solution. They create jobs.

They pay the most in sales, excise, income and property taxes. They already pay two-thirds of the tax burden in Maine.

Taxing them out of Maine does not help our economy—it harms it.

It is harmful to lay off employees. It is harmful to put your local restaurant out of business. It is harmful to drive our elderly deeper into poverty.

Liberals from Southern Maine never go to Calais or Machias or Rumford or Fort Kent. But I do. I see the elderly living in poverty.

I see how Maine families are struggling. Our industries are laying off hard-working Mainers or leaving the state.

Madison Paper, Verso in Bucksport, Verso in Jay, Lincoln Pulp and Paper, Millinocket and East Millinocket and Old Town—just to name a few.

We need to help our families, not harm them. My budget has a theme: Do No Harm. I am asking you to join me—Do No Harm! Our citizens voted to raise the minimum wage. They also voted to "tax the rich." I get it. But they did not read the legislation behind the ballot questions. They didn't know it would destroy our fragile economy.

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State of the State...

(Continued from Page 7...)

We reduced the unfunded pension liability. We improved our credit rating. We paid the hospitals!

We built the Budget Stabilization Fund from nearly zero to \$123 million. It could have been \$300 million, if we had the will to be just a bit more fiscally responsible.

We reduced the structural gap from \$1.2 billion to \$165 million. For the first time since 2005, we had positive cash flow at the end of the fiscal year.

We have lowered the income tax from 8.5 percent to 7.15 percent. During this period, revenues started to increase. Wow, imagine that—signs of prosperity.

Under my administration, Maine has been moving forward. To paraphrase Ronald Reagan: Free enterprise has done more to reduce poverty than all the government programs dreamed up by liberals.

Liberals are making the Legislature irrelevant and going straight to referendum. We need to reform our referendum process.

Tax Reform...

Rich, out-of-state unions and progressive groups are moving us backwards. They spent millions to hit us with the second-highest income tax in the country.

California's highest tax rate kicks in at \$1 million of income. Maine's starts at \$200,000 household income. California is a wealthy state.

It is 18th on the Family Prosperity Index—Maine is 44th. We cannot afford this tax.

We must help Maine families achieve prosperity—not shatter their American Dreams with high taxation, high energy costs and an underperforming education system.

Eliminating the income tax is the biggest pay raise Mainers could get—but there is no political will to promote prosperity in Augusta.

My budget counteracts the damage from the 10.15 percent income tax. It is designed to do no harm.

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Legislative Strictly Social

This Networking Reception
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The Maine State Chamber invites you to its **FREE Legislative Strictly Social** networking reception. Our annual Legislative Strictly Social is an ideal way for you, the Maine business leader, to interact with legislators, business associates, new and prospective Maine State Chamber members, and government representatives in a relaxed setting. *Registration information and directions are available from our homepage at www.mainechamber.org.*



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Maine State Chamber and Educate Maine release policy brief on strategies to build a strong foundation for Maine students

Starting all students with a strong educational foundation early in life is sound economic development for Maine

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce and Educate Maine released a policy brief Wednesday, February 8, outlining five strategies (including nine actions) to ensure Maine students receive a strong early childhood foundation that prepares them to succeed in learning and in life. The “*A Strong Foundation for Maine*” brief is the third in a series of policy briefs designed to achieve the goals laid out in Educate Maine’s “*Education Indicators for Maine*” report.

The goal of the five strategies and nine actions in “*A Strong Foundation for Maine*” is to ensure all Maine students receive a strong developmental foundation in early childhood that allows them to succeed in school and prepares them for success in their careers as adults. There are few investments that have the same proven return on investment as those in the development and health of our youngest people. Maine’s business community sees the value in these investments and wants to ensure all Maine children have every opportunity to succeed in life. They know this to be a particularly effective strategy in leveling the playing field for economically disadvantaged students, closing achievement gaps before they form.

“Too many of our students enter school trailing their peers and have to fight to catch up, falling short of their full potential,” said Maine State Chamber of Commerce President Dana Connors. “We are confident the early childhood strate-

gies and actions outlined in this policy brief will help to make sure all Maine kids get the same opportunities to succeed and grow our communities and economy.”

“On average, half of Maine’s students come from low-income households and don’t enjoy the same benefits or realize the same success as their higher income peers,” said Ed Cervone, executive director of Educate Maine. “If Maine wants to get serious about closing these achievement gaps and provide real opportunities for every student, we cannot ignore the important developmental time of early childhood, and must make the investments in research-based programs and practices proven to provide them with a strong foundation for success.”

The five strategies identified in the report are 1) increase access to and participation in quality early education opportunities, 2) improve the quality of early childhood programs and offerings, 3) align early childhood programs with elementary school programs, 4) maintain healthy physical environments for positive brain development, 5) and look to examples in other states for reaching students earlier in their lives. The 9 actions under those strategies are a focused list of best practices that will help achieve these goals.

The “*A Strong Foundation for Maine*” policy brief can be found online at www.mainechamber.org/earlychildhooded. For more information on Educate Maine’s “*Education Indicators for Maine*” report, please go to www.educatemaine.org. □

About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce: *As the state’s most influential business advocate, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce works to ensure a business climate in which Maine State Chamber members, large and small, can compete successfully in the local, regional, national, and world marketplaces. As The Voice of Maine Business, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce proudly represents a network of 5,000 businesses of all sectors, sizes, and regions. It advocates on their behalf daily before the Legislature, state departments, and various levels of state government.*

About Educate Maine: *Educate Maine is a business-led education advocacy organization whose mission is to champion college and career readiness and to increase the education attainment of all Maine people. All Maine students should graduate from high school prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and in the workplace, and the number of Maine people with a college degree, a postsecondary certificate, or a professional credential must increase to meet the demands of the economy.*

For the most current information, visit www.mainechamber.org



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State of the State... (Continued from Page 8...)

By 2020, Maine's income tax will be set at 5.75 percent for all Maine families. We must keep lowering the income tax until it is gone!

