

April 18, 2019

Paid leave bill has new life

**And thanks to a Governor's amendment,
it also has bipartisan committee support**

In a not altogether unexpected move at the April 17 work session on **LD 369**, *An Act Authorizing Earned Employee Leave*, the proposal's new bill title, sponsored by Sen. Rebecca Millett (D-Cumberland), the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing did a sudden about face, adopting a new draft amendment sponsored by the Senate Chair Sen. Shenna Bellows (D-Kennebec) on behalf of Governor Janet Mills. The amendment represented a total re-write of the majority report of the bill, stripping the 13-page report to a mere 1.5 pages and addressing many of the concerns expressed by employers. The result was a 9-2 bipartisan "ought to pass" report recommendation, with two committee members absent.

Maine State Chamber members may remember that LD 369 started out with a different title - *An Act to Support Healthy Workplaces and Healthy Families by Providing Earned Paid Sick Leave to Certain Employee*. The bill as originally presented would have allowed full- and part-time workers *at businesses that employ five or more workers* to accrue one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours of work, up to a limit of 40 hours in a year. The employee would have also been allowed to roll over up to 40 hours of unused leave into the next year, but again, the employer could have capped

the leave used time at 40 hours. The leave time would have begun to accrue upon initiation of work, but the employee would not have been able to use the leave time until they had been employed at least 90 days. The employee at an impacted business would have been eligible to use the leave time to care for themselves or a sick family member, or if the employee or a member of the employee's family has been the victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

It should be noted that the definition of "family member" was *extremely* broad in the original LD 369. In addition, the original bill included in its definition of "family member" as "any other individual related by blood or affinity" whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship. The committee divided sharply in its initial votes on the original LD 369. In fact, the committee met a second time after the first round of voting to reconsider its action and amended it further to try and alleviate the many concerns of small businesses. Still, business organizations like the Maine State Chamber remained opposed.

Then, last week, word came regarding yet a third amendment coming from the Governor's office. That proposal, shared with the Maine State Chamber on Friday, April 12, represented a dramatic

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Chamber supports bill to lower Maine's income tax rate

On Wednesday, April 17, the Maine State Chamber testified in support of **LD 1292**, *An Act to Lower Maine's Individual Income Tax*, sponsored by Rep. Beth O'Connor, R-Berwick, at a public hearing before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. The bill would reduce Maine's income tax rates over three years. The lowest rate would decrease from 5.8% to 5.2% to 5% from 2020 through 2022. Maine's middle rate would decrease from 6.75% to 6.3% to 6% from 2020 to 2022, and Maine's highest rate would decrease from 7.15% to 7.05% to 7% from 2020 to 2022.

The Maine State Chamber noted in its testimony that the Legislature has made significant strides in recent years to continually reduce the personal income tax across the board for Maine people, including reducing top income tax rate. Back in 2011, the Legislature lowered income tax rates across the board that resulted in the elimination of income tax liability for approximately 70,000 Maine taxpayers. The proposal included a reduction in the top marginal income tax rate from 8.5% to 7.95%. Then again in 2015, the Legislature again enacted legislation to further bring income tax rates including lowering that top rate yet again to 7.15%.

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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.

Paid Leave...

(Continued from Page 1...)

departure from previous iterations of the proposal and addressed many of the critical concerns from employer groups and individual businesses.

The amendment represents what is known as a "strike and replace" amendment – striking everything from the previous version, including the bill's original title, and replacing the entire old language with new. Therefore, the bill went from 13 pages to 1.5 pages rather quickly. The new LD 369 proposes the following:

- ◆ Rather than paid sick leave, a *paid leave provision* would be created in the statute that governs Maine's labor laws (Title 26);
- ◆ LD 369 would apply to any employer that employs more than 10 employees in the regular course of business for more than 120 days;
- ◆ The employee would earn one hour of *paid leave* for every 40 hours worked, up to 40 hours in a year of employment;
- ◆ Although the employee would begin to accrue the leave upon start-up, the employer doesn't have to allow its use until the employee has worked for 120 days – of course, the employer can choose to allow the leave time to be used earlier;
- ◆ The employee would be paid the base rate of pay when using the leave;
- ◆ The employee should make every effort to give timely notice regarding use of the leave;
- ◆ The employer may offer a greater leave policy (i.e., PTO), and be considered covered;
- ◆ Any enforcement or penalties associated with violations of the law will be enforced by the Maine Department of Labor – no private rights of action; and,
- ◆ Lastly, and most importantly for many businesses with multiple in-state locations, a municipal preemp-

tion would bar individual municipalities from enacting their own paid leave law.

