

January 30, 2020

Overtime bill scheduled for work session

Bill to change Maine's overtime standard will be taken up on February 12

Legislation submitted last session and carried over to this session by the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing will get its first initial work session in committee on Wednesday, February 12, 2020. Sponsored by Rep. Ryan Tipping (D-Orono), **LD 402, *An Act to Restore Overtime Protections to Maine Workers***, proposes to increase the overtime threshold by \$22,224 over a four-year period, finally landing at \$55,224 by 2022. The threshold would then be indexed each year thereafter by the second quartile of usual weekly earnings for employed full-time wage and salary workers as published by the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce led a large contingency of business associations and individual employers in strongly opposing passage of the bill. In light of the other events that have taken place here during the past 12 months since the submission of LD 402 – including another \$1 an hour increase in Maine's minimum wage, bringing us to \$12 an hour, and the added cost of providing up to 40 hours a year in Paid Time Off (PTO) for all full in part time employees in businesses with more than 10 workers starting in 2021 – the passage of LD 402 would be catastrophic for thousands of for-profit and non-profit businesses of all sizes across the state of Maine.

Referred to as the "overtime" thresh-

old, or alternately as the "salaried" threshold, it is the monetary dividing line between employees who are considered salaried/exempt for the purposes of overtime pay, and those who are hourly workers and therefore eligible for overtime pay after working 40 hours in a week. As drafted, LD 402 would increase Maine's threshold from its current level of \$33,000 to \$40,408 in 2020, then increase it again to \$47,816 in 2021, and finally to \$55,224 in 2022.

Historical Context...

Since 2009, Maine's monetary dividing line separating hourly/non-exempt and salaried/exempt has been tied to changes in Maine's minimum wage. At that time, Title 26 was amended to create a threshold that is 3,000 times the state's minimum wage. While the federal threshold is currently set at the newly established threshold of \$35,568, Maine's threshold has climbed to its current level of \$36,000 – again tied to the most recent increase in the minimum wage. It will continue to increase as Maine's minimum wage is indexed by changes to the CPI here yearly.

In 2015 and 2016, the final two years of President Barack Obama's tenure, he directed the U.S. Department of Labor to undertake rulemaking to adjust the threshold nationally. The process was a contentious one, with the U.S.

Continued on Page 4...

Maine's Public Universities welcome Roux Institute at Northeastern University to Maine

On January 27, Maine native and entrepreneur David Roux joined Northeastern University President Joseph Aoun to announce the formation of the Roux Institute at Northeastern University in Portland. University of Maine System Trustee Gregory Johnson and University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy attended the announcement event of the Roux Institute at Northeastern University in Portland.

Academic leaders at the University of Maine have already begun collaboration discussions with colleagues at Northeastern University. University leaders offered the following statements welcoming the Roux Institute to Maine.

University of Maine System Board Chair James Erwin:

"David Roux's vision and investment brings the promise of an entirely new and transformative economic sector for Maine. The concept for the Roux Institute at Northeastern University brilliantly anticipates the future confluence of digital science and health care, seeks to catalyze the research and commercialization necessary for Maine to participate in the digital economy, and supports the prepara-

Continued on Page 2...



Inside Impact...

2020 Business Day	p. 12
Bottom Line Podcast	p. 11
Broadband Infrastructure	p. 3
Child Care Crisis	p. 3
Cyber Safety	p. 9
DC Fly-In	p. 6-7
HR Issues Update	p. 4
Legislative Social	p. 8
New Legislation	p. 10
Overtime Standards	p. 1
Public Hearings	p. 10
Roux Institute	p. 1
Rural Students	p. 5
UMaine Accreditations	p. 5

Vol. 54, No. 04 Impact

(207) 623-4568

Impact (ISSN 1055-3029) is published weekly January through June and monthly July through December by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, 128 State Street, Suite 101, Augusta, Maine 04330-5630. Periodicals postage paid at Augusta, Maine, and additional mailing offices. Maine State Chamber member companies are assessed \$75.00 yearly for each newsletter subscription (subscribers or out-of-dues assessment). **POSTMASTER:** Please send any address changes to **Impact**, 128 State Street, Suite 101, Augusta, Maine 04330-5630.