My budget lowers corporate taxes, broadens the sales tax and eliminates the death tax. The non-partisan Tax Foundation called my tax plan "a recipe for a more competitive state."

It cuts taxes, welcomes professionals and allows families businesses to thrive. It does no harm!

Minimum Wage...

As written, the law to raise the minimum wage will wreak havoc. Mainers did not read the 32 pages of legal jargon behind the ballot question.

If the question asked Mainers to slash the pay for their favorite server, they would have said no.

If it asked them to increase the cost of everything their grandparents buy,

they would have said no.

Let's be clear: I am not opposed to a higher minimum wage. But I would rather talk about career wages. Liberals always aim low—they want to raise the starter wage.

I don't want to create more 9-dollar-an-hour jobs. I want to create 29-dollar-an-hour jobs.

The minimum wage law will be devastating to the restaurant industry. Menu prices will increase dramatically to cover the new labor costs.

It will eliminate the tip credit for employers, which will end tipping as we know it.

Restaurant servers who now make \$20 to \$30 an hour will get \$12 an hour with much lower tips—if any. This promotes poverty—not prosperity.

This law will prevent teens and low-skilled workers from getting jobs. Employers will not pay \$12 an hour for a kid with no work experience or someone with no skills.

Higher prices will push the elderly deeper into poverty. 358,000 Mainers on

fixed incomes won't get a raise. They cannot afford higher prices.

The minimum wage will go up \$4 an hour, but the average increase in Social Security is just \$4 a month.

Indexing is even worse. It means the minimum wage will go automatically every year—even in a recession.

We got rid of indexing for the gasoline tax because the tax kept going up, even after gas hit \$4 a gallon during the Great Recession.

We already have an employee shortage across the state. Most places already pay more than a minimum wage. It was never supposed to be a living wage.

It is used as a starter wage and for those who cannot work at 100 percent capacity.

Make no mistake, this is not about economics. It is about a socialist ideology—the same kind that has failed in Greece, Venezuela and other countries.

Liberals only care about ideology. They don't care about raising prices on your grandparents. They don't care if your teen can't find work or mentally dis-

Continued on Page 11...

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State of the State... (Continued from Page 10...)

abled people lose their jobs.

They don't care if they slash the pay for a single mother working as a waitress from \$20 to \$12.

Elderly...

This budget protects the people liberals consider expendable. They have forgotten the elderly.

They have forgotten the disabled and those with intellectual disabilities. It seems that whenever the Governor proposes to help the elderly or the mentally

and physically disabled, it gets killed in committee.

That's why the Maine people and the American people say government is not working. I don't care who gets credit for helping them. We just need to get it done for the Maine people.

Patrick and Janet Caskin of Litchfield wrote to me to say their daughter Katie is still on a waitlist for intensive home support. She has an intellectual disability. She has been on the Section 21 waitlist for five years.

Two years ago, my budget paid for the entire Section 21 waitlist. If the Legislature funded my initiative, Katie would be getting full-time care today.

But liberals have forgotten Mainers like Katie. She is not a priority for them.

Liberals only funded one-third of the waitlist. They spent the rest of the money on welfare for able-bodied, non-citizen asylum seekers.

They don't care about our elderly or the physically and mentally disabled. I do. When it comes to our most vulnerable citizens, I will do no harm!

We have realigned the welfare system and the Medicaid program to prioritize the elderly and those with all forms of disabilities.

As Ronald Reagan said: "We should measure welfare's success by how many people leave welfare, not how many are added." Able-bodied Mainers between 19 and 50 need to get off welfare. Get off the couch and get a job!

Our limited resources are helping our most vulnerable. In our budget, elderly and disabled Mainers make up more than 40 percent of MaineCare—an increase of 35 percent since 2011.

In Fiscal Year 2019, the elderly and disabled will make up 45 percent of MaineCare.

My budget includes more than \$30 million to help with increased costs for Medicare Part B and Part D. We also need to eliminate the income tax on retired pensioners. We provide tax relief to low-income and elderly homeowners with the Property Tax Fairness Credit.

This should help elderly Mainers like Juliet Nyholt of Solon, who has been struggling to pay her taxes. In 1986, her taxes were \$300—now they are over \$2,000. This is wrong.

No Mainer should be taxed out of their home—especially when environmental groups are taking hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of land value off the tax rolls.

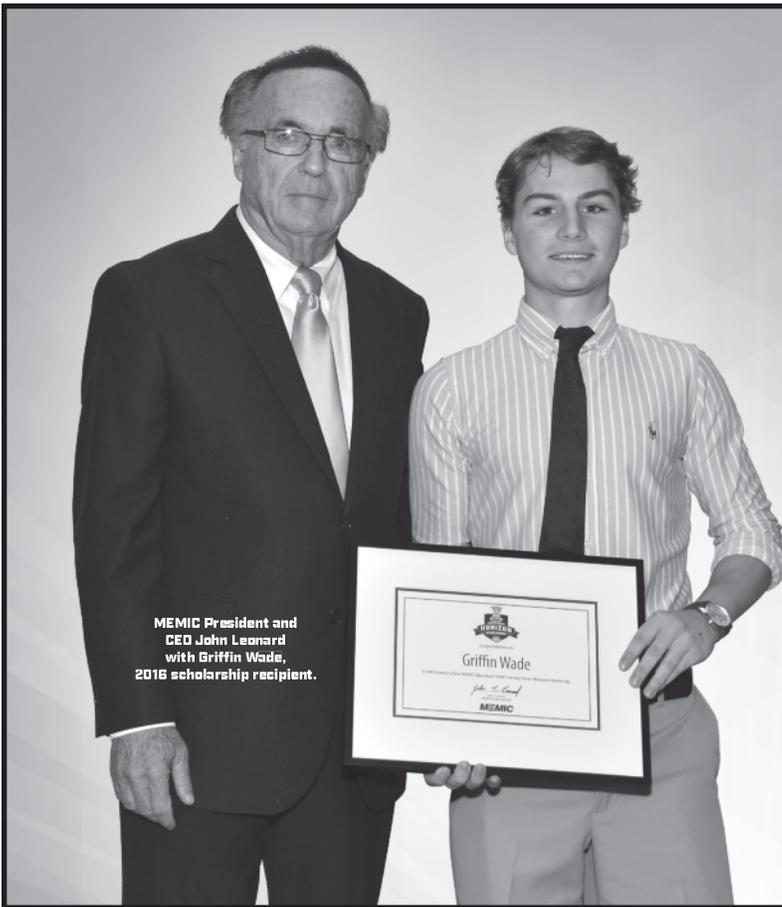
Communities and the Maine Municipal Association may do things right—they follow the law regarding tax liens and foreclosures. But they should do the right thing—help our elderly stay in their homes.