Perhaps Sen. Bellows said it best when she summed up the new proposal, saying it represented "compromise, where everyone had to give." Although the bill garnered considerable bipartisan support, the vote was not unanimous. House Chair Mike Sylvester (D-Portland) voted against the majority report, citing the presence of the municipal preemption, the effort in Portland to pass their own paid sick leave ordinance, and the importance of "home rule." Rep. Larry Lockman (R-Amherst) voted a straight "ought not to pass" on this measure.

Considering where this proposal started and where it has evolved, the bill has come far. Certainly, it is unlikely that the business community will see a better amendment – or quite frankly, a more workable law – if there is going to be a mandatory paid leave law in Maine. The bill will add cost for some small businesses and agricultural facilities. It will also likely to cause issues around absenteeism in the workplace at perhaps the least opportune times.

However, it should not be lost on anyone that something regarding paid sick leave was going to pass this session; the political environment and votes made it a virtual certainty. What's more, the specter of a citizen's-initiated referendum by the Maine Peoples Alliance (MPA) hung over the heads of employers, with the MPA indicating they intended to bring the question to the voters in 2020. If LD 369 passes, that ballot issue will be avoided.

The next step for LD 369 is consideration by the full legislature, which could happen as early as this week. As we have done from the beginning, the Maine State Chamber is following this bill closely and will continue to let our members know about any changes or floor amendments. For questions or additional information, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

Chamber opposes bill to require corporations to disclose charitable donations and would impact corporate governance

On Wednesday, April 17, the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary held a public hearing on **LD 1423**, *An Act to Require Corporate Transparency When Taxpayer Funding is Provided*, sponsored by Rep. Heidi Samson, R-Alfred. The Maine State Chamber opposed the bill for several reasons. The Maine State Chamber stated in its testimony that the bill would have a negative impact on charitable giving by corporations and attacks the corporate governance structure that is currently in place in Maine's statutes governing how corporations and their directors do business internally and their fiduciary responsibilities to their shareholders.

First, the bill would require a company to report its charitable donations on its annual disclosure with the Maine Secretary of State, if it participates in the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) or Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Maine State Chamber argues that this may create a chilling effect on corporations making those donations and believes that donating to charity should be encouraged.

The bill ignores basic principles upon which these business incentives were founded. More specifically, BETE was founded to level the playing field between companies investing in business equipment in Maine versus in other states where personal property taxes aren't assessed on business equipment. Secondly, TIFs are one of the only economic development tools municipalities have when creating economic development incentives in their towns. These incentive programs are designed to encourage a healthy economy and to help businesses establish and grow in Maine. To the extent that these companies can and are able to give to certain charities, they should be able to do so without the potential for public shaming.

Second, the bill contains a lot of unintended consequences related to corporate governance. Existing federal laws and regulations comprehensively deal with disclosure by non-profit corporations of their donations and financial support. Maine (and other states) should tread cautiously before creating patchwork legislative mandates on top of that federal regime.

Maine statutes already regulate the internal affairs of Maine nonprofit and for-profit corporations, including the relationships among directors, officers, and shareholders. Also, the fiduciary duty standards applied to directors and officers of Maine corporations have been carefully drafted using model legislation developed nationally by the business law bar. Tinkering with these provisions, if at all, should only follow careful study and review by the affected constituencies and experienced attorneys, business owners, and managers. The Maine State Chamber believes that these changes could adversely affect the willingness of individuals to serve as directors and officers of Maine nonprofits, which already often struggle to secure qualified candidates to form these entities under Maine law.

Lastly, the Maine State Chamber stated that the language in the bill is troublingly vague and subjective in many respects, such as "detrimental effect on the purposes of" a nonprofit corporation and "facilitating bias and partiality in the governance of" a nonprofit corporation.

The work session for LD 1423 has not yet been scheduled. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

LD 985 seeks to repeal proficiency-based diplomas

On Wednesday, April 17, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce testified in opposition to **LD 985**, *An Act To Maintain High School Diploma Standards by Repealing Proficiency-based Diploma Standards*, which would repeal proficiency-based diplomas altogether. During the past few years, the Education and Cultural Affairs committee has heard several bills on proficiency-based learning, standards, and aligned assessments. The Maine State Chamber appreciates the committee's attention and thoughtfulness on these complex and intertwined issues. Just last year, the committee held a series of public hearings and even more work sessions on proposals relating to proficiency-based diplomas.

