

February 14, 2019

2019 Leadership Summit celebrates 20th anniversary, centers on Making Maine Work themes

Roundtable discussions focus on Quality of People, Place, and Life

For the past 20 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 members of the Mills administration on Thursday and Friday, February 7-8 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 a record-setting 150 participants. Participants gathered to discuss some of the challenges affecting Maine's economy and relevant legislation facing the first regular session of the 129th Legislature, as well as to identify common policy priorities, all in an effort to move our state ahead.

After the opening reception and dinner, Governor Janet Mills offered remarks in anticipation of the release of her biennial budget proposal (see page 9) the next day. After dinner, Senate President Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook) and House Speaker Sarah Gideon (D-Freeport), along with Senate Republican Leader Sen. Dana Dow (R-Lincoln) and House Republican Leader Rep. Kathleen Dillingham (R-Oxford), 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 broad issues such as the role of government in solving the workforce challenges, examples of successful public/private partnerships, their overall approach to the issues of the session, and the options for reforming the citizen's initiative process. (See guest articles from legislative leadership beginning on page 16)

Friday morning continued the long-standing tradition of roundtable breakout sessions. Because of the number of critical issues likely to be debated this session, three breakout sessions were con-

vened to focus on themes from the 2018 publication, *Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy*. Attendees were divided into three sessions to focus their discussions on Quality of People, Quality of Place, and Quality of Life. 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.

Facilitated by Clifton Greim of Harriman Associates and Ben Gilman of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Quality of Place session discussed, among other topics, the value and use of

Continued on Page 4...

Inside Impact...

Best EEO Practices	p. 6
Budget Address	p. 9
Business Day	p. 22
Campus Career Connect	p. 26
DC Fly-In	p. 21
Leadership Summit	p. 1
Legislative Leadership	p. 16-19
Legislative Social	p. 32
Mandatory Paid Leave	p. 3
New Legislation	p. 20
Public Hearings	p. 7
Regional Breakfasts	p. 28
U.S. Chamber Foundation	p. 25
Water Extraction	p. 3
Workplace Wellness	p. 30

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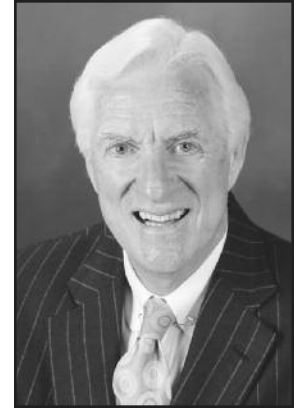
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About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce: Since 1889, the Maine State Chamber has been fighting to lower your cost of doing business. Through our Grassroots Action Network and OneVoice program, we work with a network of approximately 5,000 companies 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...

"Leadership Summit celebrates 20 years of building relationships between business and legislative leaders..."

by Dana Connors



Last week, we hosted our 20th annual Leadership Summit, and as is our tradition, it didn't disappoint! You can read all about it starting on page 1. Each year, as I reflect on this event, I'm grateful for the willingness of legislators and business leaders to come together for frank, open dialog to the public policy issues facing our state.

Since 2000, we have invited business leaders and Statehouse leaders to our annual Leadership Summit to begin and encourage ongoing conversations beyond the event. Hosting the Leadership Summit at Sunday River means that for 25 hours we are not going anywhere, and more significantly, it affords us the opportunity to focus on the reason we are there – to foster collaboration, education, information and understanding.

The diverse group of attendees includes business owners and leaders from Portland to MDI to Madawaska, along with legislative leadership, chancellors and presidents from educational institutions, economic development leaders, and representatives from local/regional chambers of commerce.

The primary intent is to build communication and encourage conversations. Plain and simple. Thankfully, the conversations continue to be open, informative, and sometimes lively, as the business community shared their thoughts, insights and concerns with our representatives from both sides of the aisle who represent both large and small communities in Maine. This led to an understanding of the challenges faced by businesses and the challenges faced by those who represent us in Augusta.

As we move through this session, let us remember that there will often be differing opinions on some of these topics, agreement on others, and more questions than answers on others. Understanding the questions is the first step to finding the answers, and that is why these conversations are so vital.

On behalf of the board and staff of the Maine State Chamber, I'd also like to thank the attendees and sponsors of this very unique event – one envied by my peers across the nation. Without their willing participation and support, we would not have the opportunity to build statewide collaboration and understanding for the many issues affecting our employers, their employees, and their communities. We look forward to working together throughout the session, to continuing the conversations we began at the 20th Leadership Summit, and to providing a high-quality of life, place and people for this great state. □

Maine Chamber opposes water extraction moratorium

The passage of LD 197 would send chilling message to businesses in Maine

LD 197, *An Act To Convene a Working Group To Authorize a Public Trust for Maine's Groundwater and To Impose a 2-year Moratorium on Large-scale Groundwater Extraction*, sponsored by Rep. Michael Sylvester (D-Portland), will be heard before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology in the coming weeks. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce opposes LD 197 due to the two-year moratorium it would create in law for the business community in Maine involved in water for their businesses.

For more than 100 years, Maine has developed common law surrounding water rights that land owners have an "absolute dominion" to extract water under their own land. LD 197 would alter this dramatically. In one swoop, this law would repeal more than 100 years of established law that the business community has come to rely on and create a moratorium. The Maine Chamber advocates for consistency and certainty in our regulatory system. If LD 197 were to pass, it would remove consistency surrounding our water regulations and remove more than 100 years of settled common law. The Maine Chamber believes this bill will take us in the wrong

direction as a state and negatively impact our business climate.

As a state, water is one of our brands – what we are known for. In fact, water from Maine is the number one skewed item sold in New York City. I was recently at an education conference in Philadelphia and everyone around the table had a bottle of water in front of them; the person next to me read the label – water from Maine. The conversation ensued about "what a wonderful product it was," to produce, and that conversation spread around the room. I am sure you all can guess that water was from Poland Spring. Next time you drink a bottle of Poland Spring water, read the label. What a great message to send out to world – what it means to be from Maine is clean water. Legislation such as LD 197 seeks to make it more difficult for Maine businesses involved in water to operate. That is not the direction we want to go in as a state or the message we want to send to those outside of Maine – and that is why the Maine State Chamber of Commerce opposes LD 197.

If you have any questions in regards to LD 197, please contact Ben Gilman by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 111, or by emailing bgilman@mainechamber.org. □



ACTION ALERT!

Public hearing for mandatory paid sick leave bill rescheduled for Mon., February 25 —

Committee reviewing proposal that could impact nearly all Maine businesses, large and small, needs employer input

A proposal to provide both full- and part-time employees with up to 40 hours of paid sick time will once again have its day in the Legislature. **LD 369, *An Act to Support Healthy Workplaces and Healthy Families by Providing Earned Paid Sick Leave to Certain Employees***, sponsored by Sen. Rebecca Millett (D-Cumberland), awaits initial action by the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. A public hearing for LD 369 has been scheduled on **Monday, February 25 at 11:00 a.m. in Room 202 of the Cross Building.**

As drafted, LD 369 closely resembles legislation proposed in 2017 during the 128th Legislative session, as well as combining provisions of a citizen's initiated referendum proposal being circulated by the Maine People's Alliance (MPA). The bill would allow 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 also be allowed to roll over up to 40 hours of unused leave into the next year, but again, the employer is allowed to cap leave used at 40 hours. The leave begins to accrue upon initiation of work, but the employee cannot use the leave until they have been employed at least 90 days. The employee at an impacted business would be eligible to use the leave to take care of themselves or a sick family member, or if the employee or a member of the employ-

Continued on Page 8...

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Committee mail can be sent to the Legislative Information Office at 100 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333. The committee meets in Room 211 of the Cross Building. The committee clerk can be reached by calling (207) 287-4143.

* Ranking Republican Member

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Sen. Mark W. Lawrence (D-York) | Rep. Seth A. Berry (D-Bowdoinham)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Sen. David R. Miramant (D-Knox) | Sen. David Woodsome (R-York)

Rep. Deane Rykerson (D-Kittery) | Rep. Christina Riley (D-Jay)

Rep. Christopher James Caiazzo (D-Scarborough)

Rep. Victoria W. Doudera (D-Camden) | Rep. Nicole Grohoski (D-Ellsworth)

Rep. Christopher J. Kessler (D-South Portland) | Rep. Jeffery P. Hanley (R-Pittston)*

Rep. Chad Wayne Grignon (R-Athens) | Rep. Steven D. Foster (R-Dexter)

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

Maine's natural resources, climate change and energy issues, broadband access and speed, and transportation modes and funding.

Facilitated by LuAnn Ballesteros of The Jackson Laboratory and Megan Sanborn of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Quality of People session discussed the size and skills of Maine's workforce to include, among other topics, education at all levels as well as CTEs, attraction and retention of people, and addressing the student debt.

Facilitated by Larry Wold of TD Bank and Linda Caprara of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Quality of Life session discussed, among other topics, housing, health care cost, the opioid addiction epidemic, workplace benefits (employee leave, etc.), and cost structure issues.

The success of the 2019 Leadership Summit is centered on the highly-engaged participation of legislators, cabinet officials and leadership. Including Thursday night's leadership panel, 24 legislators from key joint standing committees, and six administrators from critical departments joined us, including:

- ◆ Sen. Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook), President of the Senate;
- ◆ Sen. Dana Dow (R-Lincoln), Senate Republican Leader;
- ◆ Sen. Jeffrey Timberlake (R-Androscoggin), Assistant Senate Republican Leader;
- ◆ Sen. Eloise Vitelli (D-Sagadahoc), Assistant Senate Democratic Leader;
- ◆ Rep. Kathleen Dillingham (R-Oxford), House Republican Leader;
- ◆ Rep. Trey Stewart (R-Presque Isle), Assistant House Republican Leader;
- ◆ Rep. Matt Moonen (D-Portland), House Democratic Leader;
- ◆ Rep. Ryan Fecteau (D-Biddeford), Assistant House Democratic Leader;
- ◆ Sen. Shenna Bellows (D-Kennebec), chair, Labor and Housing;

Continued on Page 5...





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

- ◆ Sen. Brad Farrin (R-Somerset), Transportation;
- ◆ Sen. Robert Foley (R-York), Environment and Natural Resources;
- ◆ Sen. Lisa Keim (R-Oxford), Judiciary;
- ◆ Sen. James Hamper (R-Oxford), Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- ◆ Sen. David Woodsome (R-York), Energy, Utilities and Technology;
- ◆ Rep. Richard Bradstreet (R-Vassalboro), Labor and Housing;
- ◆ Rep. Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham), chair, Energy, Utilities and Technology;
- ◆ Rep. Richard Campbell (R-Orrington), Environment and Natural Resources;
- ◆ Rep. Matthea Daughtry (D-Brunswick), chair, Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce;
- ◆ Rep. Drew Gattine (D-Westbrook), chair, Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- ◆ Rep. Brian Hubbell (D-Bar Harbor), Veterans and Legal Affairs;
- ◆ Rep. Andrew McLean (D-Gorham), chair, Transportation;
- ◆ Rep. H. Sawin Millett Jr. (R-Waterford), Appropriations and Financial Affairs;
- ◆ Rep. Joel Stetkis (R-Canaan), Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce;
- ◆ Elise Baldacci, senior policy advisor, Office of the Governor;
- ◆ Commissioner Laura Fortman, Maine Department of Labor;
- ◆ Hon. Barry J. Hobbins, Public Advocate;
- ◆ Commissioner Heather Johnson, Maine Department of Economic & Community Development;
- ◆ Jeremy Kennedy, chief of staff, Office of the Governor;



Continued on Page 6...

Leadership Summit... (Continued from Page 5...)