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

Larry Wold, TD Bank

President: Dana F. Connors

Information in this newsletter is intended to provide guidance, not legal advice. Since exact language and definitions of key terms are critical to understanding the requirements of legislation, rules or laws, we encourage you to read each carefully. Articles and information contained in this newsletter may be reprinted with attribution given to: Maine State Chamber of Commerce. Please address comments to Melanie Baillargeon, director of communications. Information about the Maine State Chamber of Commerce may also be viewed on the Internet at: www.mainechamber.org. Her email address is news@mainechamber.org.

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.

Roux Institute at Northeastern University...

(Continued from Page 1...)

tion of the workforce that will support it.

“The Institute has the potential to make the Portland region a major player for decades to come in global health and other emerging applications of artificial intelligence solutions aimed at solving our biggest challenges.

“For more than 150 years, Maine’s public universities have supported Maine’s traditional and emerging industries through scholarship and discovery. Led by Maine’s public research university, the University of Maine, we are already engaged with Northeastern University in the work of building academic and research partnerships to support the Roux Institute at Northeastern University.

“On behalf of our faculty, our staff and the many students who we hope will find opportunity in David’s vision, the University of Maine System Board of Trustees welcomes Northeastern University and its Roux Institute to Maine. The Board is committed to contributing the talent, resources, and reach of our public university system to support this exciting venture, helping to improve Maine’s workforce, economic opportunity and quality of life for future generations.”

University of Maine System

Chancellor Dannel Malloy:

“We are in a global competition to attract research dollars to Maine. Our public universities are bringing new focus to this work under the leadership of University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy. As a System, we are committed to providing the collaboration and support needed to make investments and discovery-focused innovations in our state a success.

“The Roux Institute at Northeastern University brings a new vision, critical investment and proven research capacity to the Portland region. It can be a game-changer for Maine’s participation in the innovation economy and create new opportunities for Maine’s students and entrepreneurs.”

University of Maine President

Joan Ferrini-Mundy:

“The University of Maine welcomes the Roux Institute at Northeastern University and looks forward to developing strong and productive collaborations to benefit the people and economy of Maine. We appreciate the investment that David and Barbara Roux are making to attract Northeastern University and its partners to Maine. In particular, the focus on artificial intelligence will position Portland and the state to engage globally in exciting applications at the cutting edge.

“The University of Maine is looking forward to the opportunities that the Roux Institute at Northeastern University will provide for our students to pursue advanced degrees in fields that are growing and changing rapidly through AI, and for our faculty to collaborate in research and education. Pathways programs for UMaine students and faculty fellowships for UMaine and Northeastern faculty are being considered as the first steps in partnering.

“There will be opportunities for doctoral students to be involved in advancing our understanding of topics ranging from opioid and acetylcholine sensing technologies to photon modeling. The presence of the Roux Institute at Northeastern University will inspire and enable all of our institutions to continue in shaping the future.”

Please visit <https://news.northeastern.edu/2020/01/27/northeastern-partners-with-entrepreneur-david-roux-to-launch-the-roux-institute-at-northeastern-in-portland-maine> for more information about this exciting announcement. For more information, please contact Dan Demeritt, executive director of public affairs for the University of Maine System, by calling (207) 441-6962 or by emailing dan.demeritt@maine.edu. □

Sen. Herbig introduces legislation to invest in high-speed reliable internet in rural Maine

LD 2021 provides funding to ConnectME to fund broadband infrastructure

On January 28, 2020, a bill from Sen. Erin Herbig, D-Belfast, to invest in high-speed reliable internet received a public hearing before the Legislature's Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. The bill – LD 2021, "An Act To Provide Funding for Broadband Internet Infrastructure in Unserved and Underserved Areas" – would provide \$15 million to ConnectME Authority.

