

March 28, 2019

Paid family medical leave bill released —

The long-expected bill allows paid leave of 12 and 20 weeks

A proposal that would add Maine to the list of five current states that allow paid family medical leave has been referenced to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. The proposal, expected for some time by the business community, is sponsored by Speaker of the House Sara Gideon (D-Freeport).

LD 1410, *An Act to Create Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits*, would authorize qualified employees to take up to 12 weeks of family leave, either maternity or paternity, and 20 weeks of medical leave. However, the total amount of leave available to an individual in any 12-month period would be capped at 20 weeks. The program itself will be administered by the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), and the funding for the program will come from a **mandatory 0.55% payroll tax** on all employees.

As drafted, the bill proposes to allow covered workers to take the 12 weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child, and up to 20 weeks of medical leave for their or a family member's "serious health condition." In order to qualify as a "covered" individual, the employee must have worked for 26 weeks "for any employer" during the 12-month period prior to submitting any application for paid family medical leave or be self-employers and paying into the fund. In addition, the definition of "family member" is broader than the current Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) definition

found in Maine law and includes grandparents, step-grandparents, adoptive siblings, foster siblings, and de facto siblings, to name but a few.

The bill appears to restrict the use of the paid leave intermittently or on a reduced level, only to situations in which there is agreement by the employer and the employee to do so. As with unpaid FMLA, the bill requires the employee be restored to their previous position upon return to the workplace, or to an equivalent position with the same salary, benefits and status.

As drafted, the qualifying employee applies to be certified for the type of leave – family or sick – that they are seeking. Once certified by the MDOL, the employee is eligible for benefits. However, maximum weekly benefit amounts are confusing. On one hand, the bill indicated that employees whose average weekly wage is equal to or less than 50% of the state average weekly wage (SAWW) must be replaced at a rate of 90%, presumably of the SAWW. If the employee's average weekly wage is more than 50% of the SAWW, then they must be replaced at a rate of 67%. However, it appears that a lowest wage earned would qualify for the maximum benefit payout of 100% of the SAWW.

As indicated earlier, the fund used to pay benefits under the proposal comes from payroll taxes collected from

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Democrats reject minimum wage relief —

Labor and Housing committee disposes of six bills to help small businesses

The public hearing lasted just over five hours. The Labor and Housing committee heard from nearly two dozen small businesses, from diverse economic sectors and from various geographic locations in our state.

The testimony was compelling, with more than one small business person in or near tears, describing the hardship the recent minimum wage increases had imposed on their business, their workers, and their families.

They asked for some kind of relief – not through rolling back the current minimum wage, but by instituting a temporary youth wage or adopting an urban / rural minimum wage differential, like New York has adopted.

What they got was a request for more data. So, despite an overwhelming outcry from small, rural businesses, there appears no relief in sight as Maine heads for yet another dollar increase to a \$12 an hour minimum wage.

The Labor and Housing committee took up six different proposals that attempted to mitigate to higher costs that both for-profit and non-profit employers have experienced since the passage of the citizen's-initiated referendum, which was approved by voters in 2016 and has increased Maine's minimum wage by \$3.50 in less than three years. The bill's in question are:

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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.

Minimum Wage...

(Continued from Page 1...)

- ♦ **LD 425, An Act To Strengthen Small Businesses in Rural Maine by Changing the Minimum Wage**, sponsored by Rep. White of Washburn, sets the minimum wage at \$10.00 per hour and removes the provision that requires the minimum wage to be increased annually by the increase, if any, in the cost of living;
 - ♦ **LD 612, An Act To Promote Youth Employment**, sponsored by Rep. Bradstreet of Vassalboro, establishes a minimum hourly wage for persons who are 16 or 17 years of age that is \$1.00 per hour less than the regular minimum hourly wage, a minimum hourly wage for persons who are 15 years of age that is \$2.00 per hour less than the regular minimum hourly wage, and a minimum hourly wage for persons who are 14 years of age and under that is \$3.00 per hour less than the regular minimum hourly wage;
 - ♦ **LD 739, An Act To Help Small Businesses by Establishing an Alternate Minimum Wage**, sponsored by Rep. Rudnicki of Fairfield, creates an alternate minimum wage applicable to employees of a small employer, to the first 90 consecutive days of employment for employees who are under 20 years of age and to employees who are under 18 years of age. Starting January 1, 2020, The wage is \$9.75 and will be increased by any increase in the cost of living starting January 1, 2021, and every subsequent January 1st;
 - ♦ **LD 808, An Act To Create a Youth Wage**, sponsored by Sen. Timberlake of Androscoggin, establishes a minimum hourly wage for a person who is under 18 years of age and is enrolled as a student in a school. The wage is 75% of the regular minimum hourly wage;
 - ♦ **LD 830, An Act To Balance Maine's Minimum Wage for Small and Large Employers**, sponsored by Rep. Stetkis of Canaan, establishes a minimum hourly wage for small employers that is less than the minimum hourly wage for large employers.
- Beginning October 1, 2019, for an employer with fewer than 50 full-time employees in Maine, the minimum hourly wage is established at \$10; the minimum hourly wage for an employer of at least 50 full-time employees in Maine remains at \$11 until January 1, 2021, when it increases to \$12. This bill also delays the indexing of the minimum hourly wage for cost-of-living adjustments by one year until 2022; and,
- ♦ **LD 1098, An Act To Help Small Employers by Making the Minimum Wage Increase More Gradual in Nonurban Areas**, sponsored by Sen. Keim of Oxford, creates an alternative minimum hourly wage that applies to certain designated nonurban areas starting on January 1, 2020. Under this bill, the minimum hourly wage rate for those areas is \$11 per hour and increases by 50¢ each January 1st until it reaches \$12 per hour on January 1, 2022. The minimum hourly wage stays the same as in current law for Cumberland County, except for the towns of Baldwin, Bridgton, Harrison, and Naples. LD 1098 also freezes any scheduled increase in the current minimum wage or the new alternative minimum wage if there is in effect an extended benefit period for unemployment compensation benefits, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor. The scheduled increase or increases will resume once there is no longer an extended benefit period in effect as of January 1st of a given year. It also delays the cost-of-living adjustment for the current minimum wage to January 1, 2024, changes the calculation to be the average cost-of-living increase over the prior three years, and changes the timing of the cost-of-living adjustment to be every three years, instead of every year. The bill also requires the Department of Labor to submit an annual report analyzing job creation and job loss trends in urban and nonurban areas since the initiation of minimum wage increases established by Initiated Bill 2015, chapter 2, section 1.