- ♦ John C. Rohde, Esq., executive director / chair of the Maine Workers' Compensation Board; and,
- ♦ Commissioner Bruce Van Note, Maine Department of Transportation.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to travel to Sunday River for our 20th anniversary 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:

- ♦ **Exclusive Sponsor** (Thursday):
Pierce Atwood LLP
- ♦ **Principal Sponsors** (Friday):
Verrill Dana, LLP
Maine Street Solutions
- ♦ **Networking Sponsors:**
Boston Brands of Maine
Charter Communications
- ♦ **Breakfast & Coffee Break Sponsor:**
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- ♦ **Supporting Sponsors:** Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield; AT&T; Bangor Savings Bank; Bank of America; Bernstein Shur; Brookfield Renewable Energy; Central Maine Power Company; CIANBRO; Consolidated Communications, Inc.; Eaton Peabody; Emera Maine; Hannaford Supermarkets; Harvard Pilgrim Health Care; Headlight Audio Visual; IDEXX Laboratories, Inc.; Littler Mendelson, P.C.; Live and Work in Maine; Maine Credit Union League; Maine Renewable Energy Association; MaineHealth; MEMIC; Poland Spring Water Company; Procter & Gamble-Tambrands; Serlin Haley, LLP; Summit Natural Gas of Maine, Inc.; The Jackson Laboratory; Unitil Corp.; University of New England; Unum; VHB; Woodard & Curran Inc. □

Best EEO Practices for a Successful Business

Wednesday, February 27 | 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Bangor Savings Bank, Senator Way, Augusta



*In collaboration with the
Maine Human Rights Commission and the EEOC*

As a small business owner and an employer, you may have legal responsibilities under the federal employment anti-discrimination laws enforced by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Maine Human Rights Commission (MHRC). This workshop is designed with the intent to educate small businesses and help owners and managers focus on running a successful business by maintaining a strong EEO policy. Whether you are dealing with a complaint filed with the EEOC/MHRC or a lawsuit filed by the EEOC/MHRC, the results can be a drain to your mental and financial resources. Studies show that complaints of employment discrimination have been known to lead to moral issues at the workplace and negatively impact creativity and productivity. This workshop will cover relevant topics and business owners are encouraged to come with questions about their internal EEO policy, including:

- ♦ History of EEOC and MHRC and Agency Updates;
- ♦ Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment; Job Segregation: Race and National Origin Discrimination; Stereotypes Against Muslims; Religious Accommodations; Working with Breast Feeding Mothers; and, Respecting LGBTQ Employees;
- ♦ Leveling the Playing Field & Reasonable Job Accommodations for Employees with a Disability or Religion;
- ♦ Equal Pay for Equal Work;
- ♦ Hiring "Young" and "Recent College Graduates;"
- ♦ Genetic Information and the Application Process;
- ♦ ADR v. Investigation – Achieving a "Win-Win" Situation;
- ♦ Best Practices on How to Work with the EEOC; and,
- ♦ Retaliation: A Bad Business Practice.

Sponsored by Littler Mendelson, P.C. and Community Health Options, **this event is free but registration is required.** To register, please visit www.mainechamber.org/eventdetail.php?ID=100 or <https://bit.ly/2GoYy82>, or email your complete contact information to kmorrell@mainechamber.org. □

The first major workers' comp bills printed

The first of more than 25 comp bills will head to committee

Maine's workers compensation statute will once again be the subject of considerable debate during the 129th Legislature. The first of the more than 25 bill titles submitted at cloture, and part of the list of bills released by the Revisor's office have been printed, and referenced to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.

The bills – **LD 601, *An Act To Create Fairness by Reinstating the Cost-of-living Adjustment for Workers' Compensation Benefits***, **LD 602, *An Act To Achieve Mental Health Parity in Workers' Compensation***, both sponsored by Sen. Shenna Bellows (D-Kennebec), and **LD 758, *An Act to Clarify Work Search Requirements in Workers' Compensation***, sponsored by Rep. Mike Sylvester (D-Portland) – could have a significant impact on the cost of workers' compensation insurance in Maine.

As drafted, LD 601 would reinstitute yearly cost-of-living adjustments for comp benefits, beginning on the third anniversary of the injury. The proposed adjustment would be equal to the percentage increase or decrease in the state average weekly wage for the previous year, or 5%, whichever is less. This looks like a turn back to 1980's workers' comp law in Maine. COLA's were eliminated from Maine statute in 1992 as one of the *main* cost drivers built into the system.

LD 602 would make it significantly easier for an employee to establish a mental injury. The standard of proof would be changed from "clear and convincing" to the much easier-to-prove "preponderance of the evidence." The bill also proposes that if a work-related injury aggravates a preexisting mental injury, a compensatory disability may result, just as aggravating a preexisting physical injury may. The bill is framed as an act to "achieve mental health parity" in workers' compensation.

LD 758 would make a dramatic change in the method and manner work search requirements are conducted under Maine's system. The bill would eliminate the well-established work search rule and make it the employer's burden to find

work for the employee, who will otherwise be presumed to be entitled to the *total rate of benefits* and who will remain on the total rate with a good faith, but failing, effort to obtain a job identified by the employer. This mimics the work search rule under the federal Longshore Act, but would represent a significant reversal in the manner in which work search requirements are conducted in our state system.

Historical Perspective...

All of these bills would move our stable system backwards. Overall, the significant workers' compensation reforms adopted in 1992 have remained in place. Maine's workers' comp system was once the most expensive in the nation, with costs reaching 151% of premiums during this period – the comp system continues to work for both employers and employees.

At the time, Governor John McKernan recognized the need to do something to fix this broken system. In fact, the first modern shutdown of Maine State Government was precipitated by the legislature's refusal to enact an initial set of reforms in early 1991. After 17 days, the legislature passed those early reforms and Gov. McKernan signed the state's two year budget into law, re-opening state government. However, that didn't end the problems with Maine's comp system.

By the end of 1991, the last workers' comp insurer licensed to write comp coverage for Maine businesses indicated that they planned to withdraw from the Maine market. That would leave Maine employers without an ability to purchase comp insurance – and the law requires all Maine businesses provide comp coverage at their businesses. After the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Workers' Compensation produced a series of recommendations and reforms, the legislature once again debated the future of our comp system at a special session in October 1992. Those reforms were passed with bipartisan support and are the framework for our workers' comp law today.

Continued on Page 10...

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.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019

Environment and Natural Resources 1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 216

LD 289, An Act To Prohibit the Use of Certain Disposable Food Service Containers (Rep. Zeigler of Montville)

LD 505, An Act To Require the Use of Reusable Food Ware at Eating Establishments (Rep. Rykerson of Kittery)

LD 621, An Act To Prohibit Extruded Polystyrene Food Service Containers (Rep. Carney of Cape Elizabeth)

Labor and Housing 12:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 202

LD 201, An Act To Protect Jobs in the State by Requiring Advance Notice of Closure of Call Centers (Rep. Dunphy of Old Town)

LD 305, An Act To Protect Job Applicants from Identity Theft (Rep. Riley of Jay)

LD 480, An Act To Ensure Pay Transparency and To Reduce Gender and Racial Wage Inequities (Sen. Miramant of Knox)

LD 507, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Employer Recovery of Overcompensation Paid to an Employee (Rep. Doore of Augusta)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs 1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208

LD 427, An Act To Require the State To Fund Teacher Retirement (Rep. Brennan of Portland)

Continued on Page 11...

Paid Sick Leave... (Continued from Page 3...)

ee's family has been the victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

It should be noted that the definition of "family member" is *extremely* broad, encompassing:

- 1 The employee's, and the employee's spouse's or domestic partner's, biological child, adopted child, foster child, stepchild or legal ward, a child to whom the employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner stands in loco parentis, or an individual to whom the employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner stood in loco parentis when the individual was a minor;
- 2 The employee's, and the employee's spouse's or domestic partner's, biological parent, foster parent, stepparent, adoptive parent or legal guardian, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child;
- 3 A person to whom the employee is legally married under the laws of any state or a domestic partner of the employee;
- 4 The employee's, and the employee's spouse's or domestic partner's, biological grandparent, foster grandparent, adoptive grandparent, or step-grandparent; and,
- 5 The employee's, and the employee's spouse's or domestic partner's, biological sibling, foster sibling, adoptive sibling or stepsibling.

Furthermore, the bill includes 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 same broadness of definition holds true for the use of the new leave. An employee may take paid sick time for the employee's or a family member's:

- 1 Mental or physical illness, injury or health condition;
- 2 Medical diagnosis, care or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; or,
- 3 Preventative medical care.

In addition to leave when a family member is a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault, the leave can be used in the smallest increments that the employer allows the use of other time. Notice to the employer

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HOUSING

Committee mail can be sent to the Legislative Information Office at 100 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333. The committee meets in Room 202 of the Cross Building. The committee clerk can be reached by calling (207) 287-1331.

* Ranking Republican Member

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Sen. Shenna Bellows (D-Kennebec) | Rep. Michael Sylvester (D-Portland)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Sen. Mark W. Lawrence (D-York) | Sen. Stacey K. Guerin (R-Penobscot)
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Rep. Susan M. W. Austin (R-Gray) | Rep. Lawrence E. Lockman (R-Amherst)
Rep. Joshua Morris (R-Turner)

when foreseeable is defined as a "good faith effort," and unforeseeable use of the leave is allowed. Documentation of the use of the leave is only required after three consecutive days absence, and a signed letter from the employee or a health care professional is considered documentation.

The bill places considerable record-keeping requirements on employers, as well as a variety of penalties for failure to grant the leave or "retaliation" for the use of the leave. These include a civil fine of \$1,000 and a private right of action that would authorize liquidated damages, attorney's fees, back wages, and reinstatement. Any employee would have up to three years to bring such an action against an employer alleged to have committed a violation of the statute.

Finally, employers with five or fewer employees are mandated to provide up to 40 hours of unpaid sick time for their full and part time workers.

The issue of providing mandatory paid sick leave to employees who currently do not get such a benefit has been discussed and debated by previous Maine legislatures. The first time the bill saw serious consideration was in 2010. The legislature also considered proposals on this issue in 2004, 2007 and 2017. In each case, the Maine State Chamber led a coalition of business associations, opposing such a law as adding considerably to the cost of doing business here.

Many Maine employers do provide some form of paid leave, in the form of vacation, holiday or sick time. However, many businesses do not extend those benefits to part-time, temporary and seasonal workers. Requiring employers to provide these workers with paid leave is a significant

departure from current practice and will add to the cost of doing business here in Maine.

Adding mandatory paid sick leave mandates will not only increase the bottom line of many businesses due to increased paid time off, but it will also increase costs due to the very cumbersome tracking requirements that will be needed to calculate leave amounts for full- and part-time employees, as well as tracking its utilization. The tracking of this leave time, particularly for seasonal and temporary workers, will be difficult and expensive. Currently, only 10 states and the District of Columbia mandate such leave, making multi-state employers with operations here in Maine responsible for establishing a separate tracking system just for their Maine operations. *Once again, we will be making it more expensive to do business here than in our competitor states.*

There is considerable energy behind this proposal, and should the legislature not act on the bill, it is expected that the MPA will submit signatures to the Secretary of State in an effort to get the proposal in the ballot at some point.

A public hearing for LD 369 has been scheduled on **Monday, February 25 at 11:00 a.m. in Room 202 of the Cross Building.** Members are encouraged to voice their concerns to members of the Labor and Housing committee. The Maine State Chamber will be following events concerning this bill carefully and will keep members apprised as the bill moves through the legislative process. For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

Governor Janet Mills delivers her first State of the Budget address

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the State of the Budget Address of the 75th Governor of Maine, Janet T. Mills as prepared for delivery on Monday, February 11, 2019. It can be accessed online at www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-janet-mills-state-budget-address-2019-02-11. We have reprinted it below for your review.



Mr. President; Madam Speaker; Chief Justice Saufley; Chiefs Francis, Nicholas, Sabattis, and Paul; Ambassador Dana; Secretary of State Dunlap; Treasurer Beck; Attorney General Frey; Auditor Buckley; Honorable Members of the 129th Legislature:

Three months have passed since the general election. Two months since the Legislature was sworn in. Nearly all our cabinet members are confirmed, sworn and qualified. They are here tonight. We are getting to work.

I want to take a moment to thank the people of Maine for the outpouring of warmth you have shown me in the last month. I have felt in my heart the very best of Maine from all over Maine – the energy, the strength, the hope of Maine people.