"High-speed, reliable internet cannot and should not be a luxury in this day and age. It's essential for Maine students to get a quality education and compete in the workforce, and for businesses to grow and fully compete in the market," said Sen. Herbig. "The lack of high-speed internet in rural Maine continues to serve

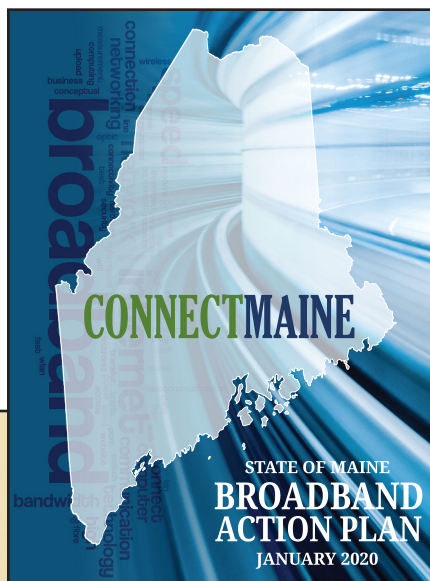
as an incredible barrier to our communities and economy. Maine students, families and business owners are counting on us to invest in broadband infrastructure. We cannot let them down or let them fall behind in today's economy."

In New England, Maine ranks last in the region in terms of access to high-speed internet, according to latest census data. This funding will allow ConnectME to provide competitive broadband infrastructure grants to underserved communities in Maine

"Years ago, inventions like cars, phones, and electric lights revolutionized modern life, but they required investment in the infrastructure to make them work," said Rep. Tina Riley, D-Jay, a cosponsor of the bill. "Because our parents and grandparents built roads and strung wires, our economy grew and our standard of living skyrocketed. The utility of today is broadband. If we do not invest in building its infrastructure, Maine will be left behind in the global economy, and our children will pay the price."

ConnectME is the state agency charged with getting the entire state connected to high-speed, reliable internet. According to their 2020 Broadband

Continued on Page 9...



Bill addresses Maine's child care crisis

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have reprinted a Letter to the Editor from Megan Diver, senior government relations specialist for the Maine State Chamber and a member of ReadyNation, from Sunday, January 26 for your review and consideration. It also appears online at www.centralmaine.com/2020/01/26/bill-addresses-maines-child-care-crisis.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is pleased to read that Economic and Community Development Commissioner Heather Johnson and Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce's executive director Kim Lindlof identify Maine's child care crisis as a barrier to workforce development. Lack of high-quality child care is a challenge we hear about often from businesses all across our state.

As so many of us work toward Maine's educational attainment goal that 60 percent of adults have a credential of value by 2025, the economics of maximizing human potential is undeniable. It is essential to Maine's future prosperity. Maine business leaders believe strongly that high-quality education, beginning with early care and education, is one of the most important investments we can make to ensure successful participation in a knowledge-based economy.

We now know that the brain development that occurs before children enter public school sets the foundation that supports all future learning. Thus, starting early is key to a healthy and capable workforce. Research is clear — skills developed through high-quality early childhood education last for a lifetime, and can help today's children become the productive, stable adults of tomorrow.

The Chamber is pleased to see that there is a new proposal before the legislature, LD 1760, First4ME, that will help address the child care crisis and its negative impact on our collective economic future. I hope the legislature and the governor will act on this proposal this session, before Maine's child care crisis gets worse. □

Overtime Standards... (Continued from Page 1...)

Department of Labor receiving literally hundreds of thousands of comments on the subject from employers and labor groups alike. After an initial recommendation of roughly \$52,000, the department issued threshold guidelines increasing the amount from \$23,660 to \$47,467, to take effect in 2016.

