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We the people of Maine...



MHPC by the
Numbers
 2014

- 5 full-time staff plus 2 policy contractors
- 8 active websites
- Active accounts with 8 social media sites
- 8 public Facebook pages and 1 public profile with a total of 9,514 fans/friends
- 148,380 monthly average Facebook reach
- 635,431 monthly average Facebook impressions
- 6 twitter accounts with a total of 2,763 followers

THE MAINE HERITAGE
 POLICY CENTER
 IS PROUD TO BE MAINE'S
 FOREMOST CONSERVATIVE,
 FREE-MARKET THINK TANK.

MAINEOPENGOV.ORG

MHPC's Center for Open Government & Transparency

State employee salary data for 2013 is now available at MaineOpenGov.org.

Are you curious about how much state bureaucrats earn? How does your private sector pay and benefits package stack up compared to those who work for state government?

Visit MaineOpenGov.org for all this information and more.

In the meantime, here's some interesting information for you to digest... Check out the top ten overtime pay recipients on state payroll last year. Some of these folks almost double their annual salary in overtime pay. Imagine how that impacts their pension payouts.

10. Richard Reaser II – Department of Public Safety, State Police Trooper – Overtime: \$44,370.51; Base Salary: \$57,463.19

9. Lance M. McCleish – Department of Public Safety, State Police Corporal – Overtime: \$48,364.15; Base Salary: \$58,121.51



MAINEOPENGOV.ORG
 THE TAXPAYERS' WATCHDOG FOR
 EVERYDAY MAINERS

8. James H. Urquhart – Department of Public Safety, State Police Sergeant-E – Overtime: \$48,590.22; Base Salary: \$66,689.86

7. Marcia N. Gilpatrick – Department of Public Safety, Emergency Communication Specialist – Overtime: \$48,794.98; Base Salary: \$59,485.88

6. Tadeusz Kajkowski – Department of Health and Human Services, Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, Hospital Nurse II – Overtime: \$49,754.41; Base Salary: \$57,622.19

5. Corey A. Huckins – Department of Public Safety, State Police Sergeant-E – Overtime: \$49,887.13; Base Salary: \$65,441.11

4. Kenneth G. MacMaster – Department of Public Safety, Fire Investigator – Overtime: \$50,926.12; Base Salary: \$51,873.48

3. Edmund A. Furtado, Jr. – Department of Public Safety, State Police Corporal – Overtime: \$57,272.09; Base Salary: \$59,148.54

2. Davene S. Luce – Department of Public Safety, Emergency Communication Specialist Supervisor – Overtime: \$57,555.60; Base Salary: \$64,217.35

1. Joshua D'Angelo – Department of Public Safety, State Police Trooper – Overtime: \$58,297.20; Base Salary: 55,005.42

(Note: This list does not include employees of the University of Maine System, the Community College System, the Maine State Housing Authority or the Maine Turnpike Authority. This data can be found at MaineOpenGov.org.)

Can we trust President Obama's welfare expansion promise?

As you probably know, President Obama has broken almost every promise he made to the American people about his health care law.

He told us we could keep our health plans, but too many Americans have already had their insurance policies outlawed.

He told us Obamacare would create millions of jobs. However, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, Obamacare will cost the country the equivalent of 2 million jobs.

Remember when Nancy Pelosi said we had to pass the bill to find out what's in it? This is probably what she was talking about.

Despite all of these broken promises, some lawmakers in Maine still think we can trust President Obama when it comes to expanding our broken and dysfunctional medical welfare program, Medicaid – also known as MaineCare.

Progressive politicians failed to pass their expensive welfare expansion bill last year and are trying to force it through Augusta again. They believe more Mainers should be on welfare and they believe they can grow the welfare state for free!

President Obama has promised to pay most of the cost of adding 100,000 able-bodied young adults to the welfare rolls, but can we trust him to keep that promise? Even if the federal government keeps its promise, Maine taxpayers will shell out more than \$800 million over the next decade. But if the feds break their promise, Mainers could be left on the

hook for skyrocketing welfare costs, resulting in higher taxes and less funding for public safety and education.

The good news is that progressive politicians are growing desperate. Earlier this year, a liberal foundation with more than \$110 million in assets gave \$670,000 to progressive political activists so they could pressure conservatives into going along with the welfare expansion scheme.