It is unethical and immoral to take away a senior citizen's home. They lose all the equity they built up during their lives. They end up on the street.

Richard Sukeforth, an elderly veter-

Continued on Page 12...





MEMIC President and CEO John Leonard with Griffin Wade, 2016 scholarship recipient.



NOW ACCEPTING Applications for MEMIC's Scholarship to Help the Families of Seriously Injured Workers

As Maine's leading workers' comp insurer, MEMIC knows that a workplace injury can have a profound impact on the worker's family. MEMIC's Harvey Picker Horizon Scholarship was created to help families confronted by a significant injury to see a brighter future on the horizon.

Visit memic.com by April 28, 2017 to apply.

MEMIC

**State of the State...
(Continued from Page 11...)**

an, and his wife, Leonette, lost their home in Albion after the town seized it for back taxes. They were thrown out with no place to go. He is here with his daughter, Yvette.

I'm pleased to announce Adria Horn of our Bureau of Veterans Services jumped into action and discovered he was eligible for VA benefits.

Mr. Sukeforth is now getting almost \$1,200 a month. This is how we should treat our elderly!

Opioid Crisis...

We are also addressing the opioid crisis that is ravaging our state.

We have been urging the Legislature to take action for years, but many have been dragging their feet.

They held up our efforts to hire more MDEA agents for two years—God only knows how much heroin poured into our state during that time.

Back then, heroin was killing 5 Mainers a week. Now it's over 7.

MDEA seized 8 pounds of heroin in January—that's almost 50,000 deadly doses of heroin mixed with fentanyl. It was the largest seizure of heroin in the state's history. It saved thousands of lives. Law enforcement works.

But liberals don't care about law enforcement efforts to stop out-of-state drug dealers from selling their poison to Mainers.

They simply want to throw money at treatment programs. They don't identify which programs the money should go to—they just want the headlines to say they are doing something. We are doing something. Strong financial management at DHHS has allowed us to budget an extra \$2.4 million in funding for opioid-addiction treatment for the uninsured.

This money will fund 359 openings for therapy and medication-assisted treatment for uninsured Mainers afflicted by the heroin and the opioids—immediately.

Seven Mainers a week are being killed by deadly opiates. Three babies a day are born afflicted by or addicted to

drugs. This drug epidemic is killing our young people.

Education Reforms...

Liberals haven't just forgotten our elderly. They have forgotten our children, too.

Out-of-state teachers' unions spent millions on a referendum to tax the so-called "rich."

We do not need more money for education—we need more accountability in education.

Only 59 cents of every dollar spent on education in Maine makes it into the classroom. The national average is 64 cents. Our children deserve more!

This attempt to "tax the rich" will drive successful people out of Maine. Only 10 percent of taxpayers pay two-thirds of the tax burden in Maine. By chasing them out of the state, liberals will generate less money for education—not more.

We are seeking accountability and efficiency in education funding. Instead of spending money on a top-heavy admin-

Continued on Page 13...

State of the State... (Continued from Page 12...)

istrative structure, we direct it where it is needed most: our students and our underpaid teachers.

This budget enables communities to form regional education systems to reduce administrative costs.

More importantly, this budget sets the stage for a statewide teacher contract. This contract will increase the base pay for teacher salaries and increase access to quality teachers throughout Maine.

Good teachers in rural Maine are lured away by wealthy communities that pay more.

This needs to stop. Teachers in rural Maine should get the same pay as teachers in wealthy towns. All Maine children deserve good teachers!

We also need to stop double-dipping, and we need to pay effective teachers what they are worth. Gimmicks like double-dipping will come to haunt our education system. We need to replace the unsustainable age imbalance and let young teachers enter our school system.

We are also reducing the cost of higher education. We have increased funding to the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and Maine Maritime Academy to help control tuition cost.

We want to make it easier for young

people to stay in Maine. I will once again propose funding for zero-interest loans for all higher ed students who decide to live and work in Maine.

Business owners who help pay off student loans should be able to write it off quickly—not over 20 years.

Energy...

Young people need good jobs. Businesses need all the help they can get to stay competitive and create good jobs.

The PUC's decision on net energy billing is the latest example. It raises rates on elderly and poor Mainers to subsidize solar panels for affluent people.

This rate hike was pushed by environmentalists, special interests, the public advocate and some Legislative leaders. Rather than protect Maine ratepayers, the PUC caved to special interests.

I have no problem if wealthy people with solar panels are paid for the excess electricity they generate. However, they should not be paid for the transmission and distribution of the excess power.

The PUC ruled Mainers will pay for the excess generation, as well as the transmission and distribution of the excess power. But Emera and CMP will also charge the ratepayers to transmit and distribute this excess electricity.

Ratepayers are being charged twice so people who put solar panels on their roof can recoup their money faster. Our elderly, our poor and our most vulnerable Mainers should not be subsidizing people who can afford to install expensive solar panels.

The wealthy solar industry will line its pockets on the backs of hardworking Mainers—not to mention our poor and most vulnerable who can least afford it.

We should be able to agree on a sensible energy policy. We should provide the most affordable energy that does the least harm to the environment.