Not surprisingly, this represented a significant jump for many employers across the nation, and a particularly huge leap for many small businesses, who were paying salaried employees more than \$23,660, but less than \$47,467 (or \$912 per week). Employers balked, both at the amount and the small timeframe given to adjust salaries – or demote workers to hourly status.

Again, not surprisingly, litigation ensued, and in August 2017, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas later invalidated this regulation on the basis that the \$47,456 annual salary (\$913 per week) was so high as to render the duties tests for exemption irrelevant.

This is extremely important – because who is considered exempt from overtime eligibility versus those who qualify for overtime pay is a *two-pronged test* – the aforementioned pay test and a duties test. In addition to the minimum salary level, employees must also perform certain duties to qualify for the Fair Labor Standards Act's white collar (executive, administrative, and professional) exemption. The court found that the duties tests were the more appropriate representation of Congressional intent for exemption, and that the salary test was to serve merely as a proxy, or shorthand, for the duties test. The court ruled that the salary test was increased so much as to make the duties test irrelevant, and that the new salary test would render non-exempt those employees who should be exempt due to the duties they perform.

With the huge salary threshold leaps that LD 402 would require of Maine employers, the bill appears to make the same mistake. The ultimate level of more than \$55,000 is even higher than the final

Continued on Page 8...



2020 Human Resource Issues Update

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

8:30 Refreshments | Program 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Bangor Savings Bank Conference Facility

(5 Senator Way, Augusta)

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. We are presenting this in three sections:

- Amy Sneirson of the Maine Human Rights Commission will lead off with a review of the changes in the Maine Human Rights Act that went into effect recently.
- Following that, Elizabeth Marcus of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will present on the EEOC's mediation program.
- Elizabeth will then be joined by Feng (Ken) An, also of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to do an interactive presentation on retaliation issues.
- A question & answers session will round out our time together.

Register today!

Online registration is available at <https://web.mainechamber.org/events/2020Human%20Resource%20Issues%20Update-427/details>. Questions can be directed to Angela Arno, director of programs and events by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org. □

Maine's public universities take historic step to unify their accreditations in the University of Maine System

Board unanimously endorses first-in-the-nation step to accredit all of Maine's public universities together for how well they share public resources in service to students and the state

The University of Maine System Board of Trustees has unanimously approved a recommendation first brought forward by Chancellor Dannel Malloy last fall to transition the separate institutional accreditations of Maine's public universities into a unified institutional accreditation for the University of Maine System through the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE). The transition to unified accreditation includes a commitment to maintaining Maine's universities where they currently exist and offers expanded opportunities for them to share academic programs, resources, and practices to more effectively serve students in meeting the System's public mission of teaching, research, and public service in Maine.

For the first time in the nation, all of a state's public universities will be evaluated based on how well they share state resources in meeting standards of accreditation that establish criteria for institutional quality and higher education effectiveness.

"The University of Maine System Board of Trustees has taken an important step to ensure that the University of Maine System and its seven Universities can best serve the people of Maine individually and collectively," said Dr. Barbara Brittingham, president of NECHE. "The Commission looks forward to working with the System and the Universities on unified accreditation."

Moving to a unified accreditation is a reform that has been under consideration since the formation of the University of Maine System in 1968. The endorsement of the unified accreditation recommendation culminates many years of productive collaborations with NECHE focused on delivering high quality public education in a transitioning higher education industry and more than a year of focused strategic

and leadership succession planning by the Board of Trustees. The Board approved a Declaration of Strategic Priorities in December 2018 to expedite and guide higher education reform in Maine.

"Innovation and collaboration will determine Maine's place in the world and its capacity to meet the needs of its citizens and communities," said James Erwin, chair of the UMS Board of Trustees. "Public education has to lead the way, upskilling more Mainers with the tools and talent needed for success by providing flexible, life-long access to relevant, 21st Century learning. We must also bring new resources to bear for Maine through research that leads to discovery and attracts new investment to our state."