Maine's business community is incredibly invested in our state's PreK-12 public education system. Our students, our teachers, and the entire system deserve our investment. The Maine State Chamber appreciates all the hard work our public schools and learning communities are doing to graduate students so that they are well-prepared for college and the workplace.

The 128th Legislature passed LD 1666 to allow school districts to choose whether to continue using proficiency-based standards or revert to the traditional credit-based diplomas. The new diploma law enacted by the 128th Legislature removes the mandate that a high school diploma be based on a student's demonstration of proficiency in Maine's Learning Results, and instead, makes a proficiency-based diploma one of two options allowing "local control" to school districts without halting the switch to proficiency-based diplomas in communities that want them.

To that end, the Maine State Chamber encourages the committee to stay the course on the previously-enacted legislation and reject any bills that will attempt to completely repeal proficiency-based diplomas. A straight repeal of proficiency-based diplomas would send the

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Income Tax...

(Continued from Page 1...)

Reducing the overall top income tax rates has been one of the top priorities for Maine's business community. In Maine, more than 80% of businesses are established as LLCs, partnerships, or S-Corps. In those instances, the income from the business flows through to the individual taxpayer(s), and he or she is responsible for paying the income tax directly. So, income tax rates are very important to the majority of businesses, especially small businesses, in Maine.

Through the years, the Taxation committee has repeatedly heard about the need to reduce the top overall income rate for a variety of reasons, including:

- ♦ Executives make decisions to locate in a state based in part on their own income tax liability and often avoid locating the business in that state because of high income tax rates;
- ♦ Paying higher taxes impacts the amount the employer chooses to reinvest in the business in terms of capital and personnel, and failure to reinvest can have a direct impact on job creation and economic growth;
- ♦ Maine companies recruit skilled workers nationally and globally, and many often have a difficult time attracting skilled top individuals because of the high personal income tax rates. Companies tell us high income tax rates are definitely a consideration in the relocation of any new employee.
- ♦ In addition, retirees often choose other states as their prime residence to avoid paying the higher taxes, especially on fixed incomes.

The work session on LD 1292 will be held on Thursday, April 25. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

Health Care Forum

Wednesday, May 22 | 9:00 a.m. to noon

Bangor Savings Bank, Senator Way, Augusta



Health care and health insurance was the single biggest public policy issue that impacted - and motivated - voters this past November at the polls. Newly-elected officials from both sides of the aisle - in Maine and in Washington - have pledged to do something "meaningful" to address cost and access to health care. On May 22, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual informative and timely presentation on the status of health care here and beyond, and what you as a business in Maine need to know as we head into 2019, and what specifically is being considered here in Maine this session. We will be joined by Katie Mahoney, director of health care policy and a national speaker from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as other state-based experts on health insurance and health care delivery.

To register for this event, please visit mainechamber.org or contact Angie Arno by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org.

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High-quality after-school programming plays an important role in helping Maine students achieve highest potential

As a member of the business organization ReadyNation and also a proud co-leader of the MaineSpark Coalition that is dedicating to achieving the state goal that 60 percent of Maine adults have a credential of value by 2025. Megan Sanborn testified on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday afternoon, April 17 in support of **LD 1347, An Act to Promote High-Quality After-school Programs in Public Schools**. High-quality after-school programming can play an important role in helping Maine achieve the 60% goal, which was also adopted as our state's goal by the 128th Legislature. It is just one more piece of the puzzle for how we best prepare our students, and how we build and strengthen Maine's future workforce.

Maine business leaders believe strongly that education is the single most important investment that can be made to ensure successful participation in the new, knowledge-based economy, earnings growth, and improved health status. Post-secondary

education or training is a critical building block to ensuring success in the workforce. High-quality early education and K-12 are imperative building blocks to ensure post-secondary success. High-quality expanded learning opportunities – after school, before school, and summer learning – are also an important part of this mix.

While the Maine State Chamber of Commerce does not often weigh in on concept bill drafts, we do want to weigh in on how important high-quality, extended learning time is for our students. We know that too many young adults in Maine are not workforce ready. While Maine has made great progress raising our high school graduation rates during the past decade to be one of the top rates in the country at 87 percent, only 36% of Maine high school students who took the SAT in 2018 met the benchmarks in both math and reading/writing. Twelve percent of young adults are not in school and not working. Meanwhile, we know that some form

Proficiency-based Diplomas... (Continued from Page 4...)

message to students and teachers that what they're working on will change again, and that the great efforts put forth in the past five years was for nothing. It would be a great disservice to teachers and school administrators who have put the time and effort into the proficiency-based model to repeal a system that they have learned and implemented into their schools and classrooms.