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ACTION ALERT!

Labor and Housing committee schedules next round of comp hearings for Mon., April 8

The Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing has scheduled the next round of workers' compensation bills to be heard in public hearing. On Monday, April 8, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Room 202 of the Cross State Office Building, the committee will hear testimony on the following workers' comp proposals:

- ♦ **LD 580**, *An Act To Improve the Advocate Program Established by the Workers' Compensation Board* (WCB), a concept draft with a still unknown purpose, seeks to improve the advocate program at the WCB;
- ♦ **LD 1095**, *An Act Regarding Workers' Compensation Liens*, would limit an employer's subrogation rights and open the door wide to settlements attributing money to non-comp damages, such as pain and suffering and loss of consortium. The employer currently has a lien on everything paid or due, and this would limit the lien to what is "attributed" to lost wages and meds;
- ♦ **LD 1203**, *An Act To Clarify the Retirement Presumption under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992*, would change the retirement resumption so that a retired employee may rebut the presumption of ineligibility for lost time benefits by showing that active employment was terminated "at least in part" because of a work-related disability, a much lower evidentiary burden than the current requirement that the employee show an inability to perform suitable work;
- ♦ **LD 1204**, *An Act To Eliminate the Cap on Weekly Benefits in Workers' Compensation Cases*, would eliminate the cap on weekly benefits, making Maine the only state in the country to do so;
- ♦ **LD 1205**, *An Act To Allow Full Retirement Benefits under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992*, would eliminate all offsets based on retirement or pension benefits, including old-age social security benefits. It would also prohibit an employer from taking a credit for past overpayments by reducing ongoing payments (thereby undoing the Maine Supreme Judicial Court's ruling last year in *Urrutia v. Interstate Brands*); and,
- ♦ **LD 1253**, *An Act To Fairly Compensate for Fatal Accidents under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992*, would eliminate the 500-week cap on death benefits, with apparent retroactive application.

The Labor and Housing committee has already heard nearly a dozen bills on Maine's workers' comp law – many of which would return our state to the pre-1992 laws that nearly lead to the collapse of our comp insurance market and damaged our state's economy for decades. Some of those bills – especially those scheduled for April 8 – call for benefit increases, while other would make systemic changes to our comp system. All are, in our opinion, unnecessary, and all will add costs onto the backs of Maine businesses. How much? By one estimate, based on the review of just a few of the bills already heard – as much as between \$15 million and \$23 million in higher workers' compensation premiums.

Concerned Maine businesses should consider appearing before the Labor and Housing committee to oppose these bills. For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

Connors delivers testimony at "Flipping the Switch on Rural Digital Entrepreneurship" congressional hearing



On Wednesday, March 13, 2019, Maine State Chamber President Dana Connors testified before the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Small Business in Washington, D.C. The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:33 a.m., in Room 2360 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Hon. Nadia Velazquez, chairwoman of the committee, presided over the hearing, and Representatives Finkenauer, Kim, Golden, Schneider, Delgado, Houlahan, Craig, Chabot, Balderson, Hern, Hagedorn, Stauber, Burchett, Spano and Joyce were present.

Below is the transcript of his remarks and replies to the committee as it appears in the Congressional Record. A recording of the hearing can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEkzzdA3EWE.

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Paid Family/Medical Leave...
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employees in the amount of 0.55%. However, if an employee earns wages below \$12,000 in a 12-month period, they are not subject to the tax. Any contributions by a single employee may not exceed 0.55% of their wages in a year, yet it appears that the MDOL is able to adjust that amount, although in which direction, or both, is unclear.

In addition, the fund itself is required to maintain an annualized amount of 140% of the previous fiscal year's payout for administration of the program. As drafted, the bill calls for contributions to begin being collected on January 1, 2021, and payouts for the leave to commence by January 1, 2022.

This is a controversial piece of legislation, particularly when juxtaposed to the many other bills likely to impact the business community – specifically the small business community – and coupled with the eminent threat of mandated paid sick leave looming on the horizon. Obviously, the mandatory payroll tax used to fund payments under the proposal will strike employees differently. It is not clear whether LLCs and S-corps will be considered employees under this bill. **If so, it would result in a new tax on many Maine small businesses.**

LD 1410 creates a new, user-funded entitlement program. People will be required to pay into the fund and are therefore going to feel entitled to use it and get their money's worth. This presents a completely different set of problems for employers – namely absenteeism issues. And in this current environment, when finding workers to fill existing openings is an increasing challenge, what are employers to do when the situation regarding unfilled positions is magnified by paid FMLA use?

As of this printing, the bill has just been referenced to committee. We expect the bill to be scheduled for a public hearing within the next few weeks. In the interim, if members have questions or need additional information, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623 4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

LEGISLATIVE STRICTLY SOCIAL



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

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

♦ Light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar ♦

Please RSVP online at www.mainechamber.org or
by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org before April 29, 2019.