"Maine believes in and depends on its public universities. The Board commends the transparency, community-wide engagement, and trust that has been developed as we have considered how unifying our accreditation can support our key priorities."

Guiding Principles and a Campaign of Participation...

In July the Board of Trustees charged Chancellor Malloy at his first Board meeting to report back on options for accreditation that would support significantly more multi-campus academic programs while adhering to NECHE standards. In September, the Board accepted the Chancellor's report and further directed the Chancellor to develop a campus-engaged recommendation to unify accreditation for the University of Maine System.

The Chancellor and university presidents collaborated on a set of guiding principles to serve as a road map for

Continued on Page 9...

The Success for Rural Students and Communities Act aims to improve college access and post-secondary outcomes

Nationwide, rural students tend to graduate from high school at higher rates than their peers in urban districts, and at about the same rate as their suburban peers. Despite their relatively high graduation rates, rural high school students are less likely than their urban and suburban peers to pursue higher education. The majority of jobs that pay middle-class wages require an additional credential, but less than a third of rural adults hold an advanced degree. With the appropriate supports, more rural students can apply to, enroll in, and complete post-secondary education.

Introduced on January 8 by U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Maggie Hassan (D-NH), *The Success for Rural Students and Communities Act* would improve college access and success for rural students by spurring innovation and investment in new strategies to prepare them to complete their credentials and step into the high-demand jobs in their communities. The bill would create a demonstration program to encourage rural community stakeholders to partner together to help their students matriculate, graduate, and enter the workforce. These partnerships would draw on the talents of local school districts, institutions of higher education, regional economic development entities, and rural community-serving organizations.

The Success for Rural Students and Communities Act aims to improve post-secondary outcomes for rural students and advance economic and workforce development in their home communities by filling high-demand jobs. It would:

- Ensure rural students succeed beyond high school by improving post-secondary education enrollment and completion;

Continued on Page 7...

"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://www.mainechamber.org/washington-dc-fly-in>. 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 6...)

- ◆ **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. □

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

Rural Students...

(Continued from Page 5...)

- Ensure rural communities benefit from their students' success through economic revitalization and cultivation of a skilled local workforce; and,
- Ensure additional rural areas benefit from these innovations by identifying and disseminating best practices.

Grants under this pilot program would be awarded to stakeholder partnerships to support activities that accomplish several objectives:

- **Increase post-secondary enrollment and completion rates for rural students** by providing early supports such as counseling, exposure to higher education programs, access to dual enrollment courses, pathways to regional employment opportunities, and help with transitions to and from high school and higher education.
- **Increase post-secondary enrollment and completion rates for adult students**, including through community outreach and programs focused on degree completion and persistence.
- **Create or strengthen post-secondary programs and training opportunities in locally relevant fields**, including by developing work-based learning and supporting associated costs, awarding prior-learning and competency-based credit, expanding career pathways to credentials, and engaging local employers and boards in developing programs and curricula.
- **Generate local and regional development strategies** that create employment opportunities for students with post-secondary degrees, including by connecting local talent with local employers and addressing barriers to success.

Cost...

The bill would authorize \$60 million beginning in FY 2021. Grantees would be required to match 20 percent of their grant total, which will encourage investment in rural areas by state, private sector, and philanthropic partners. Up to 10 percent of funds would be reserved for data collection and research, to identify effective and innovative practices, and to disseminate findings. □

Overtime Standards... (Continued from Page 4...)

Obama threshold level of more than \$47,000, and higher than California's threshold level of \$49,000 – thereby making Maine the highest threshold in the nation. In addition, the indexing provision of the bill links it to a *national income level* which will, by definition, not be in sync with Maine's.

Unintended Consequences...

There was considerable concern expressed by employers with respect to the 2016 federal regulations that would certainly apply to LD 402 beyond cost. Many workers currently considered salaried or management employees would likely see their position converted to hourly. Employers would just not be able to keep pace with the salary adjustments necessary to maintain exempt status, which leads to several unintended consequences.