Today we dig out from tunnels of snow, finding the light of our days to be longer, our dark nights shorter, and we sense that nature and the world are moving toward spring. We care for our neighbors, old and new, frail or strong. We care about those who need the most, those who work the hardest and those who pay the most.

Today we take account of the past and plan for a new, and better future. Our unemployment rate is low. But our economy has grown more slowly than that of the United States and New England since 2010. Our poverty rate is below the national aver-

age. Still one-sixth of our children live in poverty. Our per capita income is growing; but it is still the lowest in New England, as is our average household income. Maine's public high schools rank fifth in the country. But the percentage of our adult population with postsecondary degrees is well below the New England average. The quality of our health care ranks 10th in the country. Yet the public health of our citizens is ranked 33rd in the country.

Maine has many assets. But it also has many challenges. We cannot afford to stand still. This budget moves us forward. The budget is about Health. It is about Opportunity. It is about Prosperity. It is about Education. It is, in sum, about *HOPE*.

Health care is a major focus of this budget, and it is a vital part of moving our economy forward. You may have heard that more than 4,000 people are newly enrolled in MaineCare since January – people from all across the state. We intend that expanded MaineCare will help up to 70,000 people who now lack affordable health insurance, so that they can obtain preventive care, they can obtain early treatment for disease, they can remain in the workforce, and they will never again have to face the choice between medical care and bankruptcy.

These individuals are not the only ones who will be helped. Expanding MaineCare and enabling people to have

health insurance will also help our rural hospitals – which are some of the largest employers in their communities, often the only source of care, and often on the edge of financial collapse – because expansion will reduce the amount of uncompensated care they are asked to provide.

In turn, this will lower the inflation pressures on private health insurance policies. We expect that this in turn will reduce the cost of health insurance to small businesses, self-employed individuals and employees – whose insurance rates are essentially making up the difference for hospitals' uncompensated care.

But that is not enough. We will work with the Bureau of Insurance and the small business community to find additional ways to lower the cost of health insurance for small business.

Finally, MaineCare expansion will help Maine's economy. It will bring \$500 million in federal funds to Maine. That is like getting a new contract for a ship at Bath Iron Works every year – except that the jobs will be statewide. This influx of funds is projected to create 6,000 additional jobs from Sanford to Calais to Fort Kent. All of these workers will pay income and sales tax, which will in turn help the state's bottom line. This is economic development on a large scale.

To support MaineCare expansion, we include \$147 million in the state budget over the next two years – a figure arrived at based on the independent, non-partisan analysis of the Manatt report. We are also budgeting for a Medicaid Reserve Account of \$29 million to cover any contingencies.

These budget items are funded by normal income and sales tax revenues as predicted by the independent Revenue Forecasting Committee. That means no new taxes or fees. That \$147 million will trigger around a billion additional federal dollars for Maine. It is the *bargain* of a century.

As good stewards, we will continuously review and manage the MaineCare

Continued on Page 11...

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. □

Workers' Comp... (Continued from Page 7...)

There have been some changes to those laws, most notably in 2001, to address a Maine State Supreme Court ruling known as the "Kotch ruling," and again in 2012, in an attempt to bring stability to a long-standing problem in the statute dealing with the length of duration for injuries that result in a "partial incapacity." In both cases, organized labor resisted the proposed changes, despite the bipartisan support.

The Road Ahead...

Now it appears that, with the changes brought about by the 2018 elections, comp will once again be debated – and significant and costly changes are being proposed.

These are just the first of an expected onslaught of proposals that will add to the cost of doing business here. They will undo the many years of stability employers and employees have seen when it comes to comp as a public policy issue.

The fact is that Maine's injury rate of down significantly, and the severity of workplace injuries is also down. Fewer people are injured on the job because workplace safety is of critical importance to work businesses. Maine employers know the best way to lower their comp costs is to prevent workplace injuries from happening in the first place.

However, proposals like LD 601 harken back to the bad old days of 1980's era workers' comp. That is certainly the wrong direction for this state, our small businesses, and the people who work in them. Maine has spent more than 25 years rehabilitating our reputation as the worst state in the country when it came to our comp system and its costs. After having achieved the goal of safer workplaces, more affordable comp insurance, and a reasonable structure, it appears that all may once again be at risk.

The Maine State Chamber will be at the forefront, opposing any bill that will increase workers' comp costs. For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □



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Budget Address... *(Continued from Page 9...)*

program and evaluate the effects of expansion on health outcomes for our citizens, hospital finances, private health insurance rates, and job creation.

This budget also addresses other public health challenges facing our state. Among the most critical of these challenges is the opioid epidemic. This week Attorney General Frey released statistics showing 282 drug overdose deaths for the first nine months of last year. That is one overdose death per day. But the numbers do not tell the whole story.

One of those individuals was 21-year old Sean M. Yankowsky of Bangor. He died ten months after his brother, his only sibling and his best friend, 25-year old Adam Yankowsky, died from ingesting heroin laced with fentanyl. Adam had overdosed before. He had been revived, Narcaned twice on one occasion, and sent home without any guidance about what he could do next or where he could get help. Adam's and Sean's father, Maine State Police Detective David Yankowsky, and their mother, Shelly Yankowsky of Glenburn, join us this evening. They now work with the Bangor Area Recovery Network to help others battle the illness that claimed their two children. I want to thank them for their courage — the courage to carry on, the courage to speak up, the courage to help so many others. They are saving lives.

Oxford County Sheriff's Deputy Matt Baker also joins us. Matt is a 30-year vet-

eran of law enforcement. He has told hushed audiences of how he tried to revive his own 23-year old daughter, Ronni, after she overdosed on heroin. Coming home at 2:30 a.m. after working the late shift one night in 2015, Deputy Baker found his daughter in the bathroom, slumped over the toilet, not moving. Her face was blue and she was unresponsive. "I felt her heart beat once and I started CPR," Baker said. "Basically, my daughter died when I was doing CPR on her."

"About three hours later," he said, "I watched them wheel my daughter out on a gurney. This was the daughter who used to sit on my lap and talk about fishing with me. Now she sits on my mantle." Today he is sharing this terrible experience in the hope that others will listen and learn, as he brings up the little girl Ronni left behind. Matt, we are listening.

Also here tonight are Robert Fickett and Sharon Fields from Bangor. Both of them are in recovery. Bob coordinates the Recovery Coaches, and Sharon coordinates the volunteers for the Bangor Area Recovery Network, or BARN. They are success stories. They are giving back to their community. They are helping others and saving lives. Thank you, Bob and Sharon.

For David and Shelley, Matt, Bob and Sharon, and so many families like theirs around the state — help is on the way.

In addition to making more services available through MaineCare, and with federal monies currently available and with \$5.5 million in non-tax dollars in this budget, we will provide:

Continued on Page 12...

Public Hearings... *(Continued from Page 7...)*

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

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

LD 38, An Act To Require Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids for Adults (Rep. Handy of Lewiston)

LD 555, An Act To Reduce Colorectal Cancer Incidence and Mortality by Updating Screening Coverage (Sen. Davis of Piscataquis)

LD 519, An Act To Expand Adult Dental Health Insurance Coverage (Rep. Brooks of Lewiston)

MONDAY **FEBRUARY 25, 2019**

Education and Cultural Affairs

10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 208

LD 406, An Act To Establish Regional School Leadership Academies (Rep. Kornfield of Bangor)

Labor and Housing

11:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 202

LD 369, An Act To Support Healthy Workplaces and Healthy Families by Providing Earned Paid Sick Leave to Certain Employees (Sen. Millett of Cumberland)

TUESDAY **FEBRUARY 26, 2019**

Energy Utilities and Technology

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

LD 658, Resolve, To Direct a Plan for Energy Independence for Maine (Rep. Hubbell of Bar Harbor)

THURSDAY **FEBRUARY 28, 2019**

Energy Utilities and Technology

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

LD 434, An Act To Price Carbon Pollution in Maine (Rep. Rykerson of Kittery) □

Budget Address...

(Continued from Page 11...)

- ♦ Training of recovery coaches for our emergency rooms;
- ♦ Treatment based on a regional “hub and spokes” model;
- ♦ Purchase and distribution of Narcan at every appropriate venue;
- ♦ Medication Assisted Treatment;
- ♦ Resources for friends and families of persons with substance use disorder; and,
- ♦ Robust prevention and education efforts to stem the tide of this epidemic.

I am pleased with the progress to date on these initiatives under the leadership of our Director of Opioid Response, Gordon Smith. Thank you, Gordon. These initiatives supplement the vigorous efforts of law enforcement at all levels to stem the tide of drug trafficking into Maine. We propose other public health measures:

- ♦ Expanding access to low cost drugs for the elderly and disabled. This is only the first step of many we will take to help our seniors in the coming years;
- ♦ Investing \$10 million from the Fund for Healthy Maine for tobacco and nicotine prevention measures. It is critical to address the dramatic increase in vaping and other nicotine use among our young people.
- ♦ Filling the vacancies in our public health nursing corps, as the Legislature already directed us to do;
- ♦ Filling the longstanding critical vacancies in the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an agency that has seen a 25 percent reduction in staff in recent years; and,
- ♦ For our veterans, we fully fund the Bureau of Veterans Services outreach program to prevent homelessness and hunger among those who served our country with distinction. To those heroes I say, we will never forget you.

In these ways and many others, we are rebuilding our public health infrastructure.

We are also rebuilding our education infrastructure. The Department of Education has suffered from years of neglect. As of last December, it took up to

Continued on Page 13...



Department of Economic & Community Development



OutInMaine LLC has created a FREE online resource guide & social calendar supporting the LGBTQ+ community in Maine. Users can sort resource listings which include businesses, churches, schools, social groups & support orgs. You can search our whole state or just your county. Logon now at www.OutInMaine.com.

Our mission is to inform, educate, support & bring together the LGBTQ+ community and our allies in Maine.

We are always looking for new resources for our system. If you are LGBTQ+ inclusive with your business, logon now at www.OutInMaine.com and click Registration.



Budget Address... **(Continued from Page 12...)**

six months for the understaffed Department to simply certify new teachers who were waiting to start work or to recertify those already working. That is unacceptable.

With staffing adjustments this past month we have already reduced that wait time to less than six weeks. And we will not stop there. The Maine Department of Education will once again be a place that leads, inspires and fully supports our schools, teachers, and students.

This budget begins making pre-kindergarten programs available to every 4-year old in Maine. This is a voluntary, four-year program, the initial phases are included in this budget.

We also provide \$18.5 million to Child Development Services to support the needs of our youngest and neediest children. For kindergarten through high school, we provide an additional \$126 million over the biennium. This brings the state's share of public education funding to nearly 51 percent of Essential Programs and Services (EPS).

When you include the state's payments toward the teacher pension fund, the state's share of K-12 education is 55 percent. This budget invests in recruitment and retention to ensure that teachers in Maine will not be forced to leave the state for a living wage. It is time to treat our teachers with the respect and dignity they deserve. This budget ensures that no teacher in Maine will make less than \$40,000 a year.

Tonight, we are delighted that Maine's

2019 teacher of the year could join us – Joseph Hennessey from Piscataquis Community High School in Guilford. Joe teaches English and has created imaginative curricula, literature-based, active reading, analytical writing, and public speaking. Thank you for your service, Joe.

The budget also increases funding for adult education and career technical high schools so that every Mainer can compete for skilled jobs in an ever-changing economy. Tonight, we also welcome the 2018 Career Technical Education teacher-of-the-year in the gallery – Russell Clark from the Sanford Regional Technical Center. Russ teaches engineering and architectural design and exposes his students to the exciting things you can do with computer-aided-design (CAD) tools, 3D printers, and a laser cutter and engraver. Thank you, Russ, for inspiring Maine's next generation of architects and engineers.

Maine will not succeed if our graduates are burdened by debt and if adults cannot access continuing education. The budget therefore increases funding for the University of Maine System, for the Community Colleges, and for the Maine Maritime Academy. And it provides \$3 million more for scholarships through the Maine State Grant Program to prevent students from going into debt.