Minimum Wage...

(Continued from Page 2...)

The actual work session itself on these six bills took less than 30 minutes, and there was no attempt on behalf of committee democrats to work any of the proposals. Instead motions of “ought not to pass” were made and approved. While the Republicans indicated that they would move forward with “ought to pass” report recommendations for the full legislature to consider, given the numbers in the House and Senate, the possibility of passage of any of these proposals is dim at best.

The outcome in committee, while not surprising, is disheartening. As indicated in our testimony during the public hearing, the legislature provided millions of dollars last year in higher reimbursement rates to nursing homes and adult group homes *because of the increase in the minimum wage*. This session, the Environment and Natural Resources committee has passed out legislation that will result in almost \$10 million in higher bot-

tle deposit taxes in order to prevent the closure of additional rural redemption centers *because of increase in the minimum wage*. Small businesses know that Maine taxpayers aren't going to bail them out of the same predicament as redemption centers or nursing homes – yet where is their relief?

It appears, yet again, that relief won't be forthcoming this session. And that means, more consumers can expect to continue to see higher prices – and employees will see their hours reduced, their jobs eliminated, and the closing of the small businesses that once provided them with a job.

All these bills will be coming to the full legislature for debate. We will continue to follow their progress and final outcome. For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623 4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

Restrictive scheduling bill headed for public hearing

LD 1345 will affect nearly every type of Maine business

A bill that was last debated nearly four years ago has resurfaced in the 129th Legislature and will be heard in a public hearing before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing on Wednesday, April 10, beginning at 9:00 a.m. **LD 1345**, *An Act to Ensure a Fair Work Week*, sponsored by Rep. Gina Melaragno (D-Auburn), would require any employer in Maine with more than five employees to institute what is known as “predictive,” or rather “restrictive,” scheduling policies in their workplace.

As drafted, LD 1345 applies to all private sector employers with more than five employees, yet exempts both non-profits and governmental entities – presumably due to the costs associated with the implementation of the bills requirements. Employers must provide an initial estimate of hours to new employees: “*Prior to the start of a new employee’s employment, an employer shall provide the employee with a good faith estimate in writing of the employee’s expected minimum number of scheduled shifts per month, excluding on-call shifts, and the days and hours of those shifts.*”

In addition, employers must provide employees with at least two weeks’ notice of work schedules, and if there is a change in schedule, the employer is required to provide notice through in-person conversation, by telephone call, **and** in writing, including by email, text message, or other electronic means of communication. If there are unexpected changes in the employee’s schedule – i.e., due to the use of the new paid sick leave legislation currently being debated in this legislature – then the employer must compensate the employee with additional pay according to the following schedule:

- ♦ With less than seven days’ notice but 24 hours or more notice to the employee, *one hour of pay at the employee’s regular hourly rate*;
- ♦ With less than 24 hours’ notice to the employee, *two hours of pay at the employee’s regular hourly rate for each shift of four hours or less*; and,
- ♦ With less than 24 hours’ notice to the employee, *four hours of pay at the*

employee’s regular hourly rate for each shift of more than four hours.

Lastly, there are some exemptions in the bill for when work is impacted by an “act of God,” civil emergency, or utility failure. However, there is no exemption for weather or other typical situations that exist in the retail or business world.

It is important to note – because we have had inquiries by some of our manufacturing community members – that while the bill has traditionally been thought to specifically target the retail and restaurant economic sector, *this bill will in fact impact every economic sector providing the employer has more than five employees and has workers who work on a scheduled basis.*

When this bill was last heard in 2015, the Maine State Chamber joined a vast coalition of statewide business associations in opposition to the bill. The Maine State Chamber intends to both join the coalition and oppose LD 1345. This bill seeks to impose significant wage-and-hour and scheduling restrictions on employers of nearly every size and economic sector of our state. The result of which would be to place in statute the many business decisions employers make daily, or even hourly. Doing so would remove flexibility and sound management practices resulting in *an increase to the cost of doing business in this state significantly*. In addition, passage of LD 1345 would place Maine employers and the state’s economy at a significant disadvantage relative to every other state in the country, as Maine would be the only state in the country to require compliance with such a law.

What makes this proposal to galling to so many struggling small businesses is that, at the same time they are being asked to take on the higher cost of providing up to 40 hours of paid sick time, LD 1345 rubs salt in that wound by then requiring them to **pay up to double time** should they need to bring in an unscheduled employee to fill the shift left vacant by the sick worker.

LD 1345 attempts to shoehorn different employers with different needs into a

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Health Care Forum

Wednesday, May 22

9:00 a.m. to noon

**Bangor Savings Bank,
Senator Way, Augusta**

Health care and health insurance was the single biggest public policy issue that impacted - and motivated - voters this past November at the polls. Newly-elected officials from both sides of the aisle – in Maine and in Washington – have pledged to do something “meaningful” to address cost and access to health care. On April 4, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual informative and timely presentation on the status of health care here and beyond, and what you as a business in Maine need to know as we head into 2019, and what specifically is being considered here in Maine this session. We will be joined by Katie Mahoney, director of health care policy and a national speaker from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as other state-based experts on health insurance and health care delivery.

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

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Congressional Hearing... (Continued from Page 3...)

“Chairwoman Velazquez, Ranking Member Chabot, and distinguished members of the Small Business Committee. My name is Dana Connors. I am president of the Main State Chamber of Commerce, and I thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to appear before you today and for the privilege of doing so.

This is an extremely important issue for the state of Maine, which is my perspective to this report, because it does show what we anecdotally have become aware of but puts proof behind the actual issue. And we are grateful for that opportunity.

