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# Governor Paul R. LePage : Major Accomplishments 2011-2016

Office of Governor Paul LePage

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# Moving Maine Forward

## Governor Paul R. LePage

Since Governor LePage took office:

- **24,000 Private-Sector Jobs** have been created in Maine
- **Unemployment Rate is Down** from 8.1% to 3.9% (July 2016)
- **Government Jobs Have Dropped** to the level they were in 1999
- **Unemployment Claims Fell** to a 31-year low



*Governor Paul R. LePage*

## Major Accomplishments 2011-2016

**[www.Maine.Gov/Governor](http://www.Maine.Gov/Governor)**

# Moving Maine from Poverty to Prosperity

- Created the Maine STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education) loan program administered by FAME to provide interest-free loans to Maine residents who study STEM and work in Maine.
- Enhanced the Education Opportunity Tax Credit, offering more incentive to Maine companies to pay some or all of their employees' student loans.
- Expanded access to affordable natural gas for Maine people and key Maine employers from the Woodland Mill in Washington County to the Sappi Mill in Somerset County.
- Initiated the Heat Pump Pilot Program to reduce heating costs for Maine families and businesses. Heat pumps now warm over 20,000 homes and small businesses and saving roughly 3 million gallons of heating oil per year.
- Created "Account Executives" to help job creators navigate state and local government. Governor's Account Executives provided assistance to over 6,200 existing, new and expanding businesses.
- Investments by the Maine Department of Transportation in the International Marine Terminal in Portland attracted Eimskip, the Icelandic cargo shipping company.
- Established the "Business Friendly Community" program to help local municipalities become "Open for Business" and make them a key part of Maine's business attraction strategy.
- Regulatory reform streamlined licensing and permitting for job creators.
- Increased the average number of miles of highway rehabilitation per year by 187%, while lowering average unit cost by 15%.
- Created a **Red Tape Hotline (207-624-1486)** that business owners can call and get answers from state government.

# Reforming Maine's Welfare System

- Reduced Food Stamp and MaineCare enrollment by over 20% each by tightening eligibility requirements. Maine's Medicaid enrollment in 2010 was No. 2 in the nation per capita; by 2015, it was reduced to the national average.
- Reinstated work requirements for able-bodied, childless adults on Food Stamps, reducing welfare dependency by over 80%. They must now work 20 hours per week, volunteer or pursue job training to receive benefits.
- Implemented an "asset test" for welfare, prohibiting those with boats, RVs, ATVs, jet skis or other non-essential assets worth over \$5,000 from receiving benefits.
- Limited on the number of replacement EBT cards that may be issued, preventing the trafficking of EBT cards for drugs.
- Strengthened DHHS's welfare fraud unit, increasing its investigation referrals to prosecutors by ten-fold.
- Removed Maine's status as a "Sanctuary State."
- Banned the purchase of tobacco, alcohol, lottery tickets, bail and tattoos with TANF cash.
- Placed a five-year limit on cash welfare benefits, resulting in almost a 64% reduction in cases.
- Brought accountability to the welfare system by requiring drug testing for welfare recipients convicted of drug crimes.
- Alleviated fraud and discouraged the trading of EBT cards for illegal drugs by putting photo ID on EBT cards.



# Promoting Fiscal Responsibility

- For the first time in years, Maine enjoys budget surpluses versus annual deficits.
- Paid Maine's 39 hospitals the \$750 million owed from the last expansion of Medicaid welfare — without raising taxes.
- Eliminated a \$1.7 billion shortfall in Maine's government employee pension system while protecting retirees' future benefits.
- Decreased the size of state government by instituting a hiring freeze and eliminating 467 vacant positions.



*Governor LePage, who worked for decades in the forest products industry and as a consultant for manufacturing companies, sands a rifle stock at Cousineau Wood Products in North Anson.*



*Governor LePage used his business acumen to combine DHHS and Department of Labor offices in a new South Portland facility, saving taxpayers millions of dollars.*

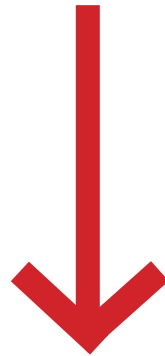
- On Day One of the LePage Administration, addressed a \$1.3 billion operating budget shortfall with a biennial budget plan that eliminated gimmicks, such as furlough days and "double dipping."
- Ensured surplus revenues flow into the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund (Rainy Day Fund) rather than giveaways to hidden legislative pork.

