

January 23, 2020

Governor Mills delivers first State of the State address

On the evening of Tuesday, January 21, 2020, Governor Janet Mills delivered her first State of the State Address to the Maine State Senate, the Maine House of Representatives, cabinet members, invited dignitaries, and the citizens of Maine. Centering on themes of readiness and resilience, the speech lasted approximately an hour and was televised live on Maine Public. We have reprinted the Governor's remarks as they were prepared.



“President Jackson, Speaker Gideon, Chief Justice Saufley, distinguished members of the 129th Legislature and honored guests, I am here tonight to continue the story of our state — to talk about the progress we have made, the challenges we face, and the strength and resilience of the people of Maine.

To you, the people of Maine — those watching in homes, businesses and shops across the state — you who are working the second shift, you who are putting the little ones to bed and making sure they have clean clothes and a lunch for tomorrow.

You work hard, you get the job done

— and you expect nothing less from all of us. You have entrusted us to put aside our differences and come together to do what's right:

- To protect your health care and to make it more affordable.
- To create new jobs and expand opportunity.
- To take care of each other, to welcome new Mainers home and to ensure that our people are safe, happy and have the chance for success.
- And you are counting on us to take action — now — on the climate crisis

Continued on Page 3...

LD 1977 seeks to mandate manufacturers of devices and equipment to provide coding and repair information to uncertified repair shops or individuals

Allowing uncertified entities to repair products could pose safety risk to consumers

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following testimony was delivered by Megan Diver on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce in opposition of LD 1977, An Act To Ensure A Consumer's Right To Repair Certain Electronic Products, on Thursday, January 23, 2020, before the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. We have reprinted it here for your review.

Senator Herbig, Representative Daughtry, distinguished members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business (IDEA) committee: I am Megan Diver, senior government relations specialist at the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, a statewide business association representing both large and small businesses across the state. The Chamber supports policies and priorities that help Maine businesses prosper and our economy flourish to make Maine as competitive as possible.

Continued on Page 2...

Inside Impact...

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Business Day | p. 6 |
| Educate Maine | p. 5 |
| Hearings / Work Sessions .. | p. 7 |
| Human Resources Issues Update .. | p. 9 |
| LD 1898 Energy Valuation .. | p. 2 |
| LD 1977 Uncertified Repairs | p. 1 |
| Legislative Strictly Social .. | p. 16 |
| New Legislation | p. 3 |
| State of the State | p. 1 |
| Washington DC Fly-In | p. 5p |

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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.

Chamber testifies in support of bill to require State to value certain energy generation property

On Tuesday, January 21, the Maine State Chamber testified in support of **LD 1898, An Act Regarding Property Taxes on Certain Energy Generation Projects**, sponsored by Sen. Heather Sanborn (D-Cumberland). The bill would require Maine Revenue Services (MRS) to value property of an energy generation project that is located partially in the unorganized territory and partially in organized territory and to allocate the value to the organized territory appropriately.

Linda Caprara testified that the Maine State Chamber has a history of supporting bills like LD 1898 that would require MRS to value large industrial property. Caprara testified that valuing large industrial property, such as that associated with energy projects, is very complicated. She also noted that MRS has the expertise to value these properties appropriately and fairly across the board so that there are not wide variations or discrepancies in value for the same property from one municipality to another. She said, the same property should be valued the same way regardless of where it is located.

In addition, the bill would also allow a municipality to pursue the same fair course of action afforded a taxpayer when appealing a value, that is to take their case before the State Board of Appeals.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

LD 1977...

(Continued from Page 1...)

The Chamber opposes LD 1977, which would mandate businesses that manufacture devices and equipment to provide coding and repair information for their products to uncertified repair shops or individuals.

The Chamber represents many businesses who develop products and services for a wide range of individual consumers and businesses. Consumers rely on these products to operate safely, securely, and accurately, whether they are being used for personal or business use. With today's modern and evolving technology, we are all more reliable on technology devices and equipment. It's important to remain conscious about the safety and security of these products.

LD 1977 does not consider the complexities of the products in question. The manufacturers are certified and have warranties on their products. Allowing anyone to repair products who is uncertified isn't fair to the companies who are certified and

could pose a safety risk to consumers, especially when individuals purchase third party components for their repairs. By making repair information publicly accessible, consumers are more likely to attempt repairs on their own and to be left exposed to risks of injuries and property damage. Additionally, by providing every consumer and nonauthorized repair facility with the same information as authorized service providers, without the requisite training and certification, the facility can offer services of sub-standard quality.

In addition, this legislation creates privacy and security concerns. The security of user information on these products is important. Allowing anyone who is not certified or trained to repair products you would weaken the privacy and security protections of those products and create risks for consumers. For these reasons the Chamber urges the committee to oppose LD 1977. Thank you.

If you have further questions about LD 1977, please contact Megan Diver by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing mdiver@mainechamber.org. □

State of the State... (Continued from Page 1...)

that threatens our very way of life.

We have made progress. And we have done so without rancor or bitterness. Together, we enacted a visionary paid leave law, workers compensation reform and important gun safety legislation. Together, we restored the Maine Indian State Tribal Commission and empowered it to become a forum for substantive communication, problem solving, and dispute resolution. Critical work that I remain committed to. We successfully negotiated seven collective bargaining agreements in timely fashion that provided cost-of-living raises, first-time parental leave and a long overdue wage study. And so much more.

Our state is strong. Our state is resilient. Our state is ready.

This year, we celebrate Maine's 200th year as a state. After we separated ourselves from Massachusetts and embarked on creating our own destiny, we, Maine people, learned to be self-reliant and, at the same time, to rely on each other. We carved our character and our living out of Maine's forests, hills and tablelands, its fields, shores, and mighty rivers. Using two-man saws and their own strength, Maine lumbermen withstood our coldest months to fell our tallest trees. Our state became the lumber capital of the world because of their resilience.