For more information on education and workforce policy, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

of post-secondary education will be necessary for 66% of jobs in Maine by 2020.

Disparate access to high-quality expanded learning in the after-school hours and during the summer breaks is a large reason why students are falling behind in school. For example, summer learning loss accounts for as much as two-thirds of the academic achievement gap between low- and high-income students. Expanded learning opportunities also improves workforce participation. Three quarters of Maine parents say that after-school programs help them keep their jobs.

The Maine State Chamber is pleased to see that this bill specifically calls for high-quality, after-school programming – and we know from our many MaineSpark partners that this can take many forms, such as deeper learning experiences that focus on mastering academic content, team building, collaboration, communications skills, and critical thinking – which build a variety of skills to become great life-long learners. This can be through technical training, applied learning, and tutoring. It can include career and workplace exploration. It can take many forms for our students and is tremendous way to bring local partners, such as businesses into students' teaching. High-quality expanded learning opportunities improve academic performance and deter youth from crime.

For more information on education and workforce policy, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

Stakeholder meetings announced for CTE statewide plan development

The Maine Department of Education's Career and Technical Education (CTE) team is currently developing a CTE statewide plan. This plan is being developed to address the requirements as part of the Carl D. Perkins federal funding that Maine receives to support CTE. As part of developing this plan, the team is holding regional stakeholder meetings throughout the state in order to get feedback and input and to share some of the initiatives around career and technical education. These meetings are open to the public, and the team welcomes the opportunity to hear from many stakeholders.

The times and locations for all of the 2019 regional stakeholder meetings are as follows:

- ♦ **Tuesday, April 23**, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the United Technology Center in Bangor;
- ♦ **Wednesday April 24**, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Westbrook Regional Vocational Center in Westbrook;
- ♦ **Thursday April 25**, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Capital Area Technical Center in Augusta; and,
- ♦ **Wednesday May 1**, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Caribou High School in Caribou.

If you have any questions, please contact Dwight A. Littlefield, state director for CTE, by emailing dwight.a.littlefield@maine.gov. □

Student Spotlight...

Hancock County Technical Center senior places third at Maine State Science Fair

Bridge Academy Maine student Riley Grindle is a senior at Ellsworth High School and is in the Biomedical Research Support program at Hancock County Technical Center. The senior placed third at the Maine State Science Fair on Saturday, March 23. Riley competed in the Biomedical and Health Sciences Competition showcasing his project, entitled “2DG or not 2DG.” The 2019 Maine State Science Fair (MSSF) took place at Bowdoin College and welcomed all students grades 9-12. MSSF is organized by The Jackson Laboratory and the Reach Center and is a great opportunity for students to express their interests in science in an innovative way.

Grindle’s research hypothesizes improvements to current tumor studies and insight on how 2DG effects the immune system as a chemotherapy. The research he collected showed that a combination containing 2DG is more efficient than the standard care treatments of leukemia and can offer less harmful effects to the immune system. He will attend the University of Maine next year to continue his education in Cellular Biology.

Bridge Academy Maine connects with high school students enrolled in CTE courses by adding college level courses to their programming to produce a high school graduate that has up to 24 college credits and real-world credentials. Because this program offers a combination of rigorous academics delivered at a low cost in the traditional high school classroom, successful students graduate college earlier and with less debt than their traditional classmates and are more successfully prepared for the workforce. Currently Bridge Academy operates in seven of the state’s 27 career and technical regions with plans to be in all 27 regions. For more information, please visit bridgeacademymaine.org. □

Head Start investment is an economic imperative

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce testified in collaboration with ReadyNation in support of increased funding for Maine’s Head Start programs – **LD 1471, *An Act To Expand Access to Head Start To Assist Opioid-Affected And Other At-Risk Families***. Both the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and ReadyNation are members of the statewide MaineSpark Coalition supporting our state’s goal that 60 percent of adults have a credential of value by 2025. Head Start is an important tool to help Maine achieve this goal.

Head Start is an important component of Maine’s system of early care and education programs that make up the continuum of programming needed by many of Maine’s youngest and most at-risk learners, and an important building block to help strengthen Maine’s future workforce and our economy.

Maine business leaders believe strongly that education is the single most important investment that can be made to ensure successful participation in the new, knowledge-based economy, earnings growth, and improved health status. Just as post-secondary education and training are critical building blocks to ensure success in the work force; high-quality early education like Head Start are vital building blocks to ensure success from kindergarten to post-secondary education.