And while I am at it, I want to be sure to express my appreciation to the Chamber, to NDP Analytics, as well as Amazon and the team that came together to put this report before you and to show the importance, the impact, and frankly, the necessity that it creates for states like Maine that is predominantly rural and small business. So I thank them for that.

My job is as the good congressman from Maine, which we miss in Maine and we are grateful that you are representing us in Washington, we do miss you in our state capital, you, too, are a class act, may I say. We, as you said, work hard to promote a positive business environment in Maine, and in doing that we represent a network of over 5,000 businesses of all sizes, representing all sectors, and from all regions of the state. We advocate on their behalf and we try to provide those types of programs and partnerships that allow them to do what they do best, which is to run their business and be successful at it.

You probably are aware somewhat of Maine because many of you perhaps have vacationed there because we have 38 million to 40 million a year that come to our beautiful state, and that is probably the reason our number plates bear the name “Vacationland.” But I want you also to know that we are rich in history. We have vibrant communities and we are unparalleled in work ethic. And when people ask me about Maine and describe in one word I say it is quality. Quality of our people, our place, as well as our products. Our state is a fabulous place to vacation. It is also a fabulous place to live and work.



You also need to know that our population is about 1,350,000 spread over 33,000 squares miles. And by the way, that is the size of the rest of New England. You also need to know that our population, 60 percent lives in the rural areas. That makes us the most rural state in the country. But when you look at the size of our business, you also need to take into account that the Federal level describes small business as under 500. Seventy-five percent of our businesses are under 10. And when you consider we have 35,000 businesses, only 64 exceed that 500. So we are the subject in so many ways of this report. And that is why this report is so important to us because it opens the door to opportunity, it provides a direction, and it creates a necessity for us to move on it.

I would like to share with you that we have made progress. We are rural, we are small, but this state has been, as you have implied in your opening comments, moving in this direction. There is a lot left to do but we are moving in the right direction.

I want to give you a couple examples to bear this out. The first is a woman who left New York City to come to Maine. She did not go to Portland where most of our population is. It has a great reputation as a foodie city. She chose our least populated county in the state, Washington County. When she came there about 10 to 14 years ago, there was no high-speed broadband internet connection. But she made it her priority to do just that. And today, because of that

commitment in that rural, most rural part of our state, I will give you two examples to bear out. Cranberry Isle is a group of islands. There are 141 people that live there. It is also now the residence of a renowned artist who came there for vacation but loved it like so many people do and wanted to move there. This high-speed internet connection now provides him to sell his art throughout the world and to live and work on Cranberry Isle.

There is another astrophysicist who lives on Roque Bluffs, another very small community, probably 250 at max. This aero physicist works with NASA, has connections to the University of Phoenix, established it as vacation, but he, too, is there.

I can see I am running out of time and I barely got started. I am hopeful that during the questions that it will bear out how important this is, and the report builds the case that in Maine it very certainly applies. And I hope the questions will give me the opportunity to expand as I would like to do. Thank you.”

Thank you for that opening because I was commissioner for 11 years and I used to go around the state preaching the gospel that highways and bridges and transportation are the foundation of our economic system. And the following comment would be, it costs a lot to build and maintain but it costs a lot more not to. And you know what? The very parallel between transportation and this issue is striking because frankly, it has many of

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Chamber testifies in opposition to local option sales tax bills

The Joint Standing Committee on Taxation held a public hearing recently on five bills that would propose a local option sales tax at the municipal level. Linda Caprara testified on behalf of the Maine State Chamber in opposition to all five of the following bills:

- ♦ **LD 65**, *An Act to Allow Municipalities to Impose a Seasonal or Year-Round Local Option Sales Tax*, sponsored by Rep. Beebe-Center (D-Rockland), would allow a municipality to impose a local option sales tax if approved by referendum on a seasonal or year-round basis with no limit on the rate that could be imposed.
- ♦ **LD 156**, *An Act to Allow Regional Service Center Municipalities to Assess an Additional One Percent Tax for Infrastructure Costs*, sponsored by Sen. Miramant (D-Knox), would allow municipalities to impose a local option sales tax of no more than 1% if approved by referendum for the purpose of funding infrastructure costs.
- ♦ **LD 1110**, *An Act to Establish a Local Option for Sales Tax*, sponsored Rep. Gramlich (D-Old Orchard), would allow a municipality to impose a local option sales tax, if approved by referendum. The bill does not specify a rate, but it does specify what items may be subject to the sales tax, such as retail transactions, prepared foods, liquor, hotel rentals, and certain rentals of automobiles.
- ♦ **LD 1254**, *An Act to Authorize a Local Option Sales Tax on Meals and Lodging and Provide Funding to Treat Opioid Use Disorder*, sponsored by Rep. Sylvester (D-Portland), would allow a municipality to impose a year-round or seasonal local option sales tax, if approved

by referendum, of no more than 1% on prepared food and short-term lodging. A total of 85% of revenue generated would be distributed back to the municipality and 15% would be distributed to all other municipalities that have to use that money for preventing and treating opioid use.

- ♦ And lastly, **LD 609**, *An Act to Provide Municipalities Additional Sales Tax Revenue from Lodging Sales*, sponsored by Rep. Terry (D-Gorham), would increase the lodging tax by 1%. Incremental revenues generated, minus administrative costs for Maine Revenue Services, will be returned to the generating municipality.