Fortunately, The Maine Heritage Policy Center is standing at the front lines of the debate over welfare expansion. We are working hard to keep legislators and voters informed about the true cost of chaining Maine to the caboose of the Obamacare train wreck.

But we need your help to ensure lawmakers and the people of Maine hear our message.

Will you join the fight?

Can we count on you to stop the spread of Obamacare and Medicaid expansion here in Maine?

Together, we can make 2014 the year that Maine decides to stand up to President Obama and the tax-and-spend majority in Augusta. Working together, **Maine can chart a better course**, rich with freedom and opportunity for the next generation.

In Liberty,

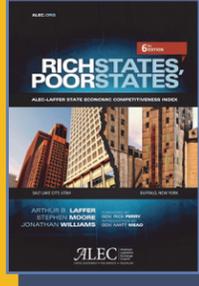
J. Scott Moody
 CEO & Chief Economist
 The Maine Heritage Policy Center

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MAINE PROSPERITY EVENTS

Rich States, Poor States: On January 23, 2014, The Maine Heritage Policy Center hosted Jonathan Williams of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) for its monthly Maine Prosperity Event to discuss the sixth edition of *Rich States, Poor States*.



The study, written by Arthur B. Laffer, Stephen Moore, and Jonathan Williams, uses a host of economic variables to gauge the relative success of state level policies and provides two rankings – economic performance and economic outlook. The performance ranking is a backward-looking measure based on

three variables: state gross domestic product, domestic migration, and non-farm payroll employment. The outlook ranking is a forward-looking measure based upon 15 state policy variables, including sales and income taxes, pension liabilities, workers' compensation costs, and right-to-work laws.

In this year's index, Maine ranked 41st for economic outlook, meaning only 9 states have poorer economic forecasts than Maine. While Maine would certainly rather have Utah's ranking (1st) or even New Hampshire's (27th), the new ranking shows a positive shift from 2012, when Maine ranked 47th. For economic performance, Maine ranked 38th, a decline from 23rd in 2012. According to the study, Maine's post-Great Recession recovery has been slower than the national average, which explains the poor performance ranking.

For more information on *Rich States, Poor States*, visit www.alec.org/publications/rich-states-poor-states/.



Illuminating Maine's Energy Crisis: In March, The Maine Heritage Policy Center hosted Paul Bachman of The Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University in Massachusetts to shed light on Maine's failed cap and-trade scheme—the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), pronounced "Reggie". RGGI's purpose is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from qualified electrical power plants by auctioning allowances to emit carbon dioxide. Unfortunately, RGGI has become little more than a hidden tax collected on Maine energy consumers—threatening the livelihood of Maine.

MHPC hosted luncheons in Auburn and Portland as well as a Legislative Briefing in Augusta. To raise awareness, a RGGI related telephone town-hall is planned for May 2014.

For more information on RGGI or to download a copy of MHPC's report on exiting RGGI, visit www.MainePolicy.org.



THE MAINE WIRE

The Maine Wire is making national headlines this year with our exclusive investigations into welfare abuse.

Editor Steve Robinson was featured on FOX News' *On the Record* with Greta Van Susteren as well as the *Howie Carr Show*. The Maine Wire's investigative reports and data were also referenced by *Town Hall* magazine and national talk show host Sean Hannity.

Connect with *The Maine Wire* online:

Cash Welfare Spending

The U.S. Congress created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in 1996 as a program to provide cash assistance to poor families with dependent children. In 2011, the federal government spent \$17.28 billion on TANF, covering roughly 4.4 million recipients, including more than 14,000 Maine residents. The Maine Wire obtained Maine's TANF data pursuant to a Freedom of Access Act request submitted in February of 2013. The data, which includes more than one million transactions funded by the TANF cash welfare program from 2011 to November of 2013, is made available in its entirety at TheMaineWire.com/cash-welfare-spending/.

GreatSchoolsforME.org

Thanks to the enduring work of **The Maine Heritage Policy Center** and Americans For Prosperity—Maine, Governor LePage proclaimed Wednesday, February 5, 2014 as Digital Learning Day throughout Maine recognizing the important opportunities digital learning provides.

In his proclamation, Governor LePage noted "when done correctly, the infusion of digital learning and the effective use of technology in schools can help personalize and improve the learning of every child." Digital learning and technology can also help educators be more effective and efficient, he wrote.

For more information about Digital Learning Day, visit www.digitallearningday.org.