Our investments in K-12 education are intended to help local schools and to help local property taxpayers. But we propose to do more for taxpayers. The budget increases revenue sharing each year of the biennium. It also increases reimbursements to municipalities for the homestead tax relief program and for disaster assis-



tance. It provides more money for county jails. Taken together – more local school aid, more revenue sharing, more homestead reimbursements, more disaster assistance, more money for the jails – the net result is relief for property taxpayers.

We are also investing in infrastructure. Over the next two years, we will pave about 2,000 miles of roadway, fix or replace about 135 bridges, and invest in rail, public transit, and seaports. This will be supported by about \$531 million of dedicated state Highway Fund revenue, leveraged federal revenues, and \$200 million of state bonds. To expand the economy, the budget:

- ◆ Invests \$2 million in broadband, designed to draw down much larger amounts of federal money to Maine;
- ◆ Funds \$5 million for rural development; and
- ◆ Directs funding to market all parts of Maine not just as a tourist destination, but as places to live and work and raise a family.

Our Department of Economic and Community Development looks forward to leading in the creation of a long range economic plan for our state. The world is changing. We need to define Maine's place in the new world. We will work with the private sector and with groups like the Maine Development Foundation to identify our state's many assets and build upon them to foster and attract:

- ◆ Sustainable farming, diversified fisheries and innovative forest products businesses;

Continued on Page 15...



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Budget Address... (Continued from Page 13...)

- ♦ Clean energy producers;
- ♦ High tech industries;
- ♦ Data centers;
- ♦ Places for people to work remotely; and,
- ♦ A quality of life that will attract young working families back to our state.

The budget also allows for bonding for such things as broadband and Land for Maine's Future, and other appropriate investments, and we look forward to working with the Legislature on a bond package that fully meets the state's needs.

Climate change is a priority issue. Our Office of Policy Innovation and the Future is preparing a climate agenda which I will announce in the coming weeks. Suffice it to say, we will make every effort, without additional general fund dollars to:

- ♦ Assist the University of Maine in the research and development of off-shore wind power;
- ♦ Provide incentives for community and residential solar power;
- ♦ Promote energy efficiency and weatherization;
- ♦ Increase the use of heat pumps;
- ♦ Build charging stations and incentives for electric vehicles; and,
- ♦ Help local and state government become "green."

Right now, Hannah Pingree, who leads the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, is working with Efficiency Maine to develop a program to promote the installation of 100,000 heat pumps in businesses and houses by 2025. That alone would save \$30 to \$60 million annually in heating bills, and lower carbon emissions by 100,000 to 200,000 metric tons a year and wean our state off fossil fuels. We look forward to unveiling the details of this effort shortly.

Our budget bolsters public safety:

- ♦ By beefing up security in courtrooms to ensure the safety of those seeking access to justice;
- ♦ By authorizing fifteen additional state troopers and sergeants to ensure a 24-hour police presence statewide, including in all rural areas;
- ♦ By adding seven positions to the Maine State Police Computer Crimes

Unit. There can be no more important purpose of government than to protect our children from violent predators, whoever they are, wherever they are, whatever their evil techniques;

- ♦ By adding a new position in the Attorney General's Office to train investigators to detect and pursue those who prey upon our seniors and steal their hard-earned savings; and,
- ♦ By fulfilling our promise to the good people of Washington County to fund a correctional facility there.

We will continue to work with community groups to combat the scourge of domestic violence.

We will no longer reject valuable federal resources for vital services — including funds for substance use disorder treatment, life-saving cancer screenings and Alzheimer's treatment, nutrition assistance for hungry families, children's health insurance, the forest legacy program, and transportation funding. By some estimates, Maine has turned down almost \$2 billion in federal money in recent years. This is money that Maine people have paid in federal taxes that is not being returned to them, but is going to other states instead. My Administration will work with the Congressional delegation to identify every source of benefits to which the Maine people are entitled and make sure our people get their fair share.

So this is our budget. There will be those who say this budget is government spending run amuck, and there will be those who say we ought to spend more and more. I respectfully disagree.

Here is what I heard on the campaign trail last year:

- ♦ Maine people want better health care.
- ♦ Maine people want better schools.
- ♦ Maine people want better jobs and greater economic opportunity.
- ♦ Maine people do not want higher taxes.

This is a pragmatic, common-sense budget that lives within our means and delivers what Maine people want. It is based on the projections of independent experts on the Revenue Forecasting Committee of the previous administration who also say that revenue beyond this biennium is expected to be \$8.3 billion. That is hundreds of millions of dollars more than what this budget proposes.

When taken in combination with the robust Rainy Day fund that we have protected, Maine is well-positioned in the years to come.

In short, *this budget is sustainable*. This budget is balanced, as the Constitution requires; it makes responsible investments to tackle serious challenges facing our state; and it honors the will of the people.

For you, the members of the 129th Maine Legislature, I welcome your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions in the coming months. Having sat in these chairs, I know that you will bring the concerns of your constituents to bear on this budget, and I look forward to that productive discussion. But keep in mind:

- ♦ In this budget there are no tax increases.
- ♦ In this budget there are no gimmicks.
- ♦ In this budget there are no negative balances.

This budget is pro-growth. It is pro-jobs. It is pro-people. This budget is for the small business struggling with health care costs and for employers seeking a skilled workforce. This budget is for the parents who have lost their children to overdose and who are now raising their grandchildren. This budget is for the families, children and seniors living without basic health care. This budget is for state workers who need the resources to get things done for Maine people. This budget is for the teachers who are paying for school supplies and food for their students out of their own pockets, while earning salaries that are not commensurate to the value of their work. This budget is for Maine's towns and for the property taxpayers who have had to pick up the tab for things state government should have been paying for.

This budget is about health, opportunity, prosperity, and education. It is about *HOPE*. It is about help for those who have been left behind. For teachers like you, Russ and Joe, it is about help for your schools, your students and your colleagues across the state. And for you, Shelly and David, for Matt, Bob and Sharon, and for thousands of other families, loved ones and unsung survivors, there is *HOPE*. I promise you. There is hope. Finally, thank you to all the people of Maine whom I love with all my heart. Thank you. □



Investing in our communities, our workforce, and our small businesses

*by Sen. Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook),
President of the Maine State Senate*

Every two years, lawmakers have a chance to consider priorities and work with the governor on a budget to fund these priorities. I believe lawmakers must begin by making critical investments in our communities, our workforce, and our small businesses. These investments will help to build and sustain a strong, vibrant economy that maximizes the strengths of our entire state from Allagash to Kittery.

If we are to secure a healthy economic future, we need to invest in our workforce. There is no question that Maine is on the verge of a labor crisis. Small businesses all across the state are dealing with significant workforce shortages, which are only expected to grow across multiple industries in the coming years. To help reverse this trend, I believe we need to explore ways to provide or alleviate student debt relief and promote Maine's career and technical education programs. Both will help attract new, qualified workers and retain Mainers already living in the state.

The Legislature will consider legislation to provide direct student debt relief to individuals who choose to live in Maine for at least five years. The hope is that the relief will serve as an incentive for qualified individuals to move to Maine and help keep Maine workers in this state. It could also provide an economic incentive for young people to set up roots in Maine. A new report from the Federal Reserve finds that many young people are putting off buying a home - as well as other life events - due to overwhelming student debt. This type of legislation could be a game-changer.

Maine's career and technical education programs, community college and university system also play an important role in reversing the impact of workforce shortages. By offering quality, affordable job training programs, more students can get the skills they need for the jobs available. Last year, lawmakers invested in bond measures to upgrade facilities and ensure students are working with up-to-date equipment. This year, we have the opportunity to build on that success.

Investing in our workforce also means making sure Mainers have access to good-paying jobs, safe work environments, and quality benefits. This session, lawmakers will consider a proposal to institute earned paid sick time in the state of Maine. It's a policy that is long overdue.

When employees have access to earned paid sick time, they can afford to take time off to get healthy and return to work quickly. Studies show that the lack of earned paid sick time actually costs the economy \$160 billion each year. Too many people go to work sick leading to the spread of disease and a loss in productivity in the long run. With a smart, carefully crafted earned paid sick time policy, Maine workers, families and business all stand to benefit.

Finally, reliable, high-speed internet shouldn't be a luxury in this day and age. The legislature must invest in broadband infrastructure, so all students can get a first-rate education and small businesses can compete with the rest of the state (and country). All households should be able to get online efficiently and effectively.

Other priorities this session include working to lower the property tax burden on Mainers and small business owners, as well as working to make health care more accessible and affordable.

There's no question - there are a lot of challenges facing this state, but this means there are also a lot of opportunities. It's my hope that lawmakers can come together this session to set our state on a better path for the future. I believe we can come together and step out of our silos to solve the major problems before us and take advantage of every opportunity that comes our way. □

Senate President Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook) represents House District 1, which covers Senate District 1: Allagash, Ashland, Caribou, Castle Hill, Caswell, Connor Twp., Cyr Plantation, Eagle Lake, Fort Kent, Frenchville, Garfield Plantation, Grand Isle, Hamlin, Limestone, Madawaska, Mapleton, Masardis, Nashville Plantation, New Canada, New Sweden, Northwest Aroostook Unorganized Territory, Oxbow Plantation, Perham, Portage Lake, Square Lake Unorganized Territory, Saint Agatha, St. Francis, St. John Plantation, Stockholm, Van Buren, Wade, Wallagrass, Washburn, Westmanland, Winterville Plantation and Woodland.. The Senate President can be reached by calling his office at (207) 287-1500 or by emailing Troy.Jackson@legislature.maine.gov.

The 129th Legislature starts off in improved position of prosperity through hard work and a lot of tough decisions

by Sen. Dana Dow (R-Lincoln), Senate Republican Leader

We are entering the 129th Legislature in a great position – an improved position of prosperity. This hasn't always been the case. Eight years ago, Republicans inherited a budget deficit of nearly \$1 billion. Taxes were too high, our bills weren't being paid, and we had no savings to speak of. To put it simply, our State Government was living paycheck-to-paycheck.

Thankfully that is not the case today. Through hard work and a lot of tough decisions, we were able change the course we were on.

Today, we are in a much more desirable position, ending 2018 on a high note with a \$273 million surplus in the rainy day fund. We are happy to report that Maine has been "Open for Business" for eight years now, and that families and businesses are better off than they once were. Our unemployment level has reached a record-low, and we have a record-high number of employers providing quality, good-paying jobs.

But all of this progress could be reversed in a matter of months as the new legislature sifts through more than 2,000 bills, many of which have the potential to significantly increase the cost of doing business in Maine.

Included in these bills are proposals that would be damaging to Maine's business community. From a host of new taxes, mandates and regulations to numerous competing spending priorities and the reversal of important welfare reforms, Senate Republicans are deeply concerned with the direction we may now be headed in.

Senate Republicans are more determined than ever to be the voice of reason,

advocating for Maine businesses and working families during the next two years. We encourage you all to join us in this endeavor. Now more than ever, we will need all hands on deck.

We know that we can't afford to increase taxes, whether it be in the form of the 3% surtax that is on the table once more, in the form of a carbon tax on fossil fuels, or a tax taken out of every employee's paycheck to fund a new state benefits program.

We need to protect workers' compensation rates against proposals that would increase rates for employers.

Maine must continue to strive to be competitive, both regionally and globally. We can't afford to have the highest tax rates in the region.

We also can't afford to repeal work and training requirements for welfare programs that get Mainers back to work, especially at a time when there are more job openings than applicants.

We need to continue to work towards reducing energy rates paid by businesses and consumers.

We need to continue to support Maine's restaurant industry against efforts to eliminate the tip credit, yet again.

Last session, servers from around the state resoundingly opposed the elimination of the tip credit. We are determined to stand by our servers once more to protect their ability to earn a living. Our servers deserve the right to earn a decent living in a profession that offers flexibility rather than be condemned to earning the minimum wage.