Maine families dug potatoes, picked corn, squash and pumpkins; harvested oats and rye side-by-side with their neighbors. Our state became the breadbasket of the Northeast because of the resilience of Maine farmers.

Hundreds of Maine craftsmen each worked from dawn till dusk to build world-class ships, piece by piece. Our products reached markets oceans away because of their resilience.

And of course, our state's history goes much further back before statehood to those who first hunted, farmed, fished and set their stones on these grounds. We stand here today because of the resilience of Native Americans.

Living in Maine has not always been easy. We have survived wars, depressions, prohibitions and booms and busts. We've seen hatred and bigotry. We've suffered loss — as a state and as families. Through it all, we have been lifted up by the courage, conviction and resilience that comes from loving a place and its people.

That resilience defines our history. That resilience will define our future.

These are trying times. Politics from Washington and beyond are marked by rancor, divisiveness and fear. During this volatile presidential election year, the noise is deafening, turning us away from the security and saneness of our own small outpost. Tariffs and trade wars, threats of terrorism and partisan fighting paralyze the nation's capital.

But here in Maine, we are doing what Mainers have done for more than

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 90 business-related bills have been tracked to date since the session began on January 8, 2020!

EDUCATION

LD 2072, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 132: Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education. (Rep. Kornfield, D-Bangor) Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. This resolve provides for legislative review of portions of Chapter 132: Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction, a major substantive rule of the Department of Education. □

two centuries: putting our shoulder to the wheel and working across the aisle to get things done for Maine people. Because we are not Washington. We are *Maine*.

Marked by strength, pragmatism and resilience, Maine has always been ready and willing to do our part for our communities, for our country, for our world. We have always welcomed people who were not fortunate enough to grow up here, including the ancestors of those in this room who came from other places.

We have always faced loss together, mending our broken hearts as one people and one state. For a moment, I want to bow my head with you to remember three good people who left this chamber unexpectedly in the past ten months — people whose kindness and decency and dedication to this state left a mark on all of us: Representatives Dale Denno, Ann Peoples, and Archie Verow. Let us also remember Representative Jim Campbell of Sanford, who served in this body for many years and who left us this past week. God bless them and may the mem-

Continued on Page 6...



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

01/23/2020 III **Impact** III 3

"As a first-time attendee at the D.C. Fly-In, I was extremely impressed with the amount of access we were able to get with our Maine delegation and their staff. The policy briefings from the experts at U.S. Chamber were also incredibly informative and pertinent, and I truly appreciate the work that the Maine State Chamber staff put into making this a well-coordinated and worthwhile event."

*Judith Borelli, Director of Public Affairs,
Texas Instruments, South Portland*

"It is always reaffirming to meet our congressional delegation and to see first-hand their thoughtful approach to the issues impacting Maine.

The ability to speak with and listen to our delegation in such a small group setting is immensely beneficial, and I really appreciated the work that went into planning the trip and the time that our legislators spent with us."

*Geoff Baur, Vice President, Finance,
IDEXX*

Register today to attend the Maine State Chamber's eighth annual

Washington, D.C., Fly-In

Tuesday, April 28 through Thursday, April 30, 2020

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce takes pride in putting together this unique opportunity for our members. As we continue to find ourselves in the middle of important issues in Washington that have a significant impact on our members, such as health care, energy, taxes, regulations, etc., the Washington, D.C., Fly-In has proven to be extremely beneficial to our member attendees as well as to our Congressional Delegates.

In order to touch on several critical federal issues that impact our member businesses, this year's trip will include a presentation by The National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to provide a Joint Policy Briefing in advance of the Capitol Hill visits. Appointments have been confirmed with each of our U.S. Congressional Delegates and their key staffers-to provide you with an opportunity to share your business concerns, as well as discuss challenges and solutions.

The itinerary illustrates the value – the partnership with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber, with individual meetings with our delegates and their staffs, access to a Joint Policy Briefing, dinner with our U.S. Congressional Delegates, and finally, an opportunity to schedule one-on-one visits to discuss policy issues specific to your industry.

Each year, we leave these meetings knowing we've been heard. And, knowing that Maine is fortunate to have congressional leaders who are caring, competent and accessible, we are certain that we have delivered an invaluable experience for our attendees. We do hope that you will join us!

Registration for this event is required, and all information for that can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/2uXtN5J>.

Important Member Registration Information...

- ◆ **Event Registration:** \$750 per attendee. Attendees are responsible for all travel arrangements. *(If you are an employer with 10 employees or less, please contact Megan Diver by emailing mdiver@mainechamber.org for the small/individual business rate.)*
- ◆ **Please register by Friday, April 10,** by emailing mdiver@mainechamber.org.
- ◆ **Hotel reservations** must be made directly to the Willard Intercontinental Hotel by Monday, April 10, by calling 1-202-628-9100. To receive the group rate, please indicate you are a member of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce's group, or via this link: <https://bit.ly/35Whxz3>. The room rate is \$479 per night plus applicable taxes; room cancellations are the responsibility of the attendee and must be made directly with the hotel.



Washington, DC, Fly-In...

(Continued from Page 4...)

- ◆ **Cancellations** for the event must be made by contacting Megan Diver at the Maine State Chamber by phone at (207) 623-4568, ext. 108.