First, it created considerable morale issues in the workplace. Previously

salaried workers felt demoted and that their career trajectory had been stunted due to the change. Second, employers had to retool their workforce, while trying to maintain productivity. Employees who found themselves moving from salaried to hourly were asked to turn in cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc., and instructed to conduct no work after hours – even if their work ethic motivated them to continue to do so, and thereby negatively impacting productivity.

In the non-profit world, if LD 402 becomes law, the impact could be equally destructive – particularly for charitable non-profits. These groups survive on contributions, and in some cases, contracts with local governments to provide services. So, they are not necessarily able to go out and raise more revenue to cover these increased labor costs, particularly the amount necessary to cover the increases envisioned by LD 402. People working for these groups generally do so because they believe in the mission of helping others; they understand that they will not be making as much as other

employees. In many cases, jacking up the salary thresholds for exempt employees means they will no longer be able to work the longer and irregular hours providing these services demands. The same holds true for local governments, whose only method of raising revenues to cover LD 402's increases would be to raise property taxes on their citizenry.

LD 402 will significantly increase to cost of doing business for nearly every employer – for profit or non-profit, large or small – operating in Maine. Furthermore, it will make Maine an outlier compared to the other 49 states who have not imposed such standards on their employers. This bill will certainly hurt Maine's ability to attract new businesses, new jobs, and new opportunities for our citizens. The Maine State Chamber will continue to strongly oppose LD 402 at work session on February 12, particularly in light of the other recent cost increases that have hit our small businesses so hard. For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

LEGISLATIVE STRICTLY SOCIAL



MAINE
S T A T E
CHAMBER
of
COMMERCE

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Senator Inn & Spa, Augusta

♦ Light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar ♦

Please register online at www.mainechamber.org.

Questions? Please email aarno@mainechamber.org.

High-Speed Internet... (Continued from Page 3...)

Action Plan, an estimated 50 percent of roadways or 17,660 miles are considered underserved. ConnectME's 2020 Broadband Action Plan is available online at www.maine.gov/connectme.

"Every single day of our life, the internet is tied to our farm. The speed and service that we experience on our farm is extremely lacking. Most days we're struggling to get online at appropriate hours to be doing this billing, to be doing this research," said Jim Buckle, owner of the Buckle Farm in Unity. "We work long days as it is, and spending late nights waiting for the speed to come up just isn't

acceptable anymore. It's expensive; farms are on tight budgets. For the speed we're getting and the amount of money we're paying, it's just not equal."

This state funding would help leverage private and federal funds to facilitate the construction of broadband infrastructure projects. The state funding essentially serves as seed money to help communities get their projects off the ground. Currently, there are more than 100 communities that have done the planning and are waiting for a broadband infrastructure grant.

"The City of Belfast has clearly realized the need for better internet speed for the entire city. They recognize that it affects so many aspects of daily life from both a community and economic development perspective. They've endorsed a

vision to provide affordable, high-speed internet and make it available to everyone in Belfast, both businesses and residents," said Thomas Kitteridge, Economic Development Director for the City of Belfast. "While the City of Belfast is likely prepared to spend considerable property tax dollars on broadband infrastructure, we're hoping we can partner with the state of Maine on a funding source that would be provided through the legislation that is proposed today.

The bill drew support from a wide variety of organizations from the Maine Municipal Association and the Maine Chamber of Commerce, to the Maine Farmland Trust, the University of Maine System, and the Community College System.

LD 2021 will undergo additional work sessions in the committee. □

UMaine Accreditations... (Continued from Page 5...)

engagement, plan development, and the transition from separate institutional accreditations to a unified institutional accreditation for the University of Maine System. Principles include a commitment to keeping universities where they currently exist, adhering to collective bargaining agreements, and the assurance that faculty will continue their shared governance role in academic policy and curriculum development at the System level.