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: EDITOR OF THE MAINE WIRE LANDS REGULAR COLUMN IN THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD

Published in the March 15, 2014 edition of

The Portland Press Herald

EST. 1862

Look forward to Steve's regular column in the PPH.

The social safety net should not serve as a lifestyle subsidy

Data show that last-resort aid has been accessed in liquor stores, strip joints and Disney World.

Nothing inflames the political passions of conservatives like welfare abuse. It conjures in them fiery resentment of the nanny state and those who take advantage of it. Yet armed only with anecdotal evidence of widespread abuse, conservatives have historically struggled to make a convincing case for welfare reform.

Thanks to the publication of a trove of welfare data, there may be a change in the wind this spring.

In January, The Maine Heritage Policy Center published the results of a several-month-long investigation into Maine's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash welfare program. The report was based on three years' worth of data provided by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, including records of transactions involving Electronic Benefit Transfer cards – the plastic used to access welfare benefits.

EVIDENCE OF WELFARE ABUSE

The Maine Heritage Policy Center's aim in making the data public was to provide a factual foundation for a conversation about welfare abuse and reform. If welfare abuse is happening, then we suspected the data might provide evidence.

So what did we find?

Over the past three years, Mainers have accessed welfare cash at liquor stores, cigarette shops, bowling alleys, gambling establishments, amusement parks, strip clubs and even a pet store, a tattoo parlor and a gun shop. Those are damning facts. The data also show welfare cash has been accessed in all 50 states – yes, Hawaii and Alaska included – Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. EBT cardholders even accessed cash at five-star resorts and Disney World.

Now, there are many good reasons someone might

spend welfare in another state: fleeing domestic abuse, military relocation, natural disaster, etc. And it is entirely possible the only ATM that Dad could find when he was shopping for little Timmy's school supplies happened to be at PT's Show Club. But the facts at least hint at a problem worth investigating.

*"It should be about moving people from welfare to work."
– President Clinton's first principle of welfare reform*

FLAWED GRASP OF THE PROBLEM

Some have suggested the data "prove" welfare abuse is virtually nonexistent because the LePage administration flagged some 3,700 transactions out of more than 1 million as suspicious. I reject that conclusion, for it is premised on a fundamental misunderstanding of the TANF program and a limited idea of what constitutes abuse.

- For starters, the vast majority of TANF funds are withdrawn from ATMs as cash. That cash could be spent on shampoo, heroin or given to a Karl Rove super PAC. Once it becomes cash, only the recipient knows how it's spent, so it's not useful to calculate abuse rates.

- Second, limiting our definition of abuse to transactions at suspicious or questionably named venues is unhelpful because it does not capture the true scope of abuse.

To illustrate: If John spends his money on alcohol and tobacco, should taxpayers subsidize his grocery shopping? Likewise, if John can afford vacations to Disney World or Honolulu, should taxpayers pay for his clothing and household goods when he gets home?

All this is to say, welfare can be abused, even in instances where legitimate goods are purchased legally from legitimate venues, if the recipient is not

truly needy.

Two goals of the TANF program, according to the federal government, are "to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for" and "to end dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage." It's difficult to see how subsidizing vacations and unhealthy habits reduces dependence on government, helps poor children and encourages work and family.

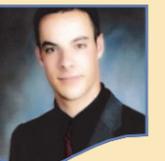
Indeed, the data suggest Maine's welfare system, in many instances, is being used not as a social safety net but as a lifestyle enhancement. And when the social safety net becomes a lifestyle enhancement, that is welfare abuse.

LEGISLATION ADDRESSES ISSUES

The state Legislature will soon consider legislation that would address some, but not all, of the problems in Maine's TANF system. Armed with the facts, lawmakers have an opportunity to work together on common-sense legislation that ensures welfare is achieving its goals.

Welfare reform is about fairness. The system presently forces working taxpayers to subsidize their neighbors' lifestyles – that's not fair. It's time to fix the system. To do so, conservatives must replace anecdote-driven emotionalism with reasoned argument and facts. The former may win elections, but only the latter can effect a solution.

Steven E. Robinson, a Dexter native and graduate of Bowdoin College, is editor of *TheMaineWire.com* and a policy analyst for *The Maine Heritage Policy Center*. He can be contacted at: serobinson@themainewire.com.



S. E. Robinson
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