The Washington, D.C., Fly-In 2020 Agenda:

Tuesday, April 28, 2020:

- ◆ Early Check-in Requested, The Willard Intercontinental, 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20004
- ◆ Late afternoon (3:30 p.m.) Joint Policy Briefing with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, hosted at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1615 H St NW, Washington, DC 20062
- ◆ Reception then dinner on your own

Wednesday, April 29, 2020:

- ◆ Maine Member Breakfast at the Occidental Grill & Seafood at The Willard Intercontinental, 1475 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004
- ◆ Meeting with Maine's Members of the United States Senate, Capitol Hill Lunch and Briefing TBD
- ◆ Meetings with Maine's Members of the United States Congress, Capitol Hill
- ◆ Meeting with Maine's Members of the United States Senate, Capitol Hill
- ◆ Reception / Dinner with Maine's Congressional Delegates, Sazerac

Thursday, April 30, 2020:

- ◆ Additional Hill visits: Our staff will assist with requests for individual meetings. Please email mdiver@mainechamber.org with your request, issue areas of interest, and with which of our U.S. congressional delegates' staffs or offices you would like to meet.

Any agenda revisions will be provided in advance of travel time. If you have additional questions, please contact Megan Diver by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or emailing mdiver@mainechamber.org. □

Letter to the Editor:

State should expand child care options _____

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have reprinted a Letter to the Editor from Jason Judd, Ed.D., executive director of Educate Maine, from Thursday, January 23 for your review and consideration. It also appears online at www.pressherald.com/2020/01/23/letter-to-the-editor-state-should-expand-child-care-options.

As your January 9 editorial, "Child care access is a Maine workforce issue," points out: Today, too many working parents with young children must make a choice between spending a significant portion of their income on child care, finding cheaper but potentially lower quality child care, or leaving the workforce altogether to care for their children. Whether because of limited availability, high costs, or program hours that don't work with parents' schedules, child care challenges are driving parents out of the workforce.

Parents who are unable to find reliable child care are significantly less likely to be employed than those who do. The scarcity of child care imposes challenges making it difficult for parents to stay in the workforce, which exacerbates our shortage of workers and damages families' economic security. Although these challenges affect all parents, mothers are also more often in low-wage jobs with nonstandard hours and inconsistent schedules.

Educate Maine is pleased that Gov. Mills recognizes this challenge and has made addressing Maine's child-care crisis one of our 10-year economic goals. It is also key to Maine achieving its education attainment goal that 60 percent of adults have a credential of value by 2025. Greater access to quality child care will promote family economic security and spur economic growth. That is why so many people are uniting to urge legislators to prioritize quality child care, and to support proposals like L.D. 1760 – First4ME – to expand high-quality early childhood programs in Maine. □

State of the State... (Continued from Page 3...)

ories of their lives bring peace to their families and wisdom to us all. This chamber is not alone in experiencing loss this past year.

Tragedy...

In April, a young state police detective was on a routine assignment when he stopped to help a stranded driver. While in that act of kindness, Detective Ben Campbell was struck by a tire that had spun off the axle of a passing tractor trailer, killing him and leaving his community and his state shocked and in mourning. Tonight, Ben's wife, Hilary Campbell of Millinocket, is with us. Hilary and her young son Everett, and the rest of Detective Campbell's family, are a reminder of the risks taken and sacrifices made by our courageous first responders. Hilary, while we can never repay Ben or your family for his service and sacrifice, we will never forget him, and we will honor his memory.

In Detective Ben Campbell's name, I ask this body to enact legislation this session to increase the state's benefit for the families of our fallen first responders. The current benefit is shamefully inadequate to the sacrifice of those who have given their lives in the line of duty. We ask so much of the men and women who answer the call to service. Let us be there for their families in times of need. It is a simple thing to do. The right thing to do. We can do it, because we are Maine, not Washington.

On the morning of September 16, 2019, a call rang out. A truck responded. Within seconds disaster struck. An explosion rocked the town and took the life of a first responder and injured many, including one who still lies in a city hospital far from home. What followed was not only shock and grief, but an outpouring of support from all corners of the state to make sure the town would be safe while the fire department, suddenly bereft of its finest firefighters, recovered. Our Fire Chief, Terry Bell, was severely injured and is still healing. Though we lost his brave brother Captain Michael Bell, the Chief is back, the picture of

resilience. Chief Bell, I am so glad that you and Denise are here with us tonight. I promise you, and I promise the people of Farmington and the people of towns all across this state, we are going to make sure every department has what they need so that this tragedy is never repeated.

And we will make sure that every young person in our state understands the opportunity and responsibility they have to give back to their communities — the spirit that heroes like your brother and Detective Campbell so selflessly embodied and that you embody today. In honor of Captain Michael Bell, I will create a scholarship fund for young people to train in fire suppression, with the first contribution coming from my contingent account as Governor.

Maine needs more firefighters, particularly in rural Maine, and to that same end, I am proud to support Senator Erin Herbig's legislation to fund the Maine Length of Service Program to boost retirement benefits to firefighters and EMS workers to compensate them for their service.

Continued on Page 7...