I ask the Legislature three questions:

- 1 Should we lower energy costs?
- 2 Should we lower carbon dioxide levels in the most cost-effective manner?
- 3 Should we reduce our demand for oil?

If we agree the answer to all three is

Continued on Page 14...



State of the State...

(Continued from Page 13...)

“yes,” then we can become a state that supports job creators and protects the environment.

But liberals continue to support their favorite—and very expensive—forms of renewal energy. They have no political desire to reduce rates for Mainers.

Our energy costs have gone from 12th highest in the nation to 11th highest. We are going backwards.

Liberals continue to deny the harm they are doing to our job creators and our economy. Put very simply, higher rates leave less money for higher wages.

Conclusion...

We are trying to attract small businesses and successful young professionals. We need creative innovators with an entrepreneurial spirit.

We must keep our families here and attract new families from other states and countries. We must give our young people a reason to stay in Maine.

We have worked hard to reduce spending and limit the growth of government. It has not been easy.

When writing about American Presidents, Andy Jones said: “Whenever government in general is smaller, the people have more say over their own lives, and the nation becomes more prosperous.”

We are trying to make Maine more prosperous. It takes courage. We were elected to make tough decisions for the hard-working taxpayers and the forgotten Mainers—not just lobbyists and special interests.

We are here to make sure our progress is not rolled back by poorly thought-out referendums. We are here do no harm. Over the next two years, I hope we can work together to set Maine on the path to future prosperity.

I ask you, the members of the 128th Legislature, to join me in protecting our economy, our families, our small businesses and, most importantly, our elderly.

Despite the challenges facing us, I ask you to move Maine forward—not backward. I ask you to do no harm.

Now, let’s get to work! ☐

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-Stephanie Briggs, Associate Director of Corporate Partnerships

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Public Hearings

Public hearings are open to everyone. This public hearing schedule is subject to change. Questions may be directed to the Secretary of the Senate's Office at (207) 287-1540. For the most current schedule, please visit <http://legislature.maine.gov/lto/committee-membership/9089/> or contact the committee clerk.

Monday, February 13, 2017

Environment and Natural Resources

10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 216

LD 182, An Act To Protect Firefighters by Establishing a Prohibition on the Sale and Distribution of New Upholstered Furniture Containing Certain Flame-retardant Chemicals (Sponsor: Rep. Kumiega of Deer Isle)

Veterans and Legal Affairs

10:00 a.m.; State House, Room 437

LD 31, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require That Signatures on a Direct Initiative of Legislation Come from Each Congressional District (Sponsor: Espling of New Gloucester)

LD 53, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Prohibit Payment Per Signature for Citizen Petition Drives (Sponsor: Rep. Guerin of Glenburn)

LD 212, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require That Signatures on a Direct Initiative of Legislation Come from Each State Senatorial District (Sponsor: Rep. Harvell of Farmington)

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

Energy, Utilities and Technology

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211

LD 229, An Act To Prohibit an Electric Utility from Charging a Customer for Using an Electromechanical Meter (Sen. Miramant of Knox)

Health and Human Services

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 209

LD 161, An Act To Remove the Treasurer of State from the Maine Vaccine Board (Sponsor: Rep. Perry of Calais)

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Taxation

1:00 p.m.; State House, Room 127

LD 72, An Act To Clarify the Tax Laws for Title to Real Estate by Releasing Inheritance Tax Liens (Sponsor: Rep. Pouliot of Augusta)

LD 77, An Act To Exempt from Maine Income Tax Income Earned by Members of the Armed Services While on Active Duty (Sponsor: Rep. Espling of New Gloucester)

LD 235, An Act To Repeal the Service Provider Tax (Sponsor: Sen. Brakey of Androscoggin)

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Insurance and Financial Services

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 220

LD 284, An Act Concerning Notification after a Security Breach (Sponsor: Rep. Stearns of Guilford) □

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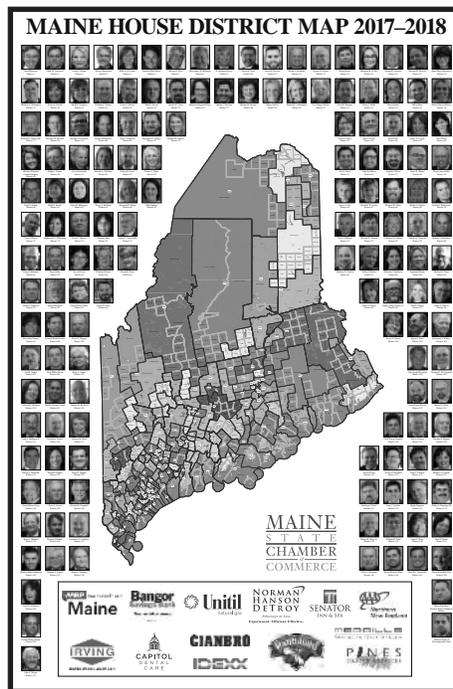
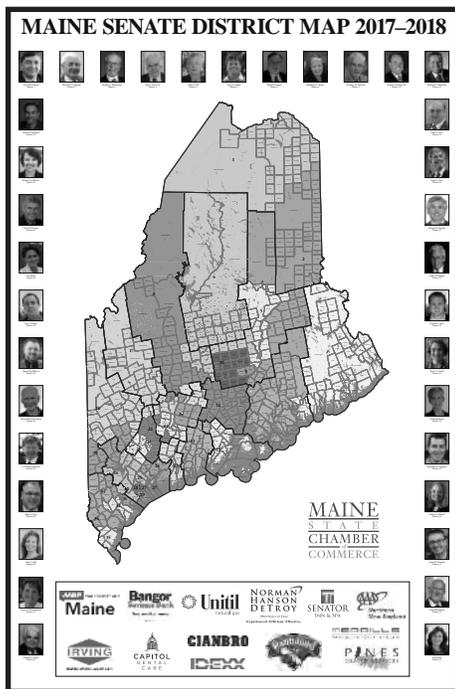
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LEGISLATIVE POSTERS NOW AVAILABLE

MAINE STATE CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has produced the two-year legislative posters again this year. Each of the two legislative posters contains color photos of all Senate and House members of the 128th Legislature, as well as a map of the state's legislative districts.