Education is a critical investment in Maine people and in our economy, and should be treated as such, through a coordinated approach starting with early learning. Ensuring that all students arrive at Kindergarten socially, emotionally and cognitively ready to learn is an important first step and merits state investments. A 2017 research report by ReadyNation shows that children who participate in high-quality early learning programs like Head Start have greater success and are 35 percent more likely to graduate from high school; four times more likely to graduate from a four-year college; and, 42 percent more likely to be employed consistently as adults. These numbers translate into an unbeatable long-term rate of return – up to \$16 for every \$1 invested.

As stated in the Maine State Chamber of Commerce/Maine Development Foundation joint report “*Making Maine Work: Investment in Young Children = Real Economic Development*,” for Maine people to truly reach their potential, it all starts at birth. Waiting to invest in Maine’s most precious assets, our children, until they enter our K-12 system is, for many, too late. To attain our vision of a high quality of life for all Maine people, we must ensure that each and every Maine child has access to high-quality care and education from birth. Investment in early education *is* real economic development. It’s not just a social and moral imperative; it is an economic imperative.

The Maine State Chamber supports increased funding for Head Start. With Maine’s lack of population growth, we need every child today to grow up to be vibrant members of Maine’s future workforce and contribute to our economy.

For more information on education and workforce policy, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

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/committee/#Committees> or contact the committee clerk.

Monday, April 22, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208
LD 259, An Act To Require the State To Meet the Mandatory 55 Percent Contribution to Schools (Sen. Miramant of Knox)

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208
LD 1262, An Act To Allow Funds from the Federal E-Rate Program To Be Applied to Maine Preschool Programs (Sen. Pouliot of Kennebec)

Energy, Utilities and Technology

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211
LD 1282, An Act To Establish a Green New Deal for Maine (Rep. Maxmin of Nobleboro)

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

2:30 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 220
LD 1472, An Act To Create a Commission To Establish a State Bank (Sen. Miramant of Knox)

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Energy, Utilities and Technology

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211
LD 946, An Act To Protect the Privacy of Online Customer Information (Sen. Bellows of Kennebec)
LD 1562, An Act To Encourage the Use of Renewable Energy (Sen. Lawrence of York)

Environment and Natural Resources

10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 216
LD 1532, An Act To Eliminate Single-use Plastic Carry-out Bags (Rep. Stover of Boothbay)

Labor and Housing

9:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 202
LD 1524, An Act To Prevent Wage Theft and Promote Employer Accountability (Pres. Jackson of Aroostook)

LD 1529, An Act Concerning Nondisclosure Agreements in Employment (Rep. Harnett of Gardiner)

LD 1564, An Act To Authorize Project Labor Agreements for Public Works Projects (Pres. Jackson of Aroostook)

Taxation

10:00 a.m.; State House, Room 127
LD 1191, An Act To Exempt Solar Energy Equipment from Property Tax (Sen. Lawrence of York)

Veterans and Legal Affairs

10:00 a.m.; State House, Room 437
LD 1583, An Act To Enact the Maine Citizens' Initiatives Clean Election Act (Rep. Corey of Windham)

Thursday, April 25, 2019

Energy, Utilities and Technology

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211
LD 1558, An Act To Change the Definition of "Gas Utility" in the Laws Governing Public Utilities (Sen. Lawrence of York)
LD 1560, An Act Regarding Utility Reorganizations (Sen. Lawrence of York)

Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 202
LD 1240, An Act To Provide Career and Technical Training Options for Electricians (Rep. Handy of Lewiston)
LD 1342, An Act To Establish the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute (Rep. Daughtry of Brunswick)
LD 1368, An Act To Require Postsecondary Institutions To Meet the Expected Family Contribution without Additional Loan Burdens for Students (Rep. Crockett of Portland)

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Legislature will no longer accept testimony by email

Beginning April 22, 2019, the Maine Legislature will no longer accept testimony through email. Instead, a new submission form will be available 24/7 through the Maine Legislature's website at <http://legislature.maine.gov>. This system will automate the distribution of electronic testimony to the committee members, analysts, and clerks. Testimony will continue to be included in the public record for committee meetings.

If you are planning to attend the hearing and provide paper copies, please do not submit your testimony electronically. Testimony submitted online the day of the public hearing will be posted to the internet. Do not include personal information that you do not want made public. Materials subject to copyright protections will be removed before posting to the website, but they will be included in the record and the email forwarded to committee members. Testimony emailed directly to the committee clerk will not be included in the public record, forwarded to the committee members, or posted to the web page.