2020 Business Day at the Statehouse

Thursday, March 12 | 8:00 am to Noon | Hall of Flags, Second Floor, Maine Statehouse, 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 12, 2020, 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! If you have additional questions, please register online at www.mainechamber.org or email aarno@mainechamber.org. □



Public Hearings and Work Sessions

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

MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2020

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 1860 (Work Session), An Act To Establish a Process for the Consideration and Implementation of Changes to School Curricula (Rep. Kornfield of Bangor)

Veterans and Legal Affairs

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

LD 999, An Act To Allow Medical and Adult Use Marijuana Stores To Share a Common Space (Sen. Miramant of Knox)
LD 1432, An Act To Improve the Adult Use Marijuana Laws (Rep. Pierce of Falmouth)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020

Energy, Utilities and Technology

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

LD 2021, An Act To Provide Funding for Broadband Internet Infrastructure in Unserved and Underserved Areas (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 202

LD 1977 (Work Session), An Act To Ensure a Consumer's Right To Repair Certain Electronic Products (Sen. Carpenter of Aroostook)

LD 2004 (Work Session), An Act To Provide for the 2020 and 2021 Allocations of the State Ceiling on Private Activity Bonds (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

Taxation

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

LD 2008, An Act Making Technical Changes to the Maine Tax Laws (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 2010, An Act To Update References Contained in the Maine Revised Statutes to the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 1607 (Work Session), An Act To Create the Department of Early Care and Learning (Sen. Millett of Cumberland)

LD 1916 (Work Session), An Act To Increase High School Graduation Rates for Students Experiencing Homelessness or in Foster Care (Sen. Libby of Androscoggin)

Labor and Housing

9:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 202

LD 2015, An Act To Provide for Leave from Work for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking (Rep. Daughtry of Brunswick)

Veterans and Legal Affairs

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

LD 1868 (Work Session), An Act To Improve the Reporting of Grassroots Lobbying (Sen. Luchini of Hancock)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2020

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 1521 (Work Session), An Act To Expand Skill Development Opportunities for Maine Youth (Sen. Keim of Oxford)

Taxation

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

LD 1898 (Work Session), An Act Regarding Property Taxes on Certain Energy Generation Projects (Sen. Sanborn of Cumberland)

LD 1929 (Work Session), Resolve, Establishing the Commission To Study Fair, Equitable and Competitive Tax Policy for Maine's Working Families and Small Businesses (Rep. Fecteau of Biddeford)

Continued on Page 8...

State of the State...

(Continued from Page 6...)

We can do this. Because we are not Washington, we are Maine.

The Economy...

I am pleased also to report to you tonight that Maine's economy is on solid footing and is growing.

- Revenues are up, our gross domestic product is up, housing starts, construction and auto sales are up; and the state budget continues to have a healthy surplus.
- The private sector created 5,300 new jobs this past year.
- My Administration helped 800 people with disabilities find and keep jobs.
- Our unemployment rate decreased from 3.5 to a historically low 2.8 percent.
- We paid off the \$80 million debt for the Riverview Psychiatric Center and stopped the bleeding of interest payments to the federal government.
- My Administration added \$30 million to the Budget Stabilization Fund, for a total of \$237 million.
- And we provided \$75 million in property tax relief for Maine seniors, families and small businesses — just look in your mailbox, about 300,000 of you should receive a \$104 check, thanks to the bipartisan budget passed last year and the work of Speaker Gideon.

While this is all progress, it is important that we remain cautious. The Revenue Forecasting Committee and the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission both express cautious optimism about the Maine economy in the near-term, recognizing "the uncertainty surrounding national fiscal and trade policies that could impact future economic growth." Some economists also predict a looming nationwide recession in line with previous economic cycles. We must be ready for any downturn, any changes. We must remain resilient. That is why I am committed to setting aside at least another \$20 million

Continued on Page 8...

Hearings...

(Continued from Page 7...)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020

Environment and Natural Resources

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

LD 2033, An Act To Ensure Proper Closure of Oil Terminal Facilities (Rep. Carney of Cape Elizabeth)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 220

LD 2007, An Act To Enact the Made for Maine Health Coverage Act and Improve Health Choices in Maine (Speaker Gideon of Freeport)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 1947, An Act To Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Education Centers (Rep. Fecteau of Biddeford)

LD 1999, An Act To Amend the Maine Education Savings Program (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

LD 2022, An Act To Provide Funding for Capital Improvements and Equipment for Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

Taxation

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

LD 2011, An Act To Update Certain Provisions in the Income Tax and Service Provider Tax Laws (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 2045, An Act Relating to the Valuation of Certain Retail Property (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 2047, An Act To Amend the State Tax Laws (Rep. Tipping of Orono) □

State of the State...

(Continued from Page 7...)

for the rainy day fund this year.

Other challenges loom large over our economy. As any business in this state will tell you, it is difficult to find qualified workers and it is impacting their ability to do business. Very simply, we need *people*. My Administration has developed a ten-year economic plan for the state with a cornerstone of attracting 75,000 people to our workforce and fostering innovation. The goal is to make Maine an international leader with a vibrant and environmentally-sustainable economy that provides good-paying jobs and an unmatched quality of life. Already we are seeing in-migration – from July 2018 to July 2019, Maine gained more than 7,500 people – people who came here to find work, people who fell in love here, people who came from other states, some from other countries – from Canada, Cambodia, the Congo and beyond. Some at great personal sacrifice.

Kifah Abdullah survived eight brutal years as a prisoner of war in Iran, facing death a hundred times over. Now, as a teacher and poet, he inspires students across our state with his story of survival and resilience.

Maine's newest citizen also joins us. The author of "Call Me American," a young man who nearly starved to death in Mogadishu as a little boy when the U.S. Marines saved him and inspired him to learn English and ultimately to become an American, Abdi Nor Iftin fled terrorism, sought refuge in another country and now lives and works in Maine, earning his college degree here. Abdi, you fought to get here. You belong here. And we welcome you here.

Our Welcome Home Program will entice those who have grown up here and left, and those who are interested in moving here, to come to Maine. Just look at the success of Tilson Technologies, led by Maine native Josh Broder. Tilson hires many veterans and is leading the world in innovative 5G technology, which is at the heart of our next industrial revolution. Tilson is here tonight and

represented by Adria Horn. We want more people like Josh and Adria to start their businesses here. To foster innovation, my Administration will also support increased funding for the Maine Seed Capital Tax Credit. By helping new businesses take root and grow, we will create jobs and diversify our economy.