And we need to investigate ways to preserve the Citizen's Initiative process



for Maine residents, rather than allow out-of-state special interests to continue to manipulate our ballot, using Maine as a testing ground for extreme, costly pet projects. It has been proven that time and time again, our ballot process is ripe for abuse from funders outside of our borders. These deep pockets are flooding Maine with campaign dollars used to pay petition circulators and fund astroturf campaigns pushing agendas that are extreme and oftentimes damaging to Maine's economy. More times than not, the legislature is left to clean up the damage after the dust has settled and glaring flaws come to light.

As the name implies, the Citizen's Initiative process is intended as a way for the citizens of this state to initiate change. The current abuse isn't right and needs to be addressed.

During the next few months, there will be tremendous pressure from within and outside of our government to expand, increase spending and throw up red tape that will hinder the growth of our economy. Our highest priority will be to continue to advocate for working Maine families and businesses here in Augusta so we can continue to enjoy these times of prosperity, surpluses and growth. □

Dana L. Dow, Senate Republican Leader Dana Dow (R-Lincoln) represents House District Senate District 13 consists of the municipalities and unorganized territories of Windsor, Washington, Alna, Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Edgecomb, Hibberts Gore Township, Jefferson, Louds Island Township, Monhegan Island Plantation, Newcastle, Nobleboro, Somerville, South Bristol, Southport, Waldoboro, Westport Island, Whitefield and Wiscasset. He can be reached by calling the Senate Republican Office at (207) 287-1505 or by emailing Dana.Dow@legislature.maine.gov.



With optimism and determination, House Democrats see the potential ahead, ready to embrace it _____

*by Rep. Sara Gideon (D-Freeport),
Speaker of the House of Representatives*

Last December, I had the honor of being unanimously elected by my colleagues in the House of Representatives to serve a second term as Speaker of the Maine House. Now, as we look forward together to 2019, we recognize that our challenges are significant, but our resources and our opportunity are so much greater. With optimism and determination, we see the potential ahead of us and we are ready to embrace it.

As I said in my acceptance remarks, I want us to “dare to be great.” All too often we retreat to our corners and can be weighed down by tradition. With a new Administration and a new legislature, the time is now for innovative approaches for the challenges that have been plaguing us for years.

We know that addressing our workforce shortage, investing in modern infrastructure, lowering health care costs, educating our kids, taking care of our seniors, growing opportunities for families and businesses to start here and thrive here are not partisan issues. They are what we can and will tackle together. And when we do, imagine where Maine will be.

Amidst all the legislation we will consider this year, I’d like to highlight a few solutions to our biggest challenges.

Maine’s demographic challenges have been extensively reported and are directly tied to our workforce shortage. This exists no matter where you go in the state, no matter what business you talk to, and it’s only growing worse.

According to the Maine Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission, between 2031 and 2036, about 48,000 more people a year will need to come to Maine to sustain our population. And thousands more individuals will be needed to sustain Maine’s workforce, which hasn’t changed much during the past decade.

One solution I’m working on is the creation of a Paid Family Leave program, which would allow all Maine businesses to offer this very popular benefit. From 2015 to 2017, more than 75 national companies issued press releases touting new or expanded parental leave policies. Forward-thinking companies recognize that generous paid parental leave and other family-friendly policies provide reputational benefits, offer a competitive edge in recruitment, and increase employee productivity and retention. But, many small business can’t offer this same benefit. A Maine-based system would help *all* businesses be able to reduce costly employee turnover and alleviate the cost of wage replacement through affordable insurance.

Another new approach in the legislature is the restructuring of our committees. The Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development committee has become two separate joint standing committees: the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and

Business (IDEA) committee and the Labor & Housing committee. It is our intention to prioritize the issues that will fuel our workforce, that will promote research and development investment in all corners of the State, and that will result in increased economic benefits for employers and employees. These changes alone will not fix the problems, but it is our goal to clearly and unequivocally demonstrate our commitment to moving Maine forward.

Finally, we need to expand the conversation about infrastructure. Often when we hear that term, we only think of roads and bridges. However, smart investments in digital infrastructure – especially ensuring all Mainers can access reliable, high-speed, broadband internet – will pave the way for the economic opportunities of tomorrow. Broadband access is critical to recruiting workers to our state, ensuring all of our students have access to world-class educational resources, lowering health care costs, increasing productivity, saving consumers money, growing small businesses, and allowing Mainers to work where they want and when they want. That’s why we have multiple pieces of legislation to find the right path to finally making dependable broadband access a reality across this state.

By no means is this list exhaustive, and I value your input. As Speaker, I will always work together and come to the table in search of common ground. I will always strive to protect the integrity of the House of Representatives and this office. My door is always open, and I look forward to a productive and dynamic session. □

Speaker of the House Sara Gideon (D-Freeport) represents House District 48, which covers Freeport and part of Pownal. She can be reached by calling her office at (207) 287-1300 or by emailing Sara.Gideon@legislature.maine.gov.

House Republicans have an important role to play

by Rep. Kathleen RJ Dillingham (R-Oxford),
House Republican Leader

Republican pro-growth policies have transformed the Maine economy. Maine is currently experiencing record-setting economic growth. The \$800 million budget shortfall Governor LePage inherited in 2011 is now a healthy budget surplus. This is a far cry from the economy and State budget that he and Republicans faced when they took control in 2010.

Medicaid had a biennial budget deficit of more than \$200 million, and our state owed the hospitals \$750 million. Thanks to Republicans, Medicaid is now on sustainable financial footing; it has not run a shortfall in years, and the hospitals have been paid in full, nearly a \$1 billion turnaround. Maine has money in the bank and citizens, families and businesses are keeping and investing more of their hard earned dollars.

The Republican fiscal policies pursued during the past eight years have created record-high private sector jobs, record-low unemployment, a record number of employers, and record-high revenues. Wages are rising faster than any other state in New England during the past four years.

Republicans demonstrated the wisdom and effectiveness of pro-growth policies. Working together, we lowered the tax and regulatory burdens on Maine people and businesses; we reduced the number of people trapped on welfare; and, reduced the number of children living in poverty.

Democrats now control the governorship and both the Senate and House by sizeable majorities. Though Republicans are in the minority, we still have an important role to play. Governor Mills recently released her proposed two-year

budget outlining her priorities and how she plans on paying for the Medicaid expansion for able-bodied, childless adults without raising taxes.

As the new House Republican Leader, I know first-hand how important hard-work and opportunity are to average Maine families. When the economy is strong, we all benefit. If the economy improves, more of our children will stay in Maine or return home to raise families. This is born out in recent demographic data which shows Maine ranked 16th nationally in 2017 for net in-migration among the states, with 12-of-16 Maine counties experiencing population growth.

We cannot afford to go backward. Republican policies lowered taxes, created jobs, brought record low unemployment, generated higher wages, and increased government revenue. I repeat: Lower taxes increased state revenues and stimulated economic growth.

The 129th Legislature is underway, and so far, special interest groups and their legislative allies have come forward with several new spending proposals. With each passing day, it is becoming clear that the number and size of requests, if supported, will not only spend our surplus, but require more of the nearly \$300 million "Rainy Day" Fund and then some. Special interest groups are calling for "tax fairness," "fee increases," and small business regulations that will take more of Mainers hard-earned money, while limiting employment opportunities.

Currently, the State of Maine's general obligation bond debt is \$376 million.



Even though we have not seen bond proposals from Governor Mills, legislators have already submitted more than \$1.37 billion in new debt requests with even more anticipated.

We have shared priorities, such as addressing the opioid problem, but have concerns that they will get lost in the background by a majority that sees everything as a priority. "If everything becomes a priority, nothing will be a priority."

Families have to set priorities, governments should too.

Republicans play a vital role by being the eyes and ears of Maine taxpayers, families, businesses and our most vulnerable citizens seeking a better life. We will keep the promise of Maine's future for our children and those wanting to come here.

If there is a proposed law, rule or policy that will benefit Maine as a whole, House Republicans will support it. Our diverse members will lend a hand to a constituent, family, or job creator in need of assistance. We will be open, responsible and caring in our approach, but we have no interest in going back to where we were eight years ago. To quote Joshua Chamberlain, we will continue to fight to make Maine "a good State to come and stay in." □

House Republican Leader Kathleen RJ Dillingham (R-Oxford) represents House District 72, which covers Mechanic Falls, Otisfield, and Oxford. She can be reached by calling her office at (207) 287-1440 or by emailing Kathleen.Dillingham@legislature.maine.gov.

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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.

**A total of 167 business-related bills have been tracked to date
since the session began on January 2, 2019!**

BOND ISSUES

LD 148, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Recapitalize the School Revolving Renovation Fund and To Give Priority Status to Certain School Facility Upgrades. (Sen. Millett, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.* The funds provided by the bond issue in Part A of this bill, in the amount of \$50,000,000, will be used to recapitalize the School Revolving Renovation Fund for the purpose of providing funds to public schools for renovation and capital repairs. Part B of this bill gives upgrades of facilities required to meet prekindergarten facility standards and for prekindergarten capacity building Priority 4 status for loans from the fund to school administrative units for school repair and renovation.

LD 602, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support Research and Development in Maine. (Sen. Dill, D-Penobscot) *Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.* The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$50,000,000, will be used for investment in research, development and commercialization in the State's 7 targeted technology sectors to be used for infrastructure, equipment and technology upgrades that enable organizations to gain and hold market share, to increase revenues and to expand employment or preserve jobs, including in the biotechnical and biomedical sectors by attracting more research capacity and in the forest products sector by using Maine fiber to reduce carbon emissions. The funds must be awarded through a competitive process to Maine-based public and private entities, leveraging other funds in a one-to-one ratio.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LD 50, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Government Oversight Committee To Improve the Development of a Long-range Strategic Plan for Economic Improvement in the State. (Rep. Mistraccio, D-Sanford) *Joint Standing Committee on*

Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce. This bill provides additional clarity, requirements and resources for the Maine Economic Growth Council's efforts to fulfill its current statutory mandate to develop, monitor and maintain a long-range strategic economic improvement plan for the State. It also includes provisions to support the State's achievement of the goals and objectives in that plan by establishing requirements for the Governor, Legislature and agencies with relevant programs and activities to consider the long-range strategic economic improvement plan and provide information to the Maine Economic Growth Council at the request of the council.

LD 814, An Act To Strengthen Maine's Economy through Research and Innovation led by the University of Maine System. (Sen. Herbig, D-Waldo) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would provide funding and enact measures based on recommendations of the President of the University of Maine at Machias in a strategic plan chartered by the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and due to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System in March 2019. The bill would strengthen research and economic development efforts across the University of Maine System to support Maine industries and workforce development and to foster business formation and expansion, specifically in the 7 research and development sectors designated in statute: advanced technology for agriculture and forestry; aquaculture and marine technology; biotechnology; composite materials technology; environmental technology; information technology; and precision manufacturing technology.

LD 859, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Fund Equipment for Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions. (Rep. R. Fecteau, D-Biddeford) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* The funds provided by this

Continued on Page 21...

◆ JOIN US ON APRIL 9-11 ◆

MAINE STATE CHAMBER of COMMERCE Washington, D.C. FLY-IN 2019



Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce's seventh annual

◆ Washington, D.C. Fly-In ◆
Tuesday, April 9 to Thursday, April 11, 2019

in collaboration with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

We are excited about this year's Washington D.C. Fly-In Program, and we know you will be too. In order to touch on a number of federal issues that impact our member businesses, we are again working with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to provide a **Federal Issue Briefing** session.

As a cornerstone piece of our program, we are scheduling appointments with our Maine Congressional Delegation, as well as their key staffers — allowing you the ability to share your business concerns, discuss challenges and solutions. We continue to find ourselves in the middle of important issues in Washington that have a significant impact on our members, ie healthcare, energy, taxes, regulations, etc. We take pride in putting together this unique opportunity available for Maine State Chamber of Commerce members. We hope you are able to join us for this unique opportunity.

Space is limited...

Event registration is \$750 per attendee. Please register by Thursday, March 15, 2019. Attendees are responsible for all travel arrangements. There is an overnight room block available at the George Hotel for a special room rate and reservations must be made directly to the George Hotel by Monday, March 12, by calling (800) 546-7866. Please indicate that you are a member of the Maine State Chamber's group.