The Maine State Chamber has long-opposed local option sales taxes for a variety of reasons. Below are some of the reasons cited from the testimony on these bills:

- ♦ **Enacting a local option sales tax increases the total tax burden in the state:** This bill adds another layer of sales tax to items purchased in municipalities that enact it. Local option taxes are nothing more than another way to raise revenue for municipalities and would do nothing to reduce taxes at the local level. After all, any time a municipality needs a new fire truck, a new school, or any new budget item, it could simply impose the tax. Municipalities need to focus on spending efficiencies, not just continually raising taxes on Maine businesses and Maine people.
- ♦ **Local option sales taxes hurt small brick and mortar businesses:** Many folks buy local to support small brick-and-mortar businesses in their municipalities. Local businesses located in one locale compete with

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Congressional Hearing... (Continued from Page 6...)

the same features, both in terms of its impact, but it also has many of the similar features in terms of how we resolve it. Those 83,000 that do not have access, that answer is going to come about when we share responsibilities, like when the Electrifying America took place we were all at the table. When we are looking at this issue, we need to be all at the table. And priorities will be given to usage and those types of things, but I think your point is spot on that I would say that in my opinion, while infrastructure overall is extremely important to our state as well as any state, broadband, high-speed internet connection is the key to our future. It is borne out in this report. To me it is parallel with transportation and does not deserve any other priority than a top priority.” □

Restrictive Scheduling... (Continued from Page 5...)

“one size fits all” approach to scheduling and workplace management. Such an approach is unrealistic and fails to consider the dynamics of each and every business and their employee team. More importantly, it sends a tremendous message outside the state of Maine with respect to our business environment, one that’s improved considerably in the past several years. With 49 other states not imposing such onerous scheduling and management restrictions on their employers, why would investors bother to look to Maine when creating new jobs and opportunities? And for any business that is portable, why would it bother to stay here? The Maine State Chamber believes, in both cases, the state would lose its economic development competitiveness, employers, and jobs.

The Maine State Chamber will present testimony in strong opposition to LD 1345 at the hearing on Wednesday, April 10. For additional information or questions, please contact Peter Gore by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by email at pgore@mainechamber.org. □

Local Option Sales Tax... (Continued from Page 7...)

local businesses in another. Businesses located in towns that enact a local option sales tax will be at a competitive disadvantage with businesses in municipalities that do not enact a local option sales tax. This will pit one community against another. *Local brick-and-mortar retail businesses will never be able to compete in that high-taxed environment.* The tax will hit their bottom line, and they may not be able to pass the expense on to the consumer. Ultimately, they will lose sales to neighboring towns that don't have local option sales tax.

- ♦ **Local option sales taxes impact local economic development efforts:** Municipalities around the state work hard to try to attract businesses to their locales; many hire economic development directors to do just that. This will do nothing to attract businesses, but instead, would discourage businesses from locating in towns that have additional taxes. This bill will make towns that impose sales taxes less attractive. Once local option taxes are in place, they would be virtually impossible to remove because that municipality would become dependent on the revenue.

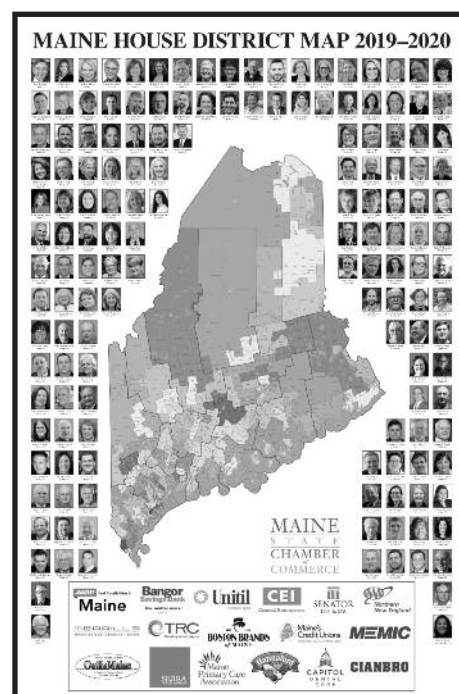
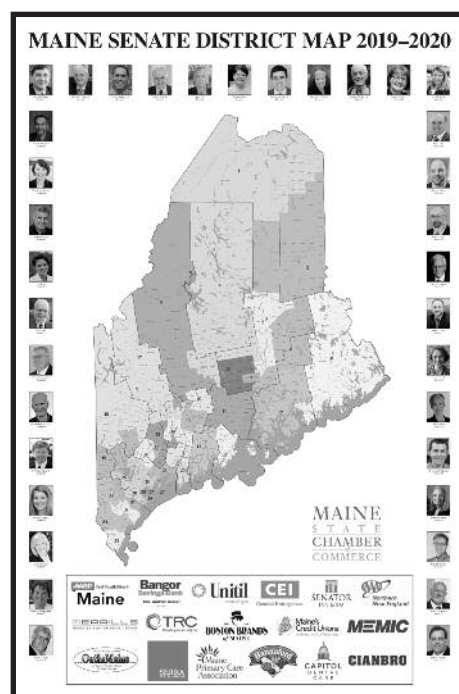
Caprara stated that we need to keep Maine businesses competitive and try to grow our economy. She said these bills do not achieve this, and instead, puts Maine businesses at risk of being uncompetitive. She also mentioned that the Maine State Chamber will be meeting with Maine Municipal Association to better understand their perspective.

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

LEGISLATIVE POSTERS NOW AVAILABLE

MAINE S T A T E CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has produced the two-year legislative posters again this year. Each of the two legislative posters contains color photos of all Senate and House members of the 129th Legislature, as well as a map of the state's legislative districts.



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

**The Maine State Chamber would like to thank the sponsors
of our 2019-2020 legislative posters:**

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

Maine Chamber opposes water extraction moratorium

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

LD 197, *An Act To Convene a Working Group To Authorize a Public Trust for Maine's Groundwater and To Impose a 2-year Moratorium on Large-scale Groundwater Extraction*, sponsored by Rep. Michael Sylvester (D-Portland), will be heard by the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Committee during a public hearing on Wednesday, April 10 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 211 of the Cross Building. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce opposes LD 197 due to the two-year moratorium it would create in law for the business community in Maine involved in water for their businesses.