To encourage young families to come here and work here, Maine also needs more affordable housing. Assistant Majority Leader Ryan Fecteau has proposed a Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit, similar to the Maine Historic Tax Credit which helped boost our economy in recent years. This proposal would create nearly 1,000 additional affordable homes over eight years, increasing Maine's current rate of production by 50 percent. Send that bill to my desk and I will sign it.

Our ten-year development plan also tells us to enhance critical infrastructure, including broadband, particularly in rural Maine. DesignLab, for instance, a marketing and design firm in Millinocket, used to upload their video files on a hard drive, then they would drive to the Medway gas station where they would ask a bus driver to deliver the digital files to a video editor in Presque Isle – no way to do business. Internet speeds for their business were dismal and severely limited their productivity. But now, with broadband, they are succeeding.

As one small businessperson put it to me the other day, "You want to grow the economy? Give me better internet." It is time for us to listen. High-speed internet is no longer a luxury, it is a *necessity*. Increasing access to high speed internet will allow our businesses to expand and allow all people to connect with schools, health care providers and markets around the country and around the world. This session, I propose that the Legislature fund \$15 million to expand broadband for Maine people and businesses. We can no longer afford to wait.

We also cannot afford to let our state's economic advantages slip away. Our economy and our environment are bound together. This past session, we made smart investments in both. Thanks to the collaboration of our Administration

Continued on Page 9...

MAINE STATE CHAMBER of COMMERCE

THE BOTTOM LINE



***A new sponsorship opportunity from
the Maine State Chamber of Commerce:
The Bottom Line Podcast***

Airing live the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m., “The Bottom Line” builds upon our previous television program with the same name. The Bottom Line features a variety of guests and highlights the various priority areas of the Chamber and issues of importance to Maine’s business community and economy.

“The Bottom Line” podcast can be heard on iTunes, iHeart Radio, Soundcloud, Stitcher Radio, Spotify and radio.com.

1-MONTH SPONSORSHIP | \$600.00

- ♦ Two commercial spots;
- ♦ Four live mentions (at the introduction and the end of each show);
- ♦ Shows archived on the “Bottom Line” web page; and,
- ♦ Live-streamed and uploaded to iTunes, iHeart Radio, Soundcloud, Stitcher Radio, Spotify, and Radio.com.

3-MONTH SPONSORSHIP | \$1,400.00

- ♦ Six commercial spots;
- ♦ Twelve live mentions (at the introduction and the end of each show);
- ♦ Sponsor logo on “The Bottom Line” web page;
- ♦ Shows archived on the “Bottom Line” web page; and,
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- ♦ 12 commercial spots;
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State of the State... (Continued from Page 8...)

and this Legislature, particularly Senate President Jackson, the McCrums, a family who for five generations has grown potatoes, this year will open a large processing plant in Washburn, Maine, using Maine-grown potatoes and creating needed jobs in the County. The McCrums are the picture of readiness, of resilience. And we thank them.

Meanwhile, two creative financiers, Sam May and Scott Budde, created a first-in-the-nation credit union for farmers. The Maine Harvest Federal Credit Union will help more Maine farmers be successful and give a big boost to the farm-to-table movement that has become so important to our economy. Thank you, Scott Budde, for joining us here tonight.

Also here with us tonight is Heather Whitaker. She is an alternative education instructor at Gorham Middle School where I was a student. She started a garden at the school where children are learning about growing food and about public service. They donate more than 800 pounds of produce to the food pantry every year. Please join me in acknowledging Maine’s Teacher of the Year, Heather Whitaker. But let us not only acknowledge Heather. Let us ensure that the students she teaches will have the opportunity to work our lands and fish our waters when they grow older.

We have to conserve our parks, our working farms, working forests and working waterfronts. Tonight, I call on this Legislature to send to the people of Maine a bond that provides much needed funding for the Land for Maine’s Future program. Maine people overwhelmingly support this program. Let us give them a chance to vote on a measure that will protect our environment, protect our fishermen and farmers, and grow the economy.

Health Care...

We cannot have a healthy economy without a healthy workforce. That is why my first act upon taking office was to expand Medicaid to provide health care to

Continued on Page 10...

State of the State...

(Continued from Page 9...)

more Maine people. More than 57,000 Mainers have accessed life-saving health care. We enacted LD 1 to protect health care for Maine people regardless of age or pre-existing conditions. And we enacted prescription drug reform to lower prescription drug costs. And we are providing \$75 million over two years for nursing homes, understanding that that money should go to the employees, to fulfill workforce and patient care needs.

But there is more we must do, especially for small businesses. Maine's small group insurance market has seen increasing premiums and decreasing enrollment, making it difficult for business owners to offer coverage to their employees. I have introduced legislation, sponsored by Senate President Jackson and Speaker Gideon, to improve health insurance for Maine people and small businesses – all without any state tax dollars. **LD 2007**, the “Made for Maine Health Coverage Act,” offers a Maine solution for small businesses and it creates a marketplace designed to best meet the needs of Maine people. I ask this body to pass that legislation on behalf of businesses like Becky's Diner, and I want to acknowledge one of the hardest working women I know, Becky Rand, who is with us tonight. This legislation is critical to supporting small businesses like hers and self-employed people, improving health care, and strengthening our workforce. Thank you Becky!

We can do this because we are not Washington, we are *Maine*. And because we are Maine, we love our communities. We love our neighbors, but still today, too many of them are falling victim to another crisis that is harming our state – the opioid epidemic.

Opioids...