Register today!

Don't miss this event that delivers unique federal access and advocacy. For more information or to confirm your attendance, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

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

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U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

"The 2018 Fly-In was another great event! We are lucky in a state like Maine to have access to elected leaders in Washington, but the Fly-In also gave us time with important members of the DC staff, which is invaluable. Those are important relationships that can be established on these visits."

Michael P. Bourque, APR, WCP,
Senior Vice President, External Affairs,
The MEMIC Group

"We are so fortunate to have four legislators in D.C. who make themselves available to talk, discuss the issues, and probe for the best outcome available. It gives me great satisfaction knowing that the Maine Chamber paves the way for this event, which is very efficient with our time."

David Barber, Senior Advisor,
AdvancePierre / Barber Foods

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 21...)

bond issue, in the amount of \$40,000,000, will be used to provide funds to make capital improvements to and purchase equipment for career and technical education centers and regions for high school students.

LD 860, An Act To Establish the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program. (Rep. Brennan, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill establishes the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program. Under the program, Maine residents who are determined to be eligible students and who are enrolled in an eligible course of study at a college within the Maine Community College System are eligible for a grant to cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees, less any federal financial aid or other financial assistance that the student receives that is not required to be repaid. The Maine Community College System must include in its biennial budget for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature the estimated full funding for the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program.

EDUCATION

LD 103, An Act To Ensure the Integrity of For-profit Colleges. (Sen. Vitelli, D-Sagadahoc) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill requires annual review of for-profit colleges by the State Board of Education to ensure that they are meeting adequate educational standards. If the board finds that a for-profit college is not meeting the standards, the board may terminate the degree-granting authority of the for-profit college.

LD 161, An Act To Increase Access to Career and Technical Education. (Sen. Woodsome, R-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to enact measures designed to increase access to career and technical education.

LD 183, An Act To Increase the Number of Teachers in Maine. (Rep. Pierce, D-Falmouth) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* Currently, under the Educators for Maine Program, an eligible undergraduate may receive a loan of up to \$3,000 per academic year or \$12,000 total. This bill increases those

Continued on Page 23...

2019 Business Day at the Statehouse

Thursday, March 14 | 8:00 am to Noon
Hall of Flags, Second Floor, Maine State House, Augusta



Employers and employees welcome ... PLEASE JOIN US!

You are invited to the Maine State Chamber of Commerce's annual Business Day at the Statehouse on Thursday, March 14, 2019 (Snow date: May 2, 2019), from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Hall of Flags (Statehouse, Second Floor).

Business Day at the Statehouse provides a prime opportunity for our members, and their employees, to discuss business issues and priorities with legislators and state government officials, as we work together to strengthen Maine's economy and keep Maine competitive. Participants have the unique opportunity to connect face-to-face with legislators. Employers often use this time to emphasize the importance of preserving and retaining existing jobs, strengthening Maine's economy through the creation of new opportunities, and keeping Maine businesses competitive in today's economy.

With your participation, the "Voice of Maine Business" will resonate throughout Augusta!

We anticipate another great turnout this year! Please RSVP today by visiting www.mainechamber.org/eventdetail.php?ID=97. If you have additional questions, please email lcaprara@mainechamber.org.

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New Legislation... (Continued from Page 22...)

loan amounts to \$9,000 per academic year and \$36,000 total. It also increases from \$20,000 to \$44,000 the total loan amount under the program a student may receive in undergraduate and postbaccalaureate loans.

LD 576, Resolve, Directing the Department of Education To Develop and Implement an Online Learning Platform for Students and Educators. (Rep. Brennan, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This resolve directs the Department of Education to develop and implement an online platform to facilitate the provision of online, virtual instruction by state-certified teachers to students in every public school in the State and the provision of a variety of high-quality professional development opportunities to educators across the State. It directs the department to report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by January 1, 2020 on the progress toward and obstacles to the development and implementation of the online platform. The joint standing committee is authorized to report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature to address any obstacles to the development and implementation of the online platform and any other concerns.

LD 577, An Act To Increase Access to Nutritious Foods in Schools by Implementing an After-school Food Program for At-risk Students. Emergency (Rep. Brennan, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill provides for the participation in the federal child and adult care food program to serve at-risk students who attend after-school programming by school administrative units that choose to operate the program and have at least one public school in which at least 50% of students qualified for a free or reduced-price lunch during the preceding school year.

LD 587, An Act To Require Career Options Education for High School Students. (Rep. Crockett, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill makes career and education development a required one-semester course to receive a high school diploma.

LD 605, An Act To Improve Antihunger Programs in Maine Schools. (Sen. Moore, R-Calais) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill

requires the Department of Education on an annual basis to provide information to public schools regarding Internet-based applications for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program.

LD 624, An Act To Facilitate the Purchase of Textbooks for Low-income College Students. (Rep. Daughtry, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce*. This bill amends the Maine State Grant Program, which is a grant program administered by the Finance Authority of Maine to award grants to Maine residents who are students at postsecondary institutions of higher education in this State based on financial need. Under the program, the minimum grant is \$1,000 per year. This bill allows the authority, using the same need and residency criteria as for the grants, to award up to an additional \$500 grant for textbooks per year.

LD 632, An Act To Promote Free, Appropriate Public Education. (Rep. Warren, D-Hallowell) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill eliminates the provision that requires the Child Development Services System to provide free, appropriate public education to a preschool child with disabilities who reaches 5 years of age between July 1st and October 15th if the child's individualized education program team determines that it is in the best interest of the child to delay enrollment in kindergarten for one year.

LD 647, An Act To Attract, Educate and Retain New State Residents To Strengthen the Workforce. (Rep. Cloutier, D-Lewiston) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill creates various programs to provide education, services and training for the State's workforce immigrant populations in the following ways:

- 1 It establishes the Welcome Center Initiative to operate welcome centers in adult education programs to provide education, services and training for foreign-trained workers in municipalities or regions of the State that have immigrant populations or that have industries that are experiencing a shortage of trained workers, patterned after the New Mainers Resource Center operated by the City of Portland adult education program through a pilot program created by the 126th Legislature. The bill provides funds for grants for proposed welcome centers;
- 2 It directs the Department of Education's office

of adult education and family literacy to:

- A Administer a vocation-specific English language acquisition and workforce training program for immigrants in the State and establish a statewide competitive grant process to carry out the purposes of the program;
- B Establish and implement a local community planning support program to provide a planning process for communities to provide English language acquisition and training in vocational skills, identify employers or areas that would benefit from immigrant residency or employment and cultivate community support to integrate immigrants into the communities and local workforce. The office must establish a grant process to carry out the purposes of the program; and
- C Develop and implement a grant process to award grants to adult education programs to increase English language acquisition instruction.

The bill provides funding for the vocation-specific English language acquisition and workforce training program, the local community planning support program and grants to increase English language acquisition instruction; and,

- 3 It directs the Department of Education to establish a welcome center under the Welcome Center Initiative within the City of Lewiston's adult education program to attract, educate and retain in employment foreign-trained workers, patterned after the New Mainers Resource Center in Portland, and provides funding for that purpose. It also provides ongoing funding for the New Mainers Resource Center in Portland.

LD 672, An Act To Allow Local Flexibility in Teacher Assignment To Enhance Student Achievement. (Rep. Stearns, R-Guildford) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill allows a holder of a professional teacher certificate to teach no more than 20% of the teacher's teaching assignment outside the teacher's area of endorsement. It also requires a superintendent to notify and provide certain details to the Commissioner of Education when a teacher is assigned to teach outside the teacher's area of endorsement.

LD 685, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine School for Marine Science, Technology, Transportation and

Continued on Page 24...

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 23...)

Engineering. (Rep. Cuddy, D-Winterport) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to amend the laws governing the Maine School for Marine Science, Technology, Transportation and Engineering.

LD 703, An Act To Help Maine Students Succeed. (Sen. Millett, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill is a concept draft.

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, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill amends the school funding formula to fund after-school programs based on the state share percentage and to fund public preschool programs at 50% of the cost of the programs, or if a school administrative unit's state share percentage is greater than 50%, to fund the unit's public preschool program at the state share percentage. The bill also increases the additional weight for economically disadvantaged students from 0.15 to 1.5. The bill also raises the maximum debt service limit for school construction projects from \$126,000,000 to \$150,000,000 beginning in 2020.

LD 718, An Act To Increase Funding for Adult Basic Literacy, Workplace Education and College Preparedness. (Rep. Talbot Ross, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce.* This bill provides an increase in funding for the adult education subsidy to local school units that operate adult education programs. It also provides targeted funds to improve the capacity of local adult education programs to meet students' academic and work readiness and training needs.

LD 772, An Act To Encourage Continued Learning. (Rep. Daughtry, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce.* This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to enact measures designed to encourage continued learning by Maine residents, including, but not limited to, creating incentives and



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implementing strategies to enable so-called stranded learners who have some college credit but no degree to complete degree and certificate programs and graduate from college.

LD 791, An Act To Provide School Districts with Full State Funding for Students with High-cost Special Education Needs. (Sen. Miramant, D-Knox) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill requires the State, beginning July 1, 2020, to provide a school administrative unit 100% of the funding needed for high-cost special education students.

LD 813, Resolve, To Encourage Relocation of Working Professional. (Sen. Chenette, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This resolve directs the Department of Economic and Community Development to design and implement a one-year pilot program to encourage remote workers to relocate to Maine. The pilot program, the New Remote Worker Grant Program, will award grants of up to \$2,500 per qualifying individual and up to \$125,000 in total funds for qualifying expenses. The resolve directs the department to report back to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over innovation, development, economic

advancement and business matters and to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over labor and housing matters and gives these committees authority to report out legislation based on the department's report.

ENVIRONMENTAL

LD 562, An Act To Improve Shoreland Zoning Rules and Enforcement To Support Municipalities. (Rep. Blume, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This bill amends the laws relating to the State's regulation of the shoreland zone as follows:

- 1 It requires the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Community Development to provide both basic and advanced training to code enforcement officers in the technical and legal aspects of code enforcement. Current law only requires that the office provide basic training to code enforcement officers.
- 2 It increases the maximum per day civil penalty for a specific violation of a municipal land use law or ordinance from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and increases the maximum per

Continued on Page 25...

Ben Gilman graduates from U.S. Chamber Foundation's Education and Workforce Fellowship Program

Fellowship provided state and local chambers with opportunities to engage nationally on critical education and workforce issues

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation recently announced Ben Gilman, general counsel and senior government relations specialist of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, graduated from its premier business leadership program. The inaugural *Business Leads* Fellowship Program trained and equipped leaders from state and local chambers of commerce with resources, access to experts, and a network of peers to build their capacity to address the most pressing education and workforce challenges.

"It was an honor to be in the inaugural class of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation's fellowship program," stated Ben Gilman, "Connecting with peers across the country dealing with similar issues was an invaluable experience and one that will benefit our members in Maine."

"As clearly displayed throughout this program, state and local leaders know better than anyone the critical link between education and economic development," says Cheryl Oldham, senior vice president of the Center for Education and Workforce. "Not only did the Fellows gain a network of peers and experts in the field, the program is designed to help these leaders find opportunities to develop initiatives that will continue to advance the growth of their local economy and put education policy into practice."

Following a competitive application and selection process, Gilman was selected along with 34 other state and local chamber executives to participate in the inaugural class. The four-month program, which ended this week, covered the entire talent pipeline, including early childhood education, K-12, higher education, and workforce development.

Upon completion, Business Leads Fellows join the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's dedicated network of 200 chambers of commerce and statewide associations from around the nation who regularly engage on education and workforce initiatives.

Given the overwhelming interest in the program, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation will host a second cohort in spring 2019. Ben Gilman has been invited back to serve as faculty for the next cohort, due in large part to his role in elevating the Maine State Chamber of Commerce as a national leader in workforce initiatives.

"We are equally proud and honored," noted Dana Connors, president of the Maine State Chamber. "Proud of this recognition for Ben and his leadership on our workforce initiatives, and honored to be elevated to a national forum of this caliber for our leadership on this critical economic issue."