**The free posters are available
for pick up at the Maine State Chamber's
office in Augusta, while supplies last.**

**The Maine State Chamber would like to thank the sponsors
of our 2017-2018 legislative posters:**

AAA-Northern New England; AARP Maine; Bangor Savings Bank; Capitol Dental Care; CIANBRO; Hannaford Supermarkets; IDEXX Laboratories, Inc.; Irving Woodlands LLC; Merrill's Investigations & Security; Norman, Hanson & DeTroy, LLC; Pines Health Services; Senator Inn & Spa; and, Unitil Corp.

Digest of New Legislation

Maine Chamber staff have studied each of these recently printed bills to assess potential impact on business trends. If you have concerns regarding any bill, please communicate those concerns to a member of our governmental services staff at (207) 623-4568.

ENVIRONMENTAL

LD 375, An Act To Establish a Carpet Stewardship Program. (Sen. Saviello, R-Franklin) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill provides for the establishment of a new stewardship program in the State for discarded carpet. Under the bill, a producer of carpet, or an organization comprising one or more producers of carpet, submits a plan for the establishment of a carpet stewardship program to the Commissioner of Environmental Protection for approval. Once approved, a program operates to provide convenient, free statewide collection opportunities for discarded carpet, and discarded carpet collected through the program is recycled or otherwise responsibly managed. A program is funded through the imposition of a carpet stewardship assessment, subject to review and approval by the commissioner, which is added to the purchase price of all carpet sold in the State.

LD 385, An Act To Establish a Stewardship Program for Certain Rechargeable Batteries. (Sen. Saviello, R-Franklin) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill provides for the establishment of a new stewardship program in the State for discarded nickel-cadmium and small sealed lead-acid rechargeable batteries. Under the bill, a producer of such rechargeable batteries, or an organization comprising one or more producers of such rechargeable batteries, submits a plan for the establishment of a battery stewardship program to the Commissioner of Environmental Protection for approval. Once approved, a program operates to provide convenient, free statewide collection opportunities for discarded rechargeable batteries covered under the program, and discarded rechargeable batteries collected through the program are recycled or otherwise responsibly managed. This bill also amends existing laws relating to certain rechargeable battery types to avoid statutory conflicts with the new stewardship program for rechargeable batteries.

Continued on Page 18...

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 17...)

LD 395, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 200: Metallic Mineral Exploration, Advanced Exploration and Mining, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection. Emergency (Rep. Tucker, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources*. This resolve provides for legislative review of Chapter 200: Metallic Mineral Exploration, Advanced Exploration and Mining, a major substantive rule of the Department of Environmental Protection.

LD 399, An Act To Revise Maine's Environmental Laws. (Rep. Tucker, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources*. This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to revise laws governing environmental protection.

LD 400, An Act Regarding the Construction or Placement of Decks within the Shoreland Zone. (Rep. Turner, R-Burlington) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources*. This bill allows municipalities to adopt ordinances that allow the construction or placement of a deck within the setbacks established pursuant to the laws governing shoreland zoning as long as certain requirements are met.

LD 441, An Act To Require Certification under the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule. (Sen. Libby, D-Androscoggin) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources*. This bill requires contractors engaged in painting, renovation, remodeling, maintenance or repair activities on buildings constructed before 1978 to have on-site a person certified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the federal renovation, repair and painting rule. It also requires persons performing maintenance on a multi-unit residential building, the owner of which receives public money in the form of a housing subsidy or voucher, to be certified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

LD 450, An Act To Prevent Oil Spills in Casco Bay. (Sen. Chipman, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources*. This bill amends the regulatory powers of the Board of Environmental Protection to require that rules relating to oil discharge prevention and pollution control for terminals, facilities, refineries, vessels and related equipment adopted under the board's

Continued on Page 19...



"The Bottom Line" explores timely issues crucial to Maine's economy

Maine employers are affected every day by issues such as transportation, technology, education, energy, health care, environment, and taxation, just to name a few. That is why the Maine State Chamber launched its television show, *The Bottom Line*, in February 2013. *The Bottom Line* takes an in-depth look at a wide variety of business related issues, their impact on jobs here, and highlights positive aspects of Maine's economy. Host Dana Connors is joined monthly by various experts to essentially "bottom line" the various facets of these and other complex issues that ultimately create jobs and growth in our state.

The Bottom Line airs three times per week on Time Warner's public access station, channel 9 for TWC customers. You can watch it on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. and on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. It is also available on our homepage at www.mainechamber.org. Each episode of *The Bottom Line* is archived at www.mainechamber.org/bottomlinearchive.php.

This month on *The Bottom Line*, host Dana Connors is joined by the Maine State Chamber's Advocacy team to discuss the start of the legislative session and the anticipated hot topics facing the business community this session.



If you'd like to support this initiative, we have a special underwriter opportunity available. Each of the two annual \$2,500 underwriters will receive:

30-second Ad Spot:

Each of our two possible 30-second ads will run approximately 12-16 times per month (every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. and every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.). The underwriter is responsible for the production of the video.

Legislative Week Ahead:

Your logo and website link will be placed on our email broadcast, sent weekly during the legislative session (January through April 2016) to approximately 2,000 subscribers.

Show Highlight:

We welcome your participation as a show guest to highlight your positive economic story in one half-show segment during the year.

Other Mentions:

Annual underwriters will be listed in opening and closing credits on every show, as well as in our newsletter and social media.

For more information about *The Bottom Line*, please contact Melanie Baillargeon, director of communications, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 110, or by emailing melanieb@mainechamber.org. Underwriter inquiries can be sent to Melody Rousseau, sponsorship and advertising sales manager, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org. □

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 18...)

authority must provide, subject to specified exceptions, that all vessels and barges engaged in transfers of oil or oil by-products, including transfers during ship-to-ship bunkering operations, be protected by an oil boom device during those transfers and notify the United States Coast Guard prior to those transfers. The bill also directs the Board of Environmental Protection to amend its existing rules relating to oil discharge prevention and pollution control to reflect these statutory changes.