When I took office a year ago, I gave my word to Maine people suffering from substance use disorder, that help was on the way. I told them then, and I tell them now, they are not alone, and together, we will do everything in our power to bring them back, to make our communities, our



families, and our state whole once again.

Because we expanded Medicaid, more than 6,500 people are now receiving treatment for substance use disorder. Gordon Smith, Maine's first Director of Opioid Response, is bringing the resources of the state to bear on this public health emergency. Thank you, Gordon. Part of that mission is to make available the life-saving drug Narcan.

When I was Attorney General, I used funds from pharmaceutical settlements to buy Narcan and distribute it to law enforcement agencies across the state. Attorney General Aaron Frey has continued that work. And, as of this month, that Narcan alone has saved 880 lives.

Now, through the new Prevention and Recovery Cabinet and the Attorney General's Office, we are making sure Narcan is more widely available, and we are training recovery coaches and supporting recovery centers statewide to help people turn their lives around. These efforts complement the efforts of law enforcement to stem the flow of dangerous drugs into our state.

Meanwhile, community leaders are also helping Maine people turn their lives around. Margo Walsh of MaineWorks, who is with us tonight, is providing jobs to people in recovery. These opportunities are critical to helping people turn their lives around. And this effort helps us fill our workforce needs – it's a win-win for Maine. Thank you, Margo, for recognizing that Maine people in recov-

ery are ready and able to work and that our economy needs their skills.

Make no mistake, healing our state from the ravages of the opioid epidemic is a complicated challenge that will not be erased overnight. It will have many ups and downs, and we must always try to understand its driving causes so we can pursue solutions. I will call for a new panel of experts to review overdose deaths, like the panels that review maternal and child deaths, to learn as much as we can to improve our response to this epidemic.

Children Come First...

There is another scourge among us that we must eradicate — child abuse. No one can think about the past year without remembering 10-year old Marissa Kennedy and 4-year old Kendall Chick, two helpless little girls who died violent deaths at the hands of their families, whose caregivers were tried and convicted last year. The deaths of these two children represented an awful failure of our society and our state's safety net. Not to have intervened, not to have broken down the door and saved those children was a sin of the highest order.

It is in the name of these children — Marissa Kennedy and Kendall Chick — that we have reactivated the Children's Cabinet, to break down the silos of the bureaucracy that failed to hear their helpless cries. And, with the approval of this Legislature, we have begun to rebuild our

Continued on Page 11...



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

Child and Family Services Division of the Department of Health and Human Services. My biennial budget included funding for 32 new child welfare case-workers. All 32 have now been hired.

But that was just a down payment. As Maine's Child Welfare Ombudsman recently noted, we have more to do, but we are on the right path. More than 1,300 children came into state custody last year, the majority of them under the age of 5, the majority of their homes torn apart by drugs. I will ask this Legislature to fund another 20 positions to respond quickly and effectively to reports of abuse or neglect of our children.

I know you agree: our greatest responsibility is to protect our children and provide them with every opportunity to succeed.

Education...

In our society, education is that pathway to success and a key to addressing our workforce needs as well. Equal access to a good education levels the playing field for every student, of every age, in every zip code in Maine. I believe in Maine public schools. I believe in our state's 18,855 teachers, who like my mother did for 37 years, devote their lives to making our children responsible

citizens with skills to last a life-time.

I am proud to say that our biennial budget includes \$115 million in new state support for K-12 education, bringing the state's share to nearly 51 percent. It paved the way for a \$40,000 minimum teacher salary, to ensure that teachers in Maine will not be forced to leave the state to earn a living wage. It replenished the fund to renovate schools in disrepair, and it increased funding for higher education [The Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System and Maine Maritime Academy] to help keep tuition affordable.

This year, I ask this Legislature to fully fund the second year of the higher education budget which was cut last spring. These institutions of higher learning cannot withstand rising costs without the prospects of higher tuition. And higher tuition is the last thing our students need.

The average Maine college graduate in 2018 owed more than \$32,600 in student loans – the eighth-highest student loan burden in the country. We need to simplify debt relief programs like the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit to help more graduates retire their debt. And we must boost the Educators for Maine Loan Forgiveness Program to incentivize young teachers to work in the underserved areas which desperately need them.

While lifting the burden of student debt off the shoulders of our graduates, we also must ensure secondary school students have the skills they need to suc-

ceed in a rapidly changing economy. We are joined by one of those 18,855 remarkable teachers – Greg Cushman, Maine's 2019 Career Technical Education Teacher of the Year. Greg is an electrical instructor and SkillsUSA advisor from Lewiston Regional Technical Center. Thank you, Greg, for training Maine's next generation of skilled tradespeople.

Our CTEs are more important than ever; yet they have not received significant funds for equipment since 1998. I ask this body to fund equipment upgrades for our CTEs so that teachers like Greg are able to provide our 8,000 CTE students with the skills that we desperately need them to have.

These are important investments that will help us address Maine's top challenges, including our workforce shortage. A workforce shortage is driving one of Maine's other top challenges – our aging transportation infrastructure.

Transportation...

So, while we're at it, in the words of my friend and fellow governor, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, let's fix the damn roads!

Just last week the Maine DOT released its three-year Work Plan. Chronic underfunding and cost increases keep us from maintaining our essential infrastructure. With a shortfall of as much as \$232 million a year, it's time to put our heads together and get creative. I want that Blue-Ribbon Commission to keep working on this for as long as it takes. I signed the Resolve that allows them to continue that work this morning.

Partisan posturing and skinny mix won't fix the roads. Creative ideas will. I'm not opposed to using some general fund dollars to improve our infrastructure, boost our economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is not a partisan issue. There are no Democratic roads or Republican bridges. We can fix this. Because we are not Washington, we are Maine.