In December 2018, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation selected the Maine State Chamber as a participant in its Career Readiness Lab and awarded the Chamber \$95,000 to implement a work-based learning program to better connect students with academic and experiential learning opportunities in their community. The Maine State Chamber was one of five state and local chambers selected across the country.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Chamber Foundation website at www.uschamberfoundation.org/event/business-leads-fellowship-program. □

New Legislation... ***(Continued from Page 24...)***

day civil penalty for a specific violation of a municipal shoreland zoning ordinance occurring within an area zoned for resource protection from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

- 3 It provides that a municipal shoreland zoning ordinance must require an applicant for a permit for development within the shoreland zone to provide to the municipal permitting authority preconstruction and postconstruction photographs of the shoreline vegetation and development site.

LD 563, *An Act To Help Municipalities Prepare for Sea Level Rise.* (Rep. Blume, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This bill amends the State's growth planning and land use laws to reflect that addressing the effects of sea level rise is a state planning and regulatory goal. The bill amends the laws regarding the State's coastal management policies to direct state, local and certain federal agencies responsible for regulating, planning, developing or managing coastal resources to conduct their activities affecting the coastal area consistent with the policy of encouraging the assessment of and planning for the effects of the rise in sea level. The bill provides that a coastal municipality or multimunicipal region that includes a coastal municipality, if the municipality or region adopts a growth management program under the State's growth planning and land use laws, may include in its comprehensive plan projections regarding sea level changes and the potential effects of the rise in sea level and may develop a coordinated plan for addressing the effects of the rise in sea level. The bill also provides that "coastal municipality" means a municipality or township in the coastal zone as identified by a coastal program administered by the Department of Marine Resources.

LD 568, *An Act To Change the Composition of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission.* (Rep. Dunphy, D-Old Town) *Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.* This bill amends the laws governing the composition of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission to increase the number of members appointed by the Governor from one to 3 and to decrease

Continued on Page 26...

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 25...)

the number of members appointed by the counties from 8 to 6.

LD 590, An Act To Promote Climate Resiliency Measures To Protect Beaches and Near-shore Infrastructure. (Rep. Blume, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This bill proposes to enact measures designed to provide flexibility in the regulation of development near the shore. The purpose of the bill is to encourage the development of creative approaches to protect beaches and critical near-shore infrastructure threatened by sea level rise and storm damage.

LD 603, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Funding for Landfill Closure Costs. (Sen. Dill, D-Penobscot) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This bill extends the eligibility period for closure costs for a landfill that currently applies only to a landfill licensed on or before September 1, 1989. The bill provides that if a license application for a landfill was accepted for processing on or before September 1, 1989 and the application was approved by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection within one year of accepting the application for processing, the landfill is eligible for payment of 75% of certain closure costs by the Department of Environmental Protection.

LD 620, An Act Regarding Licensing of Land-based Aquaculture Facilities. (Rep. Dodge, D-Belfast) *Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.* This bill amends the law allowing the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to refuse to issue a land-based aquaculture license, or revoke an existing license, when the aquaculture activity presents an unreasonable risk to indigenous marine or freshwater life or its environment and specifies that the activity is either alone in the use of a body of water in combination with the aquaculture activity of any other land-based aquaculture operations using the same body of water.

LD 621, An Act To Prohibit Extruded Polystyrene Food Service Containers. (Rep. Carney, D-Cape Elizabeth) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This bill prohibits food establish-

Continued on Page 27...

Campus Career Connect needs you! Career Mentoring for Students with Disabilities



Campus Career Connect (C3) is an online group mentoring program where college students with a disability can connect with professional mentors and get help reaching their career goals.

- ◆ Students spend time each week chatting online with career mentors
- ◆ Monthly webinars on various career-readiness topics
- ◆ Networking opportunities, resume feedback, and ongoing support
- ◆ Open to any student with a disability from Maine or studying in Maine

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The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) in an online career mentoring program for students with disabilities. The program, Campus Career Connect (C3), is an online group mentoring program where college students with a disability can connect with professional mentors and get help reaching their career goals. Students spend time each week chatting online with career mentors. Students and mentors are able to participate in monthly webinars on various career-readiness topics and have access to networking opportunities, resume feedback, and ongoing support. This program is open to any student with a disability from Maine or studying in Maine. The Chamber is seeking for employer mentors to join the program and participate in the mentoring program. Sign up today at C3.PYD.org via phone, tablet, or computer. □

Want to be a mentor?

Please contact Megan Sanborn or Kelsey Morrell by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108 or ext. 104, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org or kmorrell@mainechamber.org.

For additional information, check out C3.PYD.org or contact Deep by emailing dchinappa@pyd.org

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Youth with Disabilities

New Legislation... **(Continued from Page 26...)**

ments from processing, preparing, selling or providing food in or on an extruded polystyrene foam food service container with certain exceptions.

LD 710, Resolve, To Require the Department of Environmental Protection To Study the Establishment of a Product Stewardship Program for Mattresses. (Rep. Berry, D-Bowdoinham) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This resolve requires the Department of Environmental Protection to study the establishment of a new stewardship program in the State for mattresses and report the results of its study to the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources by December 4, 2019. The department is required to include recommended legislation to implement its recommendations related to the report, and the joint standing committee is authorized to report out a bill relating to the subject matter of the report to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.

LD 785, Resolve, Directing the Board of Pesticides Control To Educate the Public on the Proper Use of Pesticides and To Promote Integrated Pest Management. (Sen. Black, R-Franklin) *Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.* This resolve requires the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Board of Pesticides Control to develop and disseminate to the public educational materials that promote the proper use of pesticides and promote integrated pest management.

LD 797, An Act To Limit Greenhouse Gas Pollution and Effectively Use Maine's Natural Resources. (Rep. Tucker, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.* This bill provides that by January 1, 2050 the State must reduce net annual greenhouse gas emissions to at least 80% below the 1990 net annual greenhouse gas emissions level. It directs the Department of Environmental Protection to establish interim net annual emissions levels and to monitor and report on gross and net annual greenhouse gas emissions. It directs the department to update the State's climate action plan and evaluate the State's progress toward meeting the reduction levels.

LABOR

LD 567, An Act To Create a Universal Basic Incom. (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland (by Request)) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* A concept draft, this bill proposes to enact measures designed to establish a universal basic income for residents of the State.

LD 596, An Act To Prevent the Closure of Maine Businesses. (Sen. Jackson, D-Aroostook) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill requires that a person proposing to permanently shut down an industrial or commercial facility make an offer of sale, at fair market value, of the facility and equipment to an interested employee organization or to a privately owned business entity, government-owned business entity or jointly owned business entity.

LD 666, An Act To Protect Pregnant Workers. (Rep. Carney, D-Cape Elizabeth) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill provides that it is unlawful employment discrimination for an employer to fail to provide a reasonable accommodation for an employee's pregnancy-related condition, unless provision of an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer.

LD 733, An Act To Promote Keeping Workers in Maine. (Rep. Schneck, D-Bangor) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill prohibits an employer from requiring or entering into a so-called noncompete agreement with an employee earning wages that are at or below 300% of the federal poverty level. A noncompete agreement is defined as a contract or contract provision that prohibits an employee or prospective employee from working in the same or a similar profession or in a specified geographic area for a certain period of time following termination of employment. If an employer requires a noncompete agreement for a position of employment, the employer must disclose that requirement in any advertisement for that position, and an employer must provide an employee or prospective employee with a copy of a noncompete agreement at least 3 business days before requiring that employee or prospective employee to sign the agreement. An employer that violates this law commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$5,000 may be adjudged. The bill also prohibits a restrictive employment agreement between 2 or more employers that prohibits or restricts one employer from soliciting or hiring another employer's employees or former employees.

LD 757, An Act To Improve Labor Laws for

Maine Workers. (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* A concept draft, this bill would provide employees more rights under the labor laws.

MINIMUM WAGE

LD 612, An Act To Promote Youth Employment. (Rep. Bradstreet, R-Vasselboro) *Joint Standing Committee on .* This bill establishes a minimum hourly wage for persons who are 16 or 17 years of age that is \$1.00 per hour less than the regular minimum hourly wage, a minimum hourly wage for persons who are 15 years of age that is \$2.00 per hour less than the regular minimum hourly wage and a minimum hourly wage for persons who are 14 years of age and under that is \$3.00 per hour less than the regular minimum hourly wage.

LD 670, An Act To Increase the Minimum Wage for Large Employers. (Rep. Collings, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill increases the minimum wage of the employees of employers employing 50 or more full-time employees to \$13.00 on January 1, 2021, to \$14.00 on January 1, 2022 and to \$15.00 on January 1, 2023, and indexes it thereafter.

LD 739, An Act To Help Small Businesses by Establishing an Alternate Minimum Wage. (Rep. Rudnicki, R-Fairfield) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill creates an alternate minimum wage applicable to employees of a small employer, to the first 90 consecutive days of employment for employees who are under 20 years of age and to employees who are under 18 years of age. The wage is \$9.75 starting January 1, 2020 and will be increased by any increase in the cost of living starting January 1, 2021 and every subsequent January 1st.

TAXATION

LD 420, An Act to Amend the Maine Exclusion Amount in the Estate Tax. (Rep. Collings, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill would lower the exclusion amount for Maine estate tax from \$5,400,000 to \$2,000,000.

LD 607, An Act to Provide Equitable Taxation for the Food and Beverage Industry. (Sen. Guerin, R-Glenburn) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill would allow a deduction from Maine individual and corporate taxable income for the fed-

Continued on Page 28...

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 27...)

eral tax credit allowed to an employer for the employer's share of federal social security taxes paid on the portion of the employee's tips that cause the employee's wages to exceed \$5.15 per hour.

LD 609, An Act to Provide Municipalities Additional Sales Tax Revenue from Lodging Sales. (Rep. Terry, D-Gorham) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* This bill provides an incremental sales tax of 1% for those sales currently subject to the 9% sales tax on lodging. The incremental revenue, after reduction for administrative costs, is returned to the municipality or unorganized territory to which the revenue is attributable. The amount received may not be used to reduce any other state aid or revenue sharing to municipalities or the unorganized territory.

LD 611, An Act to Provide Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Operations of State Government. (Rep. Jorgensen, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill is a concept draft that proposes to provide supplemental appropriations and allocations necessary for the operations of state government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

LD 625, An Act to Phase out the Insurance Premium Tax on Annuities. (Rep. Stanley, D-Medway) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill would phase out the insurance premium tax on annuity considerations over 4 years beginning in 2020.

LD 725, An Act to provide and Income Tax Credit to Encourage Small Business Hiring. (Rep. Fay, D-Raymond) *Joint Standing Committee on .* The bill would provide small businesses with fewer than 25 employees an income tax credit. The credit would be equal to the amount of federal social security tax and medicare tax paid by the employer for the first 40 hours of employment if the employee is employed for 12 consecutive months for full time or two consecutive seasons for seasonal employees.

LD 731, An Act to Amend the Maine Tax Laws. (Rep. Tipping, D-Orono) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill would propose the amend Maine's Tax Laws.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

LD 784, An Act To Amend the Laws

Continued on Page 29...

MAINE S T A T E CHAMBER of COMMERCE

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 Kelsey Morrell by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing kmorrell@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 28...)

Governing Eligibility for Unemployment Benefits. (Sen. Davis, R-Piscataquis) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill disqualifies an individual from eligibility for unemployment benefits when the individual has refused to accept or attend a job interview for suitable work for which the individual is reasonably fitted.

UTILITIES AND ENERGY

LD 564, An Act To Encourage the Installation of Solar Panels on Residential Property. (Rep. Blume, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This bill provides a property tax exemption for solar panels and associated equipment installed on residential property that qualifies for a homestead exemption.

LD 581, An Act To Direct Electric Utilities To Provide Comparative Usage Data on Customer Billing Statements. (Rep. Riseman, I-Bridgton) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This bill requires a transmission and distribution utility to provide on the utility's billing statement to a customer information concerning the previous 24 months of the customer's energy usage comparing same-month usage data between the first year of usage and the 2nd year of usage.