# Significant Tax Reform

- Lowered the top marginal individual income tax rate from 8.5% to 7.15%. Largest tax cut in Maine history.
- Increased the death tax exemption from \$1 million to \$5.45 million (*same as federal exemption and indexed for inflation*).
- Expanded Education Opportunity Tax Credit for businesses paying student loans of employees, allowing companies a dollar-for-dollar tax credits if they pay off their employees' student debt.
- Exempted Military Retiree Pension Income from the state income tax.
- Enacted an income tax exemption for active duty military pay earned outside of Maine.
- Exempted sales tax on fuel used in agriculture and forestry.
- Eliminated tax charged on meals in retirement facilities.
- Stopped the automatic annual increase in the gas tax.
- Conformed personal exemptions and doubled the federal standard deduction; eliminated the marriage penalty and the alternative minimum tax.
- Adopted tax conformity with federal government to provide predictability for Maine's businesses to plan growth and investments.
- Increased pension exemption from \$6,000 to \$10,000 and extended the deduction to IRA income.

*Income Tax Rate*

**8.5%**



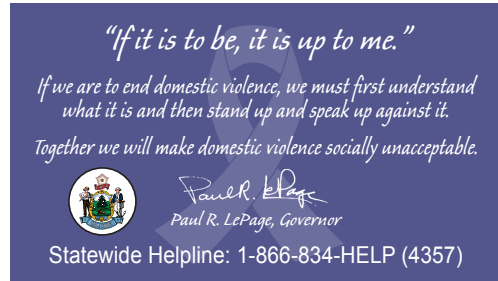
**7.15%**

*Governor LePage reduced the income tax by 16% – and he hopes to reduce it more.*



# Fighting Crime, Protecting the Public

- Introduced and signed legislation to protect victims of domestic violence.
- Signed legislation to add sex trafficking as a crime under Maine law.
- Increased the pay of the State Police, Warden Service, Marine Patrol, Capitol Police and other state law enforcement agencies to address recruitment and retention issues.
- To address the heroin epidemic, led the effort to add 200 substance-abuse treatment beds at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.



*The Governor signed LD 1523 to give pay raises to law enforcement officers.*

- To combat Maine's increased drug problem, led the effort to hire an additional 13 new agents with the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, bringing the total number of MDEA agents statewide to 52.
- Eliminated the requirement that someone obtain a concealed carry permit before they can carry a firearm, allowing Mainers to protect themselves.

# Making Education a Priority

- Passed legislation to allow charter schools in Maine for the first time, giving more choices to Maine students.
- Defeated legislation sponsored by teachers union bosses that would have eliminated the school performance grading system, preserving accountability in Maine schools.
- Enacted reforms to improve Career and Technical Education in Maine, bringing it back to the forefront of Education.
- Won bipartisan support for legislation to ensure that students demonstrate proficiency to attain a high school diploma.
- Worked with school superintendents to ensure that teachers who receive two consecutive ratings of “ineffective” may be removed.
- Advocated for uniformed military recruiters to have equal access to meet with Maine students at all of Maine’s school systems.
- Promoted the expansion of the Bridge Year program with targeted funding to help high school students earn college credits and make post-secondary education more affordable for Maine families.



*During one of his many visits to classrooms all over the state, Governor LePage had a discussion about sustainable energy with fifth graders in Windham.*



# Honoring Veterans Who Serve Our Country

- Created a tuition waiver program for all Maine National Guard members to the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and Maine Maritime Academy.
- Launched a new veterans website providing a single site to access all services for Maine veterans: **[www.maine.gov/veterans](http://www.maine.gov/veterans)**
- Reformed veteran preference in state hiring and retention to provide veterans and Gold Star spouses with a meaningful advantage in applying for employment with the State of Maine.
- State of Maine was named the No. 1 employer in 2015 Hire-A-Vet campaign for actively recruiting a record number of veterans into state service.



*Governor LePage signed LD 1612 to create more services for veterans and provide free tuition to members of the National Guard.*

- Signed legislation to ensure veterans and military spouses seeking employment in professions that require Maine licensing are given credit toward licensing requirements acquired during military training, education and experience.
  - Established a Military Service Designation driver's license, allowing veterans who are otherwise ineligible for retiree or VA identification to receive military and veteran discounts at stores and restaurants.
  - Developed a Gold Star License Plate program that was later amended to broaden the eligibility to Gold Star families whose loved one was killed while on active duty, but not in combat.
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