LD 452, An Act To Remove the Reformulated Gasoline Requirement. (Sen. Hamper, R-Oxford) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill repeals the law requiring retailers to sell only reformulated gasoline in York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Androscoggin, Kennebec, Knox and Lincoln counties and directs the Department of Environmental Protection to amend its rules to agree with the repeal of that law.

LD 493, An Act To Tax the Extraction of Water for Certain Commercial Purposes and Fund Water Quality Programs. (Rep. Melarango, D-Auburn) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill creates an excise tax of 1¢ per 25 gallons of groundwater or surface water extracted from springs or other underground sources in this State by a bottled water operator that extracted more than 1,000,000 gallons in the previous calendar year if the water is packaged for sale. The revenues from the tax are transferred to a newly created Maine Water Quality Testing and Monitoring Fund to be administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. Of the money transferred, 85% will support well water testing and 15% will support lake water quality monitoring and support.

HEALTH CARE

LD 470, An Act To Strengthen Maine's Hospitals and Increase Access to Health Care. (Rep. Devin, D-Newcastle) *Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.* A concept draft, this bill, which would be contingent upon approval by the voters of the State at referendum, proposes to enact measures designed to increase access to health care for citizens of the State and strengthen Maine's hospitals.

LABOR

LD 466, An Act To Protect Employees from Abusive Work Environments. (Sen. Jackson, D-Aroostock) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research, and Economic Development.* This bill provides legal relief for employees who have been harmed psychologically, physically or economically by exposure to abusive work environments. Employees and employers who subject an employee to an abusive work environment are liable, and employers are vicariously liable for the abusive workplace conduct of their employees, in a private civil action brought by the affected employee. The legal remedies made available by this bill do not limit any other legal rights of an individual, except that workers' compensation benefits received under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 39-A for the same injury or illness must be reimbursed from compensation that is earned through the legal remedies made available by this bill.

LD 487, An Act To Promote Keeping Workers in Maine. (Rep. Schneck, D-Bangor) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research, and Economic Development.* A concept draft, this bill proposes to regulate the use of so-called noncompete agreements, which are contracts entered into by an employee prohibiting the employee from working in the same or a similar profession within a time certain after leaving employment with the employer and within a specified geographical area. This bill would restrict the use of noncompete agreements by public and private employers by:

1. Prohibiting their use for low-wage employees;
2. Requiring employers to include in any advertisement for a job a statement that the person hired will be required to sign a noncompete agreement;
3. Requiring employers to notify prospective employees of the noncompete requirement and provide a copy of the noncompete agreement before extending a job offer;
4. Requiring employers to provide additional compensation to those employees who agree to sign a noncompete agreement;
5. Restricting the use of noncompete agreements to those situations when they are necessary to protect trade secrets or confidential information held by that employer;
6. Limiting the duration of noncompete agreements so that they would have to be renegotiated and agreed to after a certain



Legislative Week Ahead

Check it out at
www.mainechamber.org/legweekahead.php

period of time; and,

7. Allowing an employee harmed by the unlawful use of a noncompete agreement to bring suit against the employer and, if the employee prevails, be awarded damages, attorney's fees and court costs.

UTILITIES AND ENERGY

LD 260, An Act To Create the Maine Energy Office. (Rep. Fredette, R-Newport) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill:

1. Renames the Governor's Energy Office the Maine Energy Office. It repeals the language in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 2 that establishes the office and establishes it instead in Title 35-A, expands the headnote for Title 35-A and places the office under the control and supervision of a commissioner, rather than a director;
2. Establishes in the Maine Energy Office a position of deputy commissioner, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate; and,

Continued on Page 20...

Speakers announced for E2Tech's Augusta Energy Forum

On February 16, Maine's energy leaders from Efficiency Maine, the Governor's Energy Office, the Maine State Housing Authority, the Maine Turnpike Authority, and the Office of the Public Advocate will present the most important energy challenges facing the State of Maine and potential solutions to address the most critical issues.

Maine's largest end-use for energy, and biggest consumption of oil, is in the transportation sector. Yet, we have no coordinated policy on reducing oil use or developing alternative fuels, vehicles, or infrastructure programs. Heating Maine's homes and businesses is an annual challenge, yet we fret every winter to ensure that our most vulnerable stay warm. Maine also has the highest per capita energy usage in New England, but we don't have a focused strategy for reducing oil dependence while increasing productivity. Maine's businesses struggle to remain competitive with states that have lower electricity, transportation, and heating costs. On the other hand, policymakers are asked to consider dozens of proposals annually to incentivize renewable electricity generation and promote energy efficiency.

Are these the right priorities? What are the real problems to be solved? What are our energy goals? And, how do we get there?

Speakers include:

- Daniel Brennan, senior director for programs at the Maine State Housing Authority;
- Peter Mills, executive director for the Maine Turnpike Authority;
- Angela Monroe, deputy director for Maine Governor's Energy Office;
- Timothy Schneider, public advocate from the Maine Office of the Public Advocate; and,
- Michael Stoddard, executive director at the Efficiency Maine Trust.

To register or for more information, please visit www.e2tech.org. □

New Legislation... (Continued from Page 19...)

3. Specifies that an amount equal to \$300,000 from the Efficiency Maine Trust must be transferred annually to the Maine Energy Office.

UTILITIES AND ENERGY

LD 405, An Act To Make Changes to the So-called Dig Safe Law. (Sen. Woodsome, R-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy.* This bill specifies that liquefied propane gas distribution systems that have a cumulative tank capacity of over 2,000 gallons are subject to the so-called Dig Safe Law.