Galen Cole knew the importance of transportation in our state. Galen's contributions to our state were immeasurable, not only as Bangor's Mayor, but as

Continued on Page 13...

Participate in democracy...

Maine's Path of Legislation

Source: State of Maine's web site





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

a business owner, as founder of the Cole Land Transportation Museum, as a decorated WWII veteran and as a life-long champion for Maine's veterans. Members of his family join us here tonight as we remember his legacy. Thank you, Janet Cole Cross, for your father's and your family's contributions to our state's readiness, our state's resilience for the over ninety years of your father's life.

Climate Change...

I cannot speak to the state of the state, or discuss its future, without acknowledging another, greater, threat to our resiliency that is on our doorstep. As we speak this evening, wildfires are destroying far-off Australia, killing every living thing in their path. The Bering Sea off Alaska is ice-free, while drought is paralyzing southern Africa. Maine is not immune from the damage of the climate crisis.

Emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases from the burning of fossil fuels — the unfortunate “footprints of human activity stomping on the atmosphere,” according to NASA, are impacting our economy, our health and our safety. It may be easy for some to brush off the warnings of scientists on a day like today, with freezing temperatures, when a one- or two-degree hike in temperature seems harmless, even welcome.

Maine is strong. We are resilient. And we better be ready. Climate change is real. And it is affecting us as we speak. Fishermen tell us invasive green crabs from southern waters are eating their clams, decimating their fisheries. Ticks are now rampant, and the number of Lyme disease cases in Maine has increased tenfold in recent years. Some of our most beautiful towns, built alongside lakes, rivers and shores, may soon become year-round flood zones. Sea level rise and storm surges, in just a few years, will threaten the causeways and piers, the shops, harbors and houses of Boothbay, Belfast, Rockport, Lubec and other beautiful communities. And can you imagine when we might have to redesign Route 1, a main artery of our tourism industry, to avoid constant flooding?

I told the 193 delegates to the United Nations last fall, *Maine Won't Wait*. And I mean it. We are not Washington. We are Maine. We can and will do our part. So, this past year, we have:

- Created the bipartisan Maine Climate Council and became the 22nd state to join the US Climate Alliance.
- Committed to achieving 80 percent renewable energy by 2030 – one of the most ambitious renewable energy standards in the nation.
- Opened the door to offshore wind projects, supported electric vehicles and promoted the installation of heat pumps statewide.
- Removed the cap on community

solar and fixed net metering.

Now, more than 300 new solar projects are in development. From a fishermen's co-op to a capped landfill in Tremont to the Hope General Store, The Milk House in Monmouth, food pantries in Vassalboro and Saco, credit unions, apartment buildings and trailer parks, water districts, Supercuts in Brewer, farm land in Franklin County and Geiger Brothers in Lewiston — solar energy is changing the landscape and saving money for people all across the state. At the Blaine House alone, the new array of solar panels has already saved the equivalent of one ton of carbon dioxide emissions.

In the coming year, we will continue to move away from oil as a primary source for heat as we:

- Reduce our reliance on gas for transportation, which is 54 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support innovative businesses like Atlantic Sea Farms, run by Briana Warner, growing kelp commercially to diversify our aquaculture economy, while reducing ocean acidification.
- Embrace energy storage and other new technology.
- Further reduce emissions that harm our health and climate.

Offshore Wind...

Meanwhile, all along the Northeast United States, the offshore wind industry is generating thousands of jobs in the development of thousands of giga-watts of renewable electricity. According to the International Energy Administration, offshore wind is set to become a one trillion-dollar industry by 2040. Maine will not be left behind.

For centuries, the Gulf of Maine has sustained Maine life. From the time humans first migrated to Maine, the bounty of the sea and shore have been a critical part of our sustenance. Food, transportation, communication, recreation have all been gifts of the sea. For Maine people, the salt is in our veins.

But today, the Gulf of Maine is in trouble. Warming more quickly than nearly every ocean in the world, the Gulf of

Continued on Page 14...

State of the State...

(Continued from Page 13...)

Maine's ability to sustain its rich and diverse resources is diminishing. Cod, herring, shrimp and lobster are some of the staples of coastal life already at risk. We cannot wait to act. We are already fighting for our lobsterman and fishermen. Yet the Gulf of Maine is both our challenge and our opportunity. It is our new frontier...No, not for oil — but for wind.

Thanks to this Legislature, the Public Utilities Commission and our University, Maine will build and launch the nation's first floating offshore wind demonstration project, "Maine Aqua Ventus," with full input from our fishing industry and our people. And I promise you, that commitment is just the beginning of our effort to use the Gulf of Maine and all the world's oceans to slow the warming of our planet.

We can do this. The University of Maine Advanced Structures and Composites Center, led by Dr. Habib Dagher, has already created the first grid-connected floating offshore wind turbine in the United States, and Maine "Aqua Ventus" is positioned to become a leader in this industry. Thank you Dr. Dagher for putting Maine on the map.

This spring I will visit Scotland to see the offshore wind platforms they are using to supply that country with clean renewable energy. I am determined that the business we once lost to them, we will bring back to Maine. We have great potential. And in the coming weeks, my administration will be taking steps forward to unleash it. Stay tuned.

Utilities...

Mitigating the effects of climate change and moving Maine toward a clean energy future requires that our utilities be reliable and resilient — and that they put Maine consumers first. For years, we have allowed electrical utilities a monopoly on our transmission and distribution lines. Today few are happy with the results of the regulatory framework under which these utilities operate, based primarily on setting rates that allow a reasonable profit to the utilities with little



degree of benefit to the public.