LD 604, An Act To Create an Electric Vehicle Tax Credit. (Sen. Chenette, D-York) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* This bill provides an income tax credit for the purchase of a new plug-in electric-drive motor vehicle that is eligible for a federal income tax credit. The credit is \$300 plus \$50 for each kilowatt-hour of battery capacity in excess of 5 kilowatt-hours up to a maximum credit of \$1,500.

LD 614, An Act To Provide Purchase Rebates for Battery Electric Vehicles. (Rep. Ingersen, D-Arundel) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This bill establishes an electric vehicle rebate program to be administered by the Efficiency Maine Trust that, beginning July 1, 2020, allows a person who purchases or leases an eligible battery electric vehicle to apply for and, as resources allow, receive a direct rebate of \$2,500 if the person meets certain eligibility criteria. The bill also provides a General Fund appropriation of \$500,000 to support the direct rebates to be made available under the program.

LD 640, Resolve, To Require a Study of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions from the Proposed Central Maine Power Company Transmission Corridor. Emergency (Sen. Carson, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This resolve requires the Department of Environmental Protection to review all relevant, verifiable evidence on the total net effect on greenhouse gas emissions from Central Maine Power Company's New England Clean Energy Connect project and submit a report to the Legislature, make the report available to the public and provide a copy of the report to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities by June 1, 2019. The resolve prohibits the department from issuing a permit for the project without taking into account the results of the department's review.

LD 658, Resolve, To Direct a Plan for Energy Independence for Maine. (Rep. Hubbell, D-Bar Harbor) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This resolve directs the Governor's Energy Office to adopt a 10-year energy independence plan, including conservation and renewable energy strategies, for the State to become a net exporter of energy by 2030. It requires the office to develop the plan through a collaborative stakeholder process. The plan must be submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology by December 31, 2019 along with suggested legislation necessary to implement the plan. The resolve authorizes the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology to report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature related to the plan.

LD 790, An Act To Eliminate the Cap on the Number of Accounts or Meters Designated for Net Energy Billing. (Sen. Mirament, D-Knox) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.* This bill prohibits the Public Utilities Commission from adopting or amending net energy billing rules pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3209-A to impose any limit on the number of accounts or meters that customers may designate for net energy billing or any limit on the number of customers that may share an interest in a generation facility for which the energy output is credited as part of any net energy billing.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

LD 580, An Act To Improve the Advocate Program Established by the Workers' Compensation Board. (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor*

and Housing. A concept draft, this bill proposes to enact measures designed to strengthen representation for injured workers and improve the advocate program established under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992.

LD 600, An Act To Achieve Mental Health Parity in Workers' Compensation. (Sen. Bellows, D-Kennebec) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill changes the standard of proof required to demonstrate entitlement to compensation for a mental injury caused by stress so that it is the same standard as is required with respect to physical injuries. In addition, this bill specifies that a work-related injury that aggravates a preexisting mental condition may result in a compensable disability, just as aggravating a preexisting physical condition may.

LD 756, An Act To Improve the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992. (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* A concept draft, this bill proposes to enact measures designed to improve the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992.

LD 758, An Act To Clarify Work Search Requirements for Workers' Compensation. (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* Under current law, an injured worker who is only partially incapacitated by a workplace injury may be eligible for so-called 100% partial incapacity benefits if the worker is not working, as long as the worker can demonstrate that the lack of employment is due to the injury and that the worker has not been able to obtain employment, within the restrictions caused by the partial incapacity, despite an adequate work search. The Maine Supreme Judicial Court outlined the factors that must be considered when determining whether a work search by the injured worker is sufficient in the case *Monaghan v. Jordan's Meats*, 2007 ME 100, 928 A.2d 786. This bill abrogates the current "work search rule" by placing the burden on the previous employer to demonstrate that there is suitable employment available to the injured worker in the worker's local community. If the previous employer has demonstrated suitable available employment, the injured worker may still be eligible for so-called 100% partial incapacity benefits if the worker can demonstrate continued unemployment despite reasonable efforts to secure the alternative employment identified by the previous employer.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



WORKPLACE WELLNESS

HEALTHY EMPLOYEES MAKE CENTS!

Five Things to Do Daily to Keep Your Heart Healthy: Breathe easier by following these good habits

You know that exercise and a good diet can keep your heart healthy, but what else can you do to keep your ticker going strong? Here are five key things from A. Marc Gillinov, MD, you need to do every day to help your heart work most efficiently. Incorporate these habits into your lifestyle, and your heart health will be the best it can be for you.

1 **Eat healthy fats, NOT trans fats**

We need fats in our diet, including saturated, polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats. One fat we don't need is trans fat, which is known to increase your risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke over a lifetime. This is because trans fat clogs your arteries by raising your bad cholesterol levels (LDL) and lowering your good cholesterol levels (HDL). By cutting them from your diet, you improve the blood flow throughout your body. So, what are trans fats? They are industry-produced fats often used in packaged baked goods, snack foods, margarines and fried fast foods to add flavor and texture.

Tip: Read the labels on all foods. Trans fat appears on the ingredients list as partially hydrogenated oils. Look for 0 percent trans fat. Make it a point to avoid eating foods with trans fat.

2 **Practice good dental hygiene, especially flossing your teeth daily**

Dental health is a good indication of overall health, including your heart, because those who have periodontal (gum) disease often have the same risk factors for heart disease. Studies continue on this issue, but many have shown that bacteria in the mouth involved in the development of gum disease can move into the bloodstream and cause an elevation in C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation in the blood vessels. These changes may in turn, increase your risk

of heart disease and stroke.

Tip: Floss and brush your teeth daily to ward off gum disease. It's more than cavities you may have to deal with if you are fighting gum disease.

3 **Get enough sleep**

Sleep is an essential part of keeping your heart healthy. If you don't sleep enough, you may be at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease no matter your age or other health habits. One study looking at 3,000 adults over the age of 45 found that those who slept fewer than six hours per night were about twice as likely to have a stroke or heart attack as people who slept six to eight hours per night. Researchers believe sleeping too little causes disruptions in underlying health conditions and biological processes, including blood pressure and inflammation.

Tip: Make sleep a priority. Get seven to eight hours of sleep most nights. If you have sleep apnea, you should be treated as this condition is linked to heart disease and arrhythmias.

4 **Don't sit for too long at one time**

In recent years, research has suggested that staying seated for long periods of time is bad for your health no matter how much exercise you do. This is bad news for the many people who sit at sedentary jobs all day. When looking at the combined results of several observational studies that included nearly 800,000 people, researchers found that in those

who sat the most, there was an associated 147 percent increase in cardiovascular events and a 90 percent increase in death caused by these events. In addition, sitting for long periods of time (especially when traveling) increases your risk of deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot).

Tip: Experts say it's important to move throughout the day. Park farther away from the office, take a few shorter walks throughout the day and/or use a standing work station so you can move up and down. And remember to exercise on most days.

5 **Avoid secondhand smoke like the plague**

Studies show that the risk of developing heart disease is about 25 to 30 percent higher for people who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work. According to the American Heart Association, exposure to tobacco smoke contributes to about 34,000 premature heart disease deaths and 7,300 lung cancer deaths each year. And nonsmokers who have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol have an even greater risk of developing heart disease when they're exposed to secondhand smoke. This is because the chemicals emitted from cigarette smoke promote the development of plaque buildup in the arteries.

Tip: Be firm with smokers that you do not want to be around environmental smoke—and keep children away from secondhand smoke.

Follow these five tips and you'll be doing your heart a favor. You'll feel better and be able to stay active with a heart-healthy lifestyle.

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 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 visit 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 Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. You may also contact Kelsey Morrell at ext. 104 or kmorrell@mainechamber.org. □

Source: health.clevelandclinic.org/5-things-to-do-daily-to-keep-your-heart-healthy

Maine Career Connect launches pilot in Portland

— On the heels of five successful years supporting employers and relocating families in Bangor, program expands to Portland

On January 25, Maine Career Connect (MCC), a program of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, announced its expansion to the Portland market in 2019. Already successful in the Bangor market, the program will support the hiring and retention efforts of three major Portland-area employers during this pilot year - IDEXX, MaineHealth and Unum. Ula Polsky, a Bangor native and Portland-area resident for the past 13 years, has been hired to run the southern Maine program.

Polsky has a background in economic development and government affairs. In Portland she has supported numerous non profits, most notably the Children's Museum and Theatre of Maine, as a board member and in an advisory capacity. She is excited to work with employers in the Portland area to help them attract top talent to the state.

Maine Career Connect has formed an Advisory Council in Portland to help shape the program. The council is comprised of:

- ◆ Dana Connors, president/CEO of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce;
- ◆ Michelle Hale, director of talent acquisition for Dartmouth College;
- ◆ Quincy Hentzel, president/CEO of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce;
- ◆ Kelli Kim, senior talent acquisition specialist for IDEXX;
- ◆ Ed McKersie, founder/president of Live + Work in Maine/Pro Search, Inc.;
- ◆ Alison Nathanson, director of MaineHealth's Physician Recruitment Center;
- ◆ Anne Niles, senior staffing consultant at Unum;
- ◆ David Savo, senior talent acquisition manager for IDEXX;

- ◆ Jessica Smart, executive recruiter for MaineHealth; and,
- ◆ Cara Weeks, mobility program manager at Unum.

"I am excited about Maine Career Connect's expansion into southern Maine," said McKersie, "I know MCC services have proven to be invaluable to Maine employers as they work to recruit and retain the employees necessary to grow here in Maine. Live + Work in Maine is proud to be a partner in this effort."

Among its key goals, the Maine State Chamber places great emphasis on workforce development and the attraction and retention of workers in Maine. "The Maine State Chamber is proud to bring this vital concept from our affiliate in the Bangor area, where it has worked well for more than five years," noted Connors. "Moving to Maine is a family activity. Maine Career Connect is integral to attracting workers, and their families, to Maine by assisting their families in acclimating here. We anticipate continued growth and great success in the Portland area with this much-needed service."

Maine Career Connect provides concierge-level services to help employers attract top talent to the state and connect new hires to the best that Maine has to offer. Founded in 2013 in Orono, ME, we focus on the whole family, providing community transition assistance, support and referrals, as well as dual career services to connect trailing partners/spouses with employment opportunities. Learn more by visiting <https://mainecareerconnect.org> or by contacting Aubrae Filipiak at Maine Career Connect by calling (207) 370-0114 or by emailing director@mainecareerconnect.org. □

New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 29...)

LD 139, An Act To Address the Unmet Workforce Needs of Employers and To Improve the Economic Future of Workers. (Rep. Fecteau, D-Biddeford) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill makes a number of changes to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program administered by the Department of Labor, including the following. 1. It requires that the Department of Labor's outreach efforts regarding the program be tailored to focus on unemployed and underemployed workers, veterans, immigrants, recipients of benefits under the statewide food supplement program, low-skilled manufacturing workers and students enrolled in postsecondary education. 2. It directs the Department of Labor to collaborate with other entities to improve program outreach to target demographics, including, at a minimum, collaboration with the Maine Community College System.

LD 769, Resolve, To Direct the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation To Create a Working Group To Study Credentialing Skilled Individuals with Foreign Credentials. (Rep. Tepler, D-Topsham) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce.* This resolve directs the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation to create a working group to study credentialing skilled individuals with foreign credentials in the State. The working group consists of 8 to 10 members representing licensing boards and professional organizations served by the licensing boards in professions for which there is a need for and an opportunity to credential skilled individuals with foreign credentials. The working group is required to submit its report along with any recommendations and suggested legislation to the Governor and the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation. The commissioner is required to submit the report with any recommendations and suggested legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. The committee is permitted to report out a bill relating to the subject matter of the report to the First Regular Session of the 130th Legislature. □

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Monday, March 25 ♦ 5:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Senator Inn & Spa, Augusta

*Presented by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce
& the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce*

Light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar

Please RSVP to kmorrell@mainechamber.org