With the guiding principles in place the Chancellor kicked off a "campaign of participation" that included 46 town halls and discussions with the university community. He also established a Unified Accreditation website to post historic documentation on accreditation issues, to communicate openly with stakeholders, and to respond directly to questions.

"Our recommendation to unify our accreditations was developed through participation rather than persuasion," said Chancellor Malloy. "We visited each campus at least three times, held hundreds of conversations, and, when questions were asked, we responded the very next day.

"We have a lot more work to do, but we already know what matters most. The

Continued on Page 11...



Cybersecurity Safety at Home, Work, and Play

Join experts from Thomas College, the state and federal government, and other leading technology companies to learn more about the increasing threat to your personal and professional data. Specialists in the field will help you identify and understand the fast-changing landscape of cybersecurity and the role education plays in maintaining your overall safety.

Thursday, March 12 - 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Thomas College Spann Commons Summit Room
FREE and open to the public. Space is limited.

Event Schedule:

1:00 - 1:15 p.m.	Introductions and Videos from Senator Collins and Senator King
1:15 - 1:45 p.m.	Your Global Cyber Risk: A Vision from 2020 to 2025 Frank Appunn, PhD, Thomas College
1:45 - 2:15 p.m.	Hunter Quinlan '19, Maine Emergency Management Agency
2:15 - 3:05 p.m.	Michael W. Leonhirth, WEX - CISSP, CISM, CISA, CRISC
3:05 - 3:30 p.m.	Networking and Refreshments Break
3:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Ransomware: The Changing Risks and Increasing Losses Ron Bernier, Director of Tyler Detect, Tyler Technologies
4:00 - 4:50 p.m.	Panel and Q & A - Cybersecurity experts to discuss issues relative to Strategy, Federal policy and Privacy
4:50 - 5:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks
5:00 p.m.	Networking

Featuring:

 Michael Leonhirth Chief Information Security Officer WEX Inc.	 Ron Bernier Director of Tyler Detect Tyler Technologies	 Frank Appunn Professor of Information Technology Management Thomas College	 Hunter Quinlan '19 Senior Planner Cybersecurity Maine Emergency Management Agency
---	---	--	--

RSVP Today at Thomas.edu/Plugged-In

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

LABOR

LD 2087, An Act Relating to Fair Chance in Employment. (Rep. Talbot Ross, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill prohibits an employer from requesting criminal history record information on an initial employee application form, subject to certain exceptions. An employer may inquire about a prospective employee's criminal history record information during an interview or once the prospective employee has been determined otherwise qualified for the position. The bill prohibits an employer from stating on an initial employee application form or advertisement or otherwise asserting that a person with a criminal history may not apply or will not be considered for a position, subject to certain exceptions. The bill provides that if an employer inquires about a prospective employee's criminal history record information, the prospective employee, if still eligible for the position under applicable federal or state law, must be afforded an opportunity to explain the information and the circumstances regarding any convictions, including post-conviction rehabilitation.

TAXATION

LD 2008, An Act Making Technical Changes to the Maine Tax Laws. (Rep. Tipping, D-Orono) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill makes technical changes to Maine's tax laws. The bill among other things clarify that information regarding the tax credit for major food processing and manufacturing expen provided to OPEGA is exempt from the confidentiality statute. It also delays the State Tax Assessor's reporting requirement for the Maine Shipbuilding Credit and the tax credit for major food processing and manufacturing.