Links to the new submission form will be available on both the home page at <http://legislature.maine.gov>, and the committee pages at <http://legislature.maine.gov/committee>, beginning Monday, April 22, 2019. For questions or assistance, please contact the Legislative Information Office at (207) 287-1692. Thank you for participating in the legislative process. □

Public Hearings...

(Continued from Page 7...)

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

9:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 208

LD 309, An Act To Eliminate the Regional Adjustment for Public School Systems (Rep. Stewart of Presque Isle)

LD 385, An Act To Base School Funding on the Number of Students Sent by a Town to a Regional School Unit (Rep. Ackley of Monmouth)

LD 712, An Act To Fully Fund After-school and Preschool Programs in the School Funding Formula, Increase the Economically Disadvantaged Student Factor in the School Funding Formula and Increase the School Construction Debt Service Limit (Rep. Brennan of Portland)

Education and Cultural Affairs

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208

LD 468, An Act To Require That the State Fund on an Ongoing Basis a Minimum of 50 Percent of the Costs Associated with Public Preschool Programs (Rep. Farnsworth of Portland)

LD 1043, An Act To Establish Universal Public Preschool Programs (Rep. Kornfield of Bangor)

LD 1428, An Act To Require the State To Fund 50 Percent of Public Preschool Programs (Sen. Millett of Cumberland)

Thursday, May 2, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208

LD 155, An Act To Ensure Transparency in College Costs (Sen. Miramant of Knox)

LD 860, An Act To Establish the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program (Rep. Brennan of Portland)

LD 1283, Resolve, To Advance College Affordability by Convening a Task Force To Recommend a Sustainable Funding Model for Maintaining Maine's Public Higher Education Infrastructure (Rep. Jorgensen of Portland)

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LEGISLATIVE STRICTLY SOCIAL

Tuesday, April 30 ♦ 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Senator Inn & Spa, Augusta

MAINE
S T A T E
CHAMBER
of
COMMERCE

*Light hors d'oeuvres
and cash bar available*



The Maine State Chamber of Commerce,
in partnership with the

Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce,

invites you to our **FREE Legislative Strictly Social**.

This annual networking reception is an ideal way for Maine's legislators and business leaders to interact in a relaxed setting.

Please RSVP before noon on Monday, April 29
by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org.

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Digest of New Legislation

Maine Chamber staff has 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 advocacy department by calling (207) 623-4568 or visit www.mainechamber.org.

A total of 321 business-related bills have been tracked to date since the session began on January 2, 2019!

EDUCATION

LD 1538, An Act Regarding Compensation Equity for Positions in the Maine Community College System.

(Rep. Daughtry, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill requires that the rate of compensation for comparable positions in the Maine Community College System for employees of comparable qualifications, including positions in the occupational groups of faculty and instructors, administrative staff, supervisory, support services, institutional services and police, be the same at every community college in the system. The bill directs the bargaining units of the occupational groups of the system to collectively bargain with the system, its agent or its representative to amend the agreed terms and conditions of employment for employees within the occupational groups to implement the provisions of this bill by January 1, 2020.

LD 1584, An Act To Attract, Build and Retain an Early Childhood Education Workforce through Increased Training, Education and Career Pathways.

(Rep. Fecteau, D-Biddeford) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill requires the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Labor jointly to develop and implement an early childhood educators workforce support program to recruit and retain early childhood educators working with children up to 5 years of age. Components of the program include:

- 1 Expansion of educational programs at career and technical education centers and financial support of those programs;
- 2 Comprehensive scholarships for persons taking classes toward the attainment of an early childhood education

credential or an associate or bachelor's degree that allow the persons to graduate without student debt as long as the persons agree to work for a year with an approved employer;

- 3 An increased number of apprenticeships; and,
- 4 Salary supplements awarded to individuals who provide child care or who are early childhood educators. The amount of the supplement is based on the level of education and experience of the individual and other factors.

This bill also provides funding to carry out the program.

REFERENDUM PROCESS REFORM

LD 1583, An Act To Enact the Maine Citizens' Initiatives Clean Election Act.

(Rep. Corey, R-Windham) *Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs*. This bill establishes the Maine Citizens' Initiatives Clean Election Act. It provides a public financing mechanism for committees that are Maine-chartered nonprofits or groups whose principal officers are Maine citizens and are formed to support or oppose a direct initiative of legislation or a people's veto or to support a competing measure to a direct initiative of legislation. The funding process is similar to that provided for clean election candidates under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 21-A, chapter 14. It provides for limits on the amount of funds that committees seeking public funding may raise and spend prior to qualifying for public funding and the amount of qualifying contributions that a committee must raise to be certified to receive public funding, and it establishes the amounts that certified committees may receive. It also establishes proce-

Continued on Page 10...