LD 406, An Act To Amend the Law Regarding Joint Use of Certain Utility and Telecommunications Infrastructure. (Sen. Woodsome, R-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy.* This bill makes the following changes to the laws governing joint use of equipment regulated by the Public Utilities Commission:

1. It changes the conditions under which the commission may order joint use of equipment by eliminating the requirement that a hearing be held upon the commission's motion or that a complaint be filed by an affected entity before the commission may order joint use of equipment. It also eliminates the requirement that the commission find that the parties have failed to agree on the terms and conditions or compensation for the joint use of equipment before the commission may enter an order.
2. It adds unlit fiber providers, telecommunications service providers and information service providers to the list of entities that may be subject to an order for joint use of equipment.
3. It expands the types of subscribers whose interests must be taken into account by the commission when taking actions or issuing orders related to joint use of equipment.
4. It requires the commission to adopt rules governing joint use of equipment.

LD 421, An Act To Promote Economic Development and Critical Communications for Rural Family Farms, Businesses and Residences by Strategic Public Investment in High-speed Internet. (Rep. McCrea, D-Fort Fairfield) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities*

and Energy. This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to increase funding to the ConnectME Authority from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 to expand universal broadband and high-speed Internet into rural areas identified as the 6% of the State unserved by high-speed Internet. This bill proposes to make expanding high-speed Internet into unserved rural areas a key emphasis in the economic development of and to multiply the return to the State by directing the ConnectME Authority to use the increased funding to increase the rate of strategic broadband investment and leverage additional federal funding to provide middle-mile and last-mile infrastructure in the unserved areas and to correct broadband deficiencies identified in the ConnectME Authority's baseline update of 2013.

LD 422, An Act To Facilitate the Creation of the Maine Water Trust To Regulate and Protect Maine's Water Supply and To Ensure the Quantity and Quality of Maine's Drinking Water. (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy.* This bill imposes a 2-year moratorium, beginning November 1, 2017, on new contracts or agreements by a consumer-owned water utility, municipality, state agency or other governmental entity involving the extraction of more than 75,000 gallons of groundwater during any week or more than 50,000 gallons of groundwater on any day. The bill also directs the Commissioner of Environmental Protection to convene a working group to develop the statutory and regulatory framework for the establishment of the Maine Water Trust, which must be designed to ensure a safe and plentiful drinking water supply to all residents of the State by regulating the use of groundwater for commercial purposes under laws that establish the absolute control and dominion of the State over all groundwater supplies in the State. The commissioner must, on or before January 15, 2019, report the recommendations of the working group to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over environment and natural resources matters, which may report out a bill to implement those recommendations to the First Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.

LD 423, An Act To Extend Internet Availability in Rural Maine. Emergency (Rep. Alley, D-Beals) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy.* This bill provides one-time funding to extend for 2 years a program that provides mobile wireless hot spot devices to libraries in Washington County. □

It's that time of year for employers to be thinking about 2017 internships



Activity on the InternHelpME.com platform continues to grow, particularly from the student population who are interested in opportunities right here in Maine.

Calling all employers! Would you consider offering an internship in 2017? Here's what we are asking Maine employers to consider:

- **Maine's Small Employers:** If you've never offered an internship and could use some help in specific areas of your business – marketing, communications, social media, finance, hospitality, market research, computer science, information technology, engineering, process management, etc. – the possibilities are endless. Maine is a small business state with tremendous opportunities

to offer students real and meaningful experiences, while gaining valuable help in the business' daily operations.

- **Maine's Larger Employers:** We are aware that many of our larger employers already offer internships and have great programs in place, sometimes in very specific fields. We are asking for consideration to other areas of their operations that not been considered in the past.

We have an opportunity through this initiative to help show our college-aged students that there are opportunities and good jobs right here in Maine, but there is also tremendous opportunity for employers to target projects for which

they may not currently have staff resources. This is a sensible approach for both employers and students – a real win-win! Additionally, our colleges and universities recognize that this program broadens the opportunities they can offer their students on a statewide platform that is not available anywhere else.

We are interested in talking with any employer, large or small, who may want to learn more about this program and how it may help them in their daily operations. We are also willing to work with employers one-on-one to help them get started. For more information, please visit www.internhelpme.com or contact Joyce LaRoche, acting director, or Amy Downing, program coordinator, by calling the Maine State Chamber at (207) 623-4568.

Career Fair Season...

It's career fair season at the colleges and universities throughout the state, and we are meeting some talented students who hope to find employment in Maine once they graduate. Last week at the University of Maine Orono's career fair, we met Sean Buchanan. Originally from Saco, Maine, he will be graduating in May 2017 with his degree in Mechanical Engineering. Some of the projects he has worked on at the University of Maine include:

- **Senior Capstone:** The task of this project is to design and build a fully autonomous land drone capable of traversing a designed course in a prescribed time period. The land drone is to be programmed with a series of GPS coordinates to complete the course that may include even terrain, snow, ice, and water. The design of the drone will include a complete design package including drawings schematics and software as well as a full length report on the design process and analysis of the design.
- **Mechanical Design Project:** Designed and modeled a gearbox in Solidworks, based on specifications given by a customer. Full project required a design package that included complete isometric drawings, full assembly, and bill of materials as well as an in-depth formal report that included an analysis of the design.
- **Control Systems Projects:** Utilized MATLAB and Arduino microcontrollers to accomplish various tasks that required use of specifically designed breadboards, wiring, and computer programming.



In his free time, Sean enjoys playing disc golf and kayaking whenever he gets the chance. He also is interested in amateur photography and traveling. If Sean sounds like a good fit for your company and you'd like to see his full resume, please contact Amy Downing by calling (207) 623-4568 or by emailing adowning@mainechamber.org. □



Partners for Youth with Disabilities expands mentoring opportunities to community college students with disabilities on a national scale

During the next three years, Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) will be launching a new online, professional mentoring program to support community college students with disabilities across five states.

According to the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Policy, people with disabilities continue to have an unemployment rate more than two times that of people without disabilities. While higher education often improves employment opportunities, college graduates continue to face barriers when seeking employment, which can lead to unemployment or underemployment. Thanks to a three-year grant from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, Partners for Youth with Disabilities is planning to address this issue by expanding professional mentoring opportunities to community college students with disabilities in five states.