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

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

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

**Stay compliant
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The *Maine Human Resources Library* makes state and federal employment laws and regulations easy to understand. It covers pre-hire through post-termination with simple explanations of state and federal laws, side by side. It is a comprehensive, easy-to-navigate resource that will guide you through complex HR tasks.

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Maine State Chamber strongly supports bill requiring legislative hearings for citizen-initiated legislation

Proposals should be thoroughly reviewed through the legislative process to better understand a referendum's impacts

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce testified on Wednesday morning, March 27, in support of **LD 1209, An Act To Require Legislative Hearings on Citizen-initiated Legislation**. The Maine State Chamber strongly supports LD 1209, because citizen's initiatives may have far reaching implications to the state, the economy, jobs and to individuals just like other legislation in which a public hearing is scheduled and the public is notified. We believe that a public hearing allows the bill to be thoroughly reviewed and go through the normal legislative process so that the voters of Maine may have clearer idea of what the legislation does.

For decades, the legislature routinely has referred initiated bills to a committee where a public hearing is held for interested parties to weigh in with their views as well as give legislators the opportunity to ask clarifying questions of proponents and opponents. Recently, citizen's initiatives haven't followed this historical routine. Nonpartisan staff of OPLA and OFPR provide a valuable service in explaining the mechanics of a bill and helping legislators and the public become more informed, and the Maine State Chamber thinks all proposed citizen's initiatives should go through this process.

As recent history has shown, these

Continued on Page 11...

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



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

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

Disability:IN

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC
foundation

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

Want to be a mentor?

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

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


Partners for
Youth with Disabilities

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Regional Business Breakfasts

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

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

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

Tuesday, June 4

Southern Maine Regional Breakfast Meeting

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

Wednesday, June 19

Kennebec Valley Regional Breakfast Meeting

Bangor Savings Bank, Senator Way, Augusta

Wednesday, June 26

Maine Highlands Regional Breakfast Meeting

Location TBD – Bangor Area

In collaboration with Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, June 27

Northern Maine Regional Breakfast Meeting

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

Small business advocate tapped to lead broadband expansion

Heather Johnson, commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, has named former small business advocate Peggy Schaffer to lead the ConnectME Authority. Schaffer will lead the state's efforts to expand broadband across the rural parts of Maine. Schaffer formerly served as co-chair of the Maine Broadband Coalition. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce announced last year that \$100 million in annual state investment was necessary to expand broadband access across the state. Governor Janet Mills has promised to expand broadband access and stimulate the economy with targeted grants and loans. She has also promised to empower the ConnectME Authority with more responsibility and allow the creation of broadband expansion districts.

For more information about the ConnectME Authority, please visit www.maine.gov/connectme. □

Referendum Reform... (Continued from Page 10...)

referendums can cause a lot of work for the Legislature after they are enacted by the voters. This bipartisan legislative review is an important step before the issue moves into the public campaign phase that leads up to Election Day. Campaigns tend to be waged in the media through paid advertising and staged events, forcing the public to choose which competing or conflicting ads to believe. Without the benefit of a legislative hearing, the voting public has no readily accessible place to go for perspective and analysis.

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

Public Hearings

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

Monday, April 1, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 997, An Act To Promote Social and Emotional Learning and Development for Young Children (Sen. Breen of Cumberland)

LD 1174, An Act To Facilitate Remote Learning during School Cancellations (Sen. Miramant of Knox)

Health and Human Services

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

LD 578, Resolve, To Create a Pilot Program To Assist the Transition to Recovery of Persons Suffering from Opioid Use Disorder (Rep. Hymanson of York)

Veterans and Legal Affairs

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

LD 1332, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require State and Congressional Elections To Be Decided by a Plurality of Votes Cast (Rep. Johansen of Monticello)

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

Appropriations and Financial Affairs

1:00 p.m.; State House, Room 228

LD 547, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support Maine Aquaculture (Sen. Chipman of Cumberland)

Transportation

1:00 p.m.; State House, Room 126

LD 466, An Act To Create a Diesel Fuel Tax Differential (Rep. Tepler of Topsham)

LD 1157, An Act To Fix Maine's Roads and Bridges by Establishing a Seasonal Gasoline Tax Adjustment (Rep. McLean of Gorham)

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

Energy, Utilities, and Technology

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

LD 1231, An Act To Fund Energy Efficiency Programs through a Fee on the Sale of Unregulated Heating Fuels (Rep. Kessler of South Portland)

LD 1248, Resolve, To Direct the ConnectME Authority To Report on the Progress of the Detailed 2019-2021 Strategic Plan for Broadband Service in Maine (Rep. Morales of South Portland)

Environment and Natural Resources

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

LD 401, An Act To Preserve State Landfill Capacity and Promote Recycling (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 603, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Funding for Landfill Closure Costs (Sen. Dill of Penobscot)

LD 988, An Act To Reduce the Landfilling of Municipal Solid Waste (Sen. Chipman of Cumberland)

Labor and Housing

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

LD 1232, An Act To Ensure the Right To Work without Payment of Dues or Fees to a Labor Union as a Condition of Employment (Rep. Lockman of Bradley)

LD 1250, An Act To Prohibit Sexual Harassment as a Subject Matter of Mandatory Arbitration in Employment Contracts (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

LD 1319, An Act To Prohibit Employer Disciplinary Action against Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services Persons Responding to an Emergency (Rep. Grohoski of Ellsworth)