Legislative Week Ahead

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

A snapshot of the biggest legislative issues of the week, the Legislative Week Ahead, provides a weekly video forecast of the biggest issues facing lawmakers in Augusta during the upcoming week. The Maine State Chamber's Advocacy team breaks down the issues and what each means to your business. New episodes are posted each Tuesday during the legislative session.

View the Legislative Week Ahead by visiting www.mainechamber.org/legweekahead.php, or see past Legislative Week Ahead videos by visiting www.mainechamber.org/legweekaheadarchive.php. □

Public Hearings...

(Continued from Page 8...)

Friday, May 3, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs
9:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 208
LD 161, An Act To Increase Access to Career and Technical Education (Sen. Woodsome of York)
LD 358, An Act To Fully Fund Career and Technical Education for Fiscal Year 2018-19 (Sen. Woodsome of York)
LD 504, An Act To Enhance the Development of Innovative Career and Technical Education Programs (Rep. Higgins of Dover-Foxcroft)
LD 1036, Resolve, Establishing a Task Force To Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System To Support Workforce Development (Rep. Higgins of Dover-Foxcroft)
LD 1267, An Act To Allow the Awarding of Graduation Credits by Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions (Sen. Pouliot of Kennebec) □

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 9...)

dures governing financial reporting and accounting, appeals of decisions, penalties for violations and other procedural matters to ensure the integrity of the process. In addition to other available funds, including qualifying contributions raised by committees and voluntary contributions through a tax checkoff program, funding for certified committees is provided by an annual appropriation of \$3,000,000.

LD 1542, An Act To Allow a Municipality To Choose Its Power Provider. (Rep. Denk, D-Kennebunk) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This bill provides a process to allow a municipality to choose a single transmission and distribution utility via a referendum when that municipality is served by more than one utility. The decision to hold a referendum must be made by a majority vote of the municipal officials. A referendum to choose a single utility must occur during a gubernatorial or presidential election in November and must be called, advertised and conducted according to the law relating to municipal elections. The bill also requires the choice of a single utility to be approved by the Public Utilities Commission. The commission is required to approve the choice if the commission finds that the chosen utility is willing to furnish service to the entire municipality, has the financial ability to meet its obligations under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A and is willing and able to pay a fair and reasonable price, as determined by the commission, for the assets of the 2nd utility needed to furnish service to the entire municipality. Upon approval, the commission is directed to order the 2nd utility to sell its assets used to serve the municipality to the chosen transmission and distribution utility. This bill also allows the commission to adopt routine technical rules to implement these provisions.

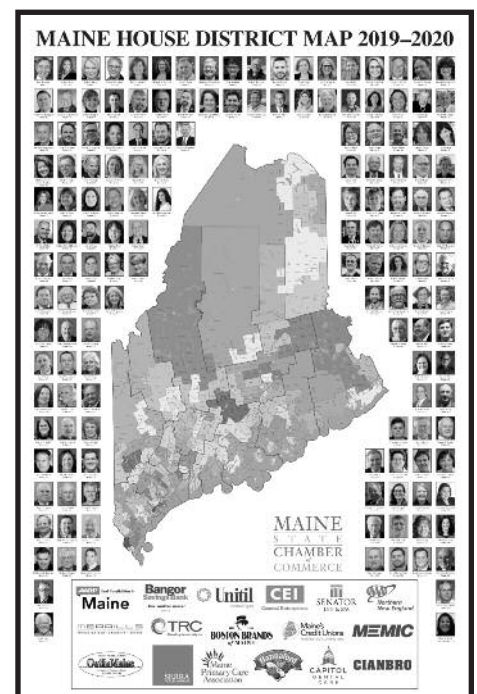
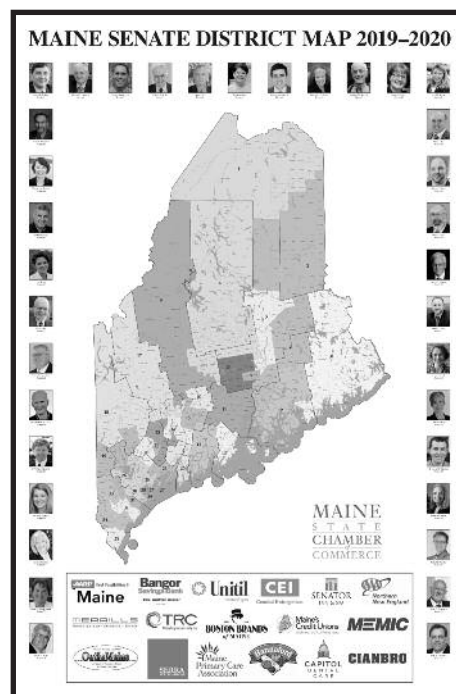
UTILITIES AND ENERGY