PYD will offer e-mentoring to 330 young adults with the goal of improved employment outcomes through partnerships with Business Leadership Networks in Massachusetts (Work Without Limits),

Connecticut (Connecticut Business Leadership Network), Maine (Maine Business Leadership Network, in partnership with the Maine Chamber of Commerce), Wyoming (Unita County Business Leadership Network), and Kansas (Greater Kansas City Leadership Network), as well as community colleges in these areas.

Community college students will access professional and peer mentors to increase their networks, receive advice, and gather support about achieving goals. They will also participate in topical webinars related to employment readiness and engage in live networking and interview fairs hosted by the Business Leadership Networks.

According to Regina Snowden, founder and executive director of Partners for Youth with Disabilities, “For 31 years, PYD has witnessed the transformative power of mentoring in the lives of youth and young adults with disabilities in their efforts to gain employment and achieve independence. We are thrilled to be expanding our program model beyond Massachusetts through e-

Mentoring. We know that this effort between many collaborating partners will result in increased employment opportunities for the participating young adults.”

Taking the Next Step...

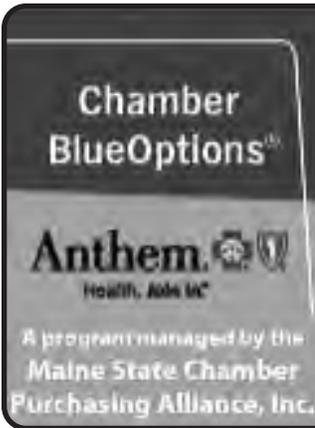
If you have questions or concerns that you feel might be holding you back from hiring someone with a disability, we can help! Please contact the Maine Business Leadership Network (MEBLN), and we’ll put you in contact with another business who has overcome similar concerns.

An affiliate of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Maine Business Leadership Network is a statewide, employer-driven program designed for business leaders to promote hiring practices that enable qualified people with disabilities to enter and succeed in the workplace.

For more information about the MEBLN or how your business can get involved, please visit www.mainebln.org or contact Amy Downing, MEBLN program manager, by emailing adowning@mainechamber.org. □

About Partners for Youth with Disabilities: *Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) empowers youth with disabilities to reach their full potential by providing transformative mentoring programs, youth development opportunities, and inclusion expertise. To learn more, visit www.pyd.org.*

About Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation: *The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, based in the Washington, DC area, was established in 1991 by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation and the Mitsubishi Electric U.S. companies, which produce, sell and distribute a wide range of consumer, industrial, commercial and professional electronics products. The foundation has contributed more than \$15 million to organizations that are empowering young people with disabilities to lead more inclusive and productive lives. To learn more, visit the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation’s website at www.MEAF.org.*



WORKPLACE WELLNESS

HEALTHY EMPLOYEES MAKE CENTS!

February is National Heart Health Month

Lifestyle Changes to Combat Heart Disease

Healthy Eating. Exercise. Quitting Smoking. Managing Stress. They can all have a profound impact on combating heart disease. Making all of these a priority may seem overwhelming, but every small positive step you take can help improve your health.

Healthy Eating...

Following a healthy diet — what does that mean? To lower your risk of heart disease and heart attack, you and your family should follow a diet that is:

- *Low in saturated and trans fats.* Saturated fats are found in some meats, dairy products, chocolate, baked goods, and deep-fried and processed foods. Trans-fats can also be found in fried and processed foods. Both types of fat raise your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad,” cholesterol level.
- *High in omega-3 fatty acids.* Found in fish, nut, oils, such as olive oil, and some seafood and plants, omega-3 fatty acids lower your risk of heart attack, in part by helping prevent blood clots.
- *High in fiber.* Fiber is found in whole grains, fruits and vegetables. A

fiber-rich diet not only helps lower your LDL cholesterol level, but also provides nutrients that may help protect against heart disease.

- *Low in salt and sugar.* A low-salt diet can help you manage your blood pressure. A low-sugar diet can help you prevent weight gain and control diabetes and pre-diabetes.

Exercise...

Being active doesn't have to mean being an Olympian, you can benefit from as little as 60 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. For major health benefits, every week adults should do at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity or two total body strength training workouts.

Quitting Smoking...

If you smoke, you know you need to stop. Smoking can raise your risk of heart disease and heart attack, and it affects every cell in your body. If you can't stop on your own, talk with your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit, or seek out support groups.

Managing Stress...

Managing stress can mean managing

risk. Unmanaged stress can affect your health. It may cause high blood pressure, irregular heart rhythms, damage to your arteries, higher cholesterol levels, and the development and progression of coronary artery disease. Physical activity, medicine and relaxation therapy can help relieve stress.

We've got you covered for all your workplace wellness needs. When employees feel good, they tend to perform better. That's why most Chamber BlueOptions' plans come with employee discounts on health products and services, as well as an online health and fitness program. Just contact your Anthem-appointed insurance producer for more information, or go to the Chamber's BlueOptions web page (www.mainechamber.org/blueoptions.php) to find a producer.

For more information on the Chamber BlueOptions health plan, please contact Joyce LaRoche, executive director of the Maine State Chamber Purchasing Alliance, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 113, or by emailing jlaroche@mainechamber.org, or Amy Downing, program coordinator, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104 or by emailing adowning@mainechamber.org. □

Resources provided by Anthem.com. This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.

Periodicals

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125 Community Drive, Suite 101
Augusta, Maine 04330-8010



Thursday, May 11 ♦ 8:00 a.m. to Noon ♦ Statehouse Hall of Flags

The Maine State Chamber is hosting its annual Business Day at the Statehouse on Thursday, May 11, 2017, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Hall of Flags (Statehouse, Second Floor).

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Linda Caprara, senior government relations specialist / director of grassroots advocacy, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. With your participation, the “Voice of Maine Business” will resonate throughout Augusta!