LD 1324, Resolve, To Establish the Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income Security (Sen. Vitelli of Sagadahoc)

LD 1325, An Act To Allow Workplace Substance Use Testing for Fentanyl, Hydromorphone, Hydrocodone, Oxycodone and Oxymorphone Use at the Employer's Discretion (Sen. Keim of Oxford)

Thursday, April 4, 2019

Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business

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

LD 349, An Act To Extend the Refundability of the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit to Students in the Behavioral Health Field (Rep. Beebe-Center of Rockland)

LD 872, An Act To Forgive Education Debt for Certain Health Care Professionals Who Work in the State (Rep. Mastraccio of Sanford)

Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services

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

LD 815, An Act To Regulate the Issuance of Short-term, Limited-duration Health Insurance Policies in the State (Pres. Jackson of Aroostook)

LD 1243, An Act To Assist Small Businesses in Providing Health Care for Their Employees (Rep. Morales of South Portland)

LD 1260, An Act Regarding Short-term, Limited-duration Health Plans (Rep. Foley of Biddeford)

LD 1263, An Act Regarding Telehealth (Sen. Gratwick of Penobscot)

LD 1274, An Act To Enact the Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (Sen. Sanborn of Cumberland)

Monday, April 8, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 307, An Act To Limit the Number of Charter Schools in Maine (Rep. Brennan of Portland)

LD 318, An Act To Prepare All Students for Work and Life by Requiring That Students Receive Instruction in Vocational Preparation and Practical Life Skills (Rep. Keschl of Belgrade)

LD 438, An Act To Allow the Creation of New Innovative School Models by

Continued on Page 13...

Public Hearings...

(Continued from Page 12...)

Removing the Cap on the Number of Authorized Charter Schools (Sen. Pouliot of Kennebec)

Labor and Housing

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

LD 580, An Act To Improve the Advocate Program Established by the Workers' Compensation Board (Rep. Sylvester of Portland)

LD 1095, An Act Regarding Workers' Compensation Liens (Sen. Bellows of Kennebec)

LD 1203, An Act To Clarify the Retirement Presumption under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992 (Rep. Sylvester of Portland)

LD 1204, An Act To Eliminate the Cap on Weekly Benefits in Workers' Compensation Cases (Rep. Sylvester of Portland)

LD 1205, An Act To Allow Full Retirement Benefits under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992 (Rep. Sylvester of Portland)

LD 1253, An Act To Fairly Compensate for Fatal Accidents under the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992 (Rep. Sylvester of Portland)

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs

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

LD 1341, An Act To Provide Flexibility for Efficient and Effective Management of School Management and Leadership Centers (Rep. Kornfield of Bangor)

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

2:30 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 220

LD 1264, An Act Relating to Insurance Coverage for Screening Mammograms (Sen. Breen of Cumberland)

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Energy, Utilities, and Technology

8:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 211

LD 1364, An Act Regarding Net Neutrality and Internet Policy (Rep. Grohoski of Ellsworth)

Environment and Natural Resources

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

LD 197, An Act To Convene a Working Group To Authorize a Public Trust for Maine's Groundwater and To Impose a 2-year Moratorium on Large-scale Groundwater Extraction (Rep. Sylvester of Portland)

LD 413, An Act To Ensure the Rights of Citizens to Groundwater in the State (Rep. Riseman of Harrison)

LD 1358, An Act To Further the Public Interest in All Maine Waters (Rep. Gramlich of Old Orchard Beach)

Judiciary

9:00 a.m.; State House, Room 438

LD 841, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Damages Awarded for Wrongful Death (Rep. Moonen of Portland)

LD 1045, An Act Regarding Bad Faith Assertions of Patent Infringement (Rep. Daughtry of Brunswick)

Labor and Housing

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

LD 1345, An Act To Ensure a Fair Workweek (Rep. Melaragno of Auburn)

Veterans and Legal Affairs

9:00 a.m.; State House, Room 437

LD 1196, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Implement Ranked-choice Voting (Sen. Chenette of York)

LD 1213, An Act To Repeal the Ranked-choice Voting Law (Rep. Stetkis of Canaan)

LD 1365, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Provide for the Election of the Governor by Majority Vote (Rep. Babbidge of Kennebunk)

Friday, April 12, 2019

Health and Human Services

9:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 209

LD 1247, Resolve, To Change the Work Requirement Rules under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (Rep. Madigan of Waterville) □

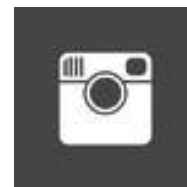
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Digest of New Legislation

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

A total of 294 business-related bills have been tracked to date since the session began on January 2, 2019!

EDUCATION

LD 1368, An Act To Require Postsecondary Institutions To Meet the Expected Family Contribution without Additional Loan Burdens for Students.

(Rep. Crockett, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce.* This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to require postsecondary institutions to meet the expected family contribution without additional loan burdens on students. The expected family contribution is an index number that postsecondary institutions use to determine how much financial aid a student would receive annually if the student were to attend that postsecondary institution. Included in financial aid packages are federal Stafford loans, which are fixed-rate student loans originat-

ed by the Federal Government. This bill is designed to limit exposure of a student's loan burden to federal Stafford loans only.

LD 1369, An Act To Create an Additional Pathway To Certify Industrial Arts Teachers To Foster Career and Technical Subjects in Maine Schools.