LD 1558, An Act To Change the Definition of "Gas Utility" in the Laws Governing Public Utilities. (Sen. *Continued on Page 11...*)

LEGISLATIVE POSTERS NOW AVAILABLE

MAINE S T A T E 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 129th 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 2019-2020 legislative posters:**

AAA-Northern New England; AARP Maine; Bangor Savings Bank; Boston Brands of Maine; Capitol Dental Care; CIANBRO; Coastal Enterprises, Inc.; Hannaford Supermarkets; Maine Credit Union League; Maine Primary Care Association; MEMIC; Merrill's Investigations & Security; OutInMaine LLC; The Senator Inn & Spa; Serra Public Affairs; TRC Companies; and, Unitol Corp.

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Regional Business Breakfasts

After the legislature adjourns, our staff routinely travels throughout the state during the spring and summer months to discuss legislative activity and the critical role individual business owners can play in the passage or defeat of legislation. The Maine State Chamber gathers business leaders on a regional level through its **Regional Business Breakfast Meetings**. Local business leaders provide valuable insight that is instrumental to this open dialogue about business issues that affect your business, your community, and your state.

To register for any of these **FREE** events, please contact Angie Arno by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org. To sponsor one of these events in your area, please contact Melody Rousseau by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org.

Each Regional Business Breakfast runs from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, June 4

Southern Maine Regional Breakfast Meeting

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, 2 Gannett Drive, South Portland

Wednesday, June 19

Kennebec Valley Regional Breakfast Meeting

Bangor Savings Bank, Senator Way, Augusta

Wednesday, June 26

Maine Highlands Regional Breakfast Meeting

Location TBD – Bangor Area

In collaboration with Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, June 27

Northern Maine Regional Breakfast Meeting

University of Maine at Presque Isle, St. John & Aroostook Rooms

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 10...)

Lawrence) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*. This bill includes propane dealers in the definition of “gas utility” in the laws governing public utilities.

LD 1560, An Act Regarding Utility Reorganizations. Emergency (Sen. Lawrence, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*. This bill provides that a reorganization of a utility may not be approved by the Public Utilities Commission unless it is established by the applicant for approval that the reorganization provides net benefits to the utility’s ratepayers and is consistent with the interests of the utility’s investors. In determining whether a utility reorganization provides net benefits to the utility’s ratepayers, the commission at a minimum must examine whether the reorganization will result in a rate increase for the utility’s ratepayers and whether the reorganization will result in a loss of local control of the utility’s management and operations in a manner that limits the ability of local management to protect the interests of the utility’s ratepayers in this State.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

LD 1530, An Act To Expand Incentives To Live and Work in Maine through a Tax Credit for Certain Student Loans. (Rep. Babbidge, D-Kennebunk) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce*. This bill provides an income tax credit of up to \$1,000 for individuals for certain student loan payments made during the tax year if the individuals were first employed in Maine on or after January 1, 2020. The credit is equal to the lesser of 50% of the loan payments actually made and 50% of income tax liability in the first year in which the credit is claimed declining to 10% of income tax liability in the 5th and final year in which the credit is claimed. The credit may not exceed 50% of the individual’s outstanding student loan debt and may not be claimed if the individual claims the credit for educational opportunity. □

Periodicals

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Energy Summit

Friday, April 26, 2019 | 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Maple Hill Farm Inn & Conference Center (11 Inn Rd., Hallowell)

With a new legislature and administration in place, Maine energy policy is definitely a priority in Augusta this year. With so many proposals and decisions to be made, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce will convene all the key players in one location for a full-day of discussion, presentations, and information, included a keynote address by **Gordon van Welie, president and chief executive officer of ISO New England Inc.** You won't want to miss being a part of this timely event!

To register for this event, please visit www.mainechamber.org. If you need help with registration, please contact Melody Rousseau by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org. If you have questions about the program's content, please contact Ben Gilman at ext. 111 or by emailing bgilman@mainechamber.org. □

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