I ask your guidance and your help in making sure that these foreign corporations to whom we accede the privilege of operating in our state, are answerable to Maine, not to Spain or some other foreign country. Let's work together to ensure that Maine consumers are at the table, that profits do not take precedence over service, and that utilities are accountable and answerable to the people of Maine.

The Past, the Present, the Future...

The stories of Kifah Abdullah, the Farmington Fire Department, Tilson Technologies, Abdi Nor Iftin, Becky Rand, Margo Walsh's clients in recovery, Heather Whitaker, Greg Cushman and Galen Cole, these are stories of resilience, readiness, preparedness. These are stories of Maine. They are stories that Maine's first Governor William King would relish.

As I reflect upon the spirit of Maine people, in this our bicentennial year, and as I think about our history, I wonder what our predecessors would think of where we are today. I wonder, what did Governor William King see when he traveled the state 200 years ago? Did he see eagles flying over the Kennebec? The same prehistoric sturgeon we now hear leaping in the waves? The tall elegant pines, the brightest salmon, fields newly cleared of stone? Middens on the islands left by Native Americans thousands of years before? The tall rock of Seguin beckoning fishermen and sailors home?

Could he have imagined the wonders of the modern world or the new heights that Mainers have reached? Could he have dreamed that a young woman from Caribou would be speeding through outer space at this moment, having achieved history by completing the first all-female spacewalk? Thank you, Jessica Meir, for being a hero to young girls and boys from Maine — proving that the sky is, in fact, no longer the limit. Jessica is yet another example of readiness, of Maine-bred resilience.

What would Governor William King think of our clothing made in China or of a delivery service called "Amazon?" What would he think of the growing "tech sector," of the "digital age," of cyber security or Russian hackers? What would he think of cars and cell phones, of Uber, Lyft and Air BnB? Would he have given up sending letters from Maine for Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter or Facebook?

And what about Governor Carl E. Milliken of Island Falls — the first governor to live in the Blaine House one hundred years ago — what would he think of us now? One hundred years ago, on the heels of national prohibition, Governor Milliken spoke about the impending vote on women's suffrage. Opponents had gathered ten thousand signatures to force a referendum to block the right to vote. In his speech to this body, Governor Milliken said unequivocally, "If only one woman in Maine wants to vote, she ought to have the chance."

Continued on Page 15...

State of the State...

(Continued from Page 14...)

This year, the Legislature can take one more step in the direction of full citizenship, full responsibility and equality under the law: After decades of debate and forty-six years after Maine ratified the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution, it is time to do what 26 other states have done – preserve equality of rights regardless of sex. Pass the Equal Rights Amendment to the Maine Constitution.

As Justice Ginsburg said, I would like my granddaughters, when they pick up the Maine Constitution, to see that language — that women and men are persons of equal stature — I'd like them to see that it is a basic principle of our society. So, pass the ERA.

Now, Governor Milliken was concerned about intoxicating beverages too. So, he and Neil Dow would probably roll over in their graves to learn that Maine now has 153 craft breweries — more breweries per person than any other state. And I would want to reassure Governor Milliken unequivocally that my election fourteen months ago had nothing to do with the fourfold increase in beer consumption in my home state.

What will our state be like twenty years from now, fifty years, one hundred years from now? Will Artificial Intelligence replace books, normal com-

munications? Will we have digital codes instead of names? Will facial recognition replace the handshake?

I can't say for certain what the future holds. But 50 years down the road, I predict:

- There will be data centers across Maine, buried in granite, cooled by geothermal cells, providing enough spinoff heat to run a town for an entire winter.
- Skyscrapers and homes across the country will be built with cross laminated timber, invented and manufactured here in Maine.
- Bean will be still be selling great boots, delivered by robots — they will be good for spending a weekend hiking on the moon.
- Visitors will still be flocking to Westbrook to see the formation of yet another ice disk spinning on the Presumpscot River.
- There will be high speed passenger rail from Freeport to Lewiston and all the way to Montreal.
- We will finally have high speed Internet all across the state and maybe even cell phone service on 295.
- And the governor of Maine, whoever she is, will be making \$70,000 a year.

But know this: Everybody will want to live here. Everybody will want to stay here.

Conclusion...

We have an ambitious agenda. There will be people who say, "We can't do all

of this now. Government should do less, not more." Building a health care system, saving people from the opioid epidemic, fighting child abuse and domestic violence, confronting climate change, strengthening education and improving our workforce — Is this too much to ask? Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neil once said, "Any fool can tear down a barn. But it takes a good carpenter to *build one*."

We can do these things. We are not Washington. We are Maine.

Let's build a barn that shelters our state, that protects our stock and feed, that keeps the evils of the world at bay and makes our state resilient for centuries to come.

One hundred fifty-years ago, Governor Joshua Chamberlain addressed this body. He said, "Government has something more to do than to govern and levy taxes.... It is something more than a police to arrest evil and punish wrong. It must also encourage good, point out improvements, open roads to prosperity and infuse life into all right enterprises." I think he meant, build a barn.

Two hundred years ago, we secured our independence from Massachusetts and became a state, though we divided the country in an unholy compromise. Today we set a course for the next decade, the next centennial.

Like the pulse of our common community, the water beneath the now-crust-ed ice flows deeper than ever, hiding the strength and richness of our rivers, our state's life blood. The mountain peaks boast of snow. The high pines that once attracted shipbuilders and the spruce whose roots secure the granite along our shores are sure now of surviving another winter, sheltering the land for many seasons more to come.

We are but a minute in the course of the centuries. But these things will surely be here fifty years hence — ready, resilient, strong and unchanged. Like them, let us preserve what we can, and build what we can, when we can, however we can of this great state in this our bicentennial year.

To all the people of Maine – Thank you for the great honor of being your Governor. □



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