(Rep. Wadsworth, R-Oxford) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to amend the credentialing of education personnel to create a pathway for a teacher to obtain an endorsement on a teaching certificate for a component of industrial arts with an experiential lab that includes, but is not limited to: automotive body repair, diagnostics and mechanics; welding; electrical; carpentry; and computer-aided design. Rules must include at least the following qualifications for a teacher to be eligible for an endorsement: a completed apprenticeship registered with a statewide or national apprenticeship and training organization; a completed 2-year degree or certificate from a technical institution accredited by a national association of career and technical schools or similar organization; completion of a minimum number of hours of paid applied employment or teaching in the endorsement area being sought; and completion of a minimum number of hours of experience learning the trade or craft for which the endorsement is sought. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are major substantive rules as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

LD 1382, An Act To Establish Computer Science Courses and Content in Kindergarten to Grade 12 Schools.

(Rep. Pierce, D-Falmouth) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill provides the necessary resources and support for kindergarten to grade 12 schools to adopt computer science into their courses and curriculums. The bill establishes a grant

program for computer science professional development, including costs of transportation, mentoring and coaching. The bill also requires the Department of Education to develop a statewide plan as well as computer science standards for kindergarten to grade 12 schools. The bill creates a full-time Regional Education Representative position in the Department of Education to support the creation and implementation of the plan and the standards. The bill establishes a grant program for computer devices and instructional materials to provide the tools necessary for schools to implement computer science courses and content. The bill also establishes a computer science teacher certification program for students who are majoring in education in the University of Maine System. Finally, the bill authorizes the Department of Education to adopt rules as necessary to implement the provisions of the bill.

LD 1428, An Act To Require the State To Fund 50 Percent of Public Preschool Programs.

(Sen. Millett, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill requires the State to fund a minimum of 50% of the costs of an approved public preschool program for each year a school administrative unit operates the program, other than the year in which the school administrative unit receives start-up funds for the program. If funds for essential programs and services do not provide the funding necessary to fund a minimum of 50% of approved public preschool programs, the State is directed to use other funding sources and the Commissioner of Education is directed to include the funding levels necessary in the Department of Education's request to the Legislature for appropriations from the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL

LD 1358, An Act To Further the Public Interest in All Maine Waters.

(Rep. *Continued on Page 15...*)



Altria Today

Growing Together

Altria's companies promote economic development in the communities we call home.

We support initiatives that attract capital investment and create new jobs. We're committed to leadership development programs that prepare future leaders for community service.

Altria salutes the Maine State Chamber of Commerce.

Altria commends the Chamber's efforts to promote a positive business climate in the State of Maine.



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New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 14...)

Gramlich, D-Old Orchard Beach) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*. This bill explicitly states the State's authority and responsibility over all waters in the State, whether above or below ground, and directs the State to protect, conserve and manage the water in the interest of present and future generations.

LABOR

LD 1410, An Act To Create Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits. (Speaker Gideon, D-Freeport) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing*. This bill establishes a paid family and medical leave benefits program administered by the Department of Labor. The program provides up to 12 weeks of family leave and up to 20 weeks of medical leave to eligible covered individuals. No more than 20 weeks of family leave and medical leave in the aggregate may be taken in a 12-month period. An individual is eligible for leave under the program after

working 26 weeks or more for any employer in the 12 months prior to submitting an application or if the individual is self-employed and has elected to be part of the program. The maximum weekly benefit amount is capped at 100% of the state average weekly wage. The weekly benefit amount is 90% of the portion of the covered individual's average weekly wage that is equal to or less than 50% of the state average weekly wage and 67% of the portion of the covered individual's average weekly wage that is more than 50% of the state average weekly wage. Covered individuals are required to file claims for benefits in accordance with rules adopted by the department and to provide certification that they qualify for family leave or medical leave. This bill establishes the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Fund to support the program. The funds for administrative costs and payment of benefits will come from payroll contributions by employees. The bill requires payroll contributions to begin January 1, 2021, and benefits will be paid out beginning January 1, 2022.

UTILITIES AND ENERGY

LD 1364, An Act Regarding Net Neutrality and Internet Policy. (Rep. Grohoski, D-Ellsworth) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*. This bill prohibits a state agency or instrumentality from committing state funds in a manner that the agency or instrumentality knows would result in a direct payment to an Internet service provider unless the Internet service provider agrees in writing to conform to the requirements of the Federal Communications Commission order, FCC 15-24, adopted on February 26, 2015, known as the Open Internet Order.

LD 1383, An Act To Amend Maine's Municipal Land Use and Eminent Domain Laws Regarding Transmission and Distribution Utilities. (Rep. Grignon, R-Athens) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*. This bill requires a transmission and distribution utility, prior to taking land or an easement by eminent domain, to obtain the approval of the body of government having jurisdiction over the land or easement. Following approval by the body of government, the transmission and distribution utility is still required to obtain a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the Public Utilities Commission. The bill makes explicit that the exemption from municipal zoning ordinances regarding real estate used by public utilities does not apply to an elective transmission upgrade, which is a transmission line for which a person developing the transmission line has agreed to pay all of the costs of developing the transmission line without passing those costs on to ratepayers.

LD 1401, An Act To Study Transmission Solutions To Enable Renewable Energy Investment in the State. (Rep. Berry, D-Bowdoinham) *Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*. This bill proposes to establish a study of transmission solutions to help enable more renewable energy investment in the State. The study would examine areas of clean energy potential; review possible funding mechanisms for advancing renewable energy initiatives, including bonding and public-private partnerships; and recommend measures to increase the pace of renewable energy investment in the State. □

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Energy Summit

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

Maple Hill Farm Inn and Conference Center

11 Inn Road, Hallowell

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

To register for this event, please visit www.mainechamber.org or email aarno@mainechamber.org. If you would like to sponsor this event, please contact Melody Rousseau by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org. If you have further questions about the program's content, please contact Ben Gilman by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 111, or by emailing bgilman@mainechamber.org. □