LD 2010, An Act to Update References Contained in the Maine Revised Statutes to the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986. (Rep. Tipping, D-Orono) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill affects the States income tax laws and update references to the US Internal Revenue Code of 1986 contained in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 36 to refer to the US IRS Code of 1986 as amended through December 31, 2019 for tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2019 and for any prior tax years as specifically provided by the US IRS of 1986 as amended. □

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.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020

Taxation

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

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

LD 2010 (Work Session), 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, 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)

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

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

LD 882 (Work Session), Resolve, To Require the Examination of the System of Learning Results (Rep. Sampson of Alfred)

Labor and Housing

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

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

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

LD 1693 (Work Session), An Act To Enhance Enforcement of Employment Laws (Pres. Jackson of Aroostook)

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)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2020

Energy, Utilities and Technology

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

LD 2017, An Act To Promote Renewable Energy Resources by Establishing an Energy-to-Gas Pilot Project (Rep. Riley of Jay)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 2014, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine State Grant Program (Rep. Daughtry of Brunswick)

Labor and Housing

10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 202

LD 402 (Work Session), An Act To Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 1572 (Work Session), An Act To Enact the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act (Rep. Talbot Ross of Portland)

LD 1639 (Work Session), An Act To Require Comprehensive Responsible Contracting Practices for Public Construction Projects (Pres. Jackson of Aroostook)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Taxation

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

LD 403, An Act To Prevent Tax Haven Abuse (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 989, An Act To Improve Maine's Tax Laws (Sen. Chipman of Cumberland) □

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,
- ◆ Live-streamed and uploaded to iTunes, iHeart Radio, Soundcloud, Stitcher Radio, Spotify, and Radio.com.

6-MONTH SPONSORSHIP | \$2,500.00

- ◆ 12 commercial spots;
- ◆ 24 live mentions (at the introduction and the end of each show);

- ◆ One in-studio appearance as Partnering Sponsor;
- ◆ Sponsor logo on “The Bottom Line” web page;
- ◆ Shows archived on the “Bottom Line” web page; and,
- ◆ Live-streamed and uploaded to iTunes, iHeart Radio, Soundcloud, Stitcher Radio, Spotify, and Radio.com.

12-MONTH SPONSORSHIP | \$4,000.00

- ◆ 24 commercial spots;
- ◆ 48 live mentions (at the introduction and the end of each show);
- ◆ Two in-studio appearances as Partnering Sponsor;
- ◆ Sponsor logo on “The Bottom Line” web page;
- ◆ Shows archived on the “Bottom Line” web page; and,
- ◆ Live-streamed and uploaded to iTunes, iHeart Radio, Soundcloud, Stitcher Radio, Spotify, and Radio.com.

Sponsorships are limited so book your spot today! For current analytics, more information, or to secure your spot, please email aarno@mainechamber.org. □

UMaine Accreditations... (Continued from Page 9...)

Guiding Principles developed by the presidents and I commit us to our existing agreements, our campus locations, and the critical role faculty must play in academic governance and curriculum development. Over the next two years we will work with our colleagues at NECHE and together and transparently across our proud universities to unify our accreditations in pursuit of academic excellence and student opportunity and success.”

A Two-Year Transition...

The resolution adopted by the Board directs the Chancellor and the UMS University Presidents to prepare and submit a substantive change application to NECHE to transition the current separate UMS university institutional accreditations to a unified accreditation for the System, covering all of its universities, by June 30, 2020.

Upon approving the substantive change request NECHE will determine further steps to evaluate the System’s quality and effectiveness in its transition to unified accreditation. These steps could include a confirming visit within six months and a comprehensive evaluation within two years.

Chancellor Malloy has established an Academic and Student Affairs / Advising Committee and Finance, Administration, and Student Support Services Committee to oversee this work. The panels will be headed by University and System leadership and include representation from all seven universities, The Chancellor will also co-convene a Unified Accreditation Coordinating Council along with Chief of Staff and General Counsel Jim Thelen. Finally, faculty senate and assembly leaders will work to develop System-wide academic governance policies.

For more information, please contact Dan Demeritt, executive director of public affairs for the University of Maine System, by calling (207) 441-6962 or by emailing dan.demeritt@maine.edu. □

Periodicals

Postage Paid

Lisbon, ME

128 State Street, Suite 101
Augusta, Maine 04330-5630



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. □

