

*The Voice of
Maine
Business*

MAINE
STATE
CHAMBER
of
COMMERCE

2022



128 State Street, Suite 101
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 623-4568 | mainechamber.org

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MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT 2022 RETURN ON YOUR

RETURN ON YOUR MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is opening doors for Maine employers through its efforts in **ADVOCACY, ACCESS, and AWARENESS.**

We work diligently to promote and protect Maine's economy, and while the pandemic may have changed how we do things, it has only magnified the need for our initiatives.

We proudly continue to be *The Voice of Maine Business*, especially in these uncertain times.

ACCESS

Our robust calendar of programs and events, coupled with our public policy committees and grassroots efforts, maximizes valuable interactions with business, legislative, and policy leaders for key discussions that encourage a deeper understanding of the issues facing Maine employers. We successfully offered high-quality events through alternative formats during the pandemic and are pleased to begin safely reconnecting in person.

- Our **Annual Dinner** convenes hundreds of Maine leaders for timely keynotes from nationally acclaimed speakers, televised gubernatorial or congressional debates, historic gatherings of dignitaries, and annual awards and recognitions.
- Each session, our **Business Day at the Statehouse** facilitates direct dialogue between legislators and employers, giving members the opportunity to emphasize the importance of preserving and retaining jobs, strengthening our economy, and keeping Maine businesses competitive.
- Annually, our **Leadership Summit** accelerates honest, open dialogue among Board members, legislative and committee leadership, and the Governor's Cabinet about top public policy issues.
- The **Legislative Social** is an ideal way for business, legislative, and government leaders to connect, interact, and network in a relaxed setting.
- Through our **Regional Business Breakfasts**, we share the status or outcome of legislation and learn more about the unique concerns of local employers.
- Since 1995, our annual scholarship golf tournament, **Scramble for Scholars**, has assisted 112 Maine students through our members' generous support, resulting in nearly \$162,000 in scholarships.
- The **Washington, D.C. Fly-In** responds to the need for local input on the increasing number of federal policies affecting Maine through visits with our congressional delegates.

AWARENESS

At the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, keeping our members well-informed and being a strong voice for Maine's business community are important parts of our mission, particularly during times of crisis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we ramped up our communications efforts to better serve our members.

In 2022, our ongoing communications include:

- In October 2020, we launched **OneVoice Maine**, a twice-yearly magazine that highlights the contributions of Maine's business community to making Maine a vibrant place to live and work. With a print run of 10,000, each edition is mailed to our members, accessible online, and available at visitor centers statewide.
- Our streaming public affairs show, **The Maine Take with Dana Connors**, covers the ideas, issues, and initiatives that help grow Maine's economy. With guests including federal and state elected officials, policymakers, business leaders, and more, each episode garners thousands of views.
- Since July 2020, we have **hosted informational webinars and policy seminars** focusing on a variety of priority business issues, including many related to the pandemic and Maine's economic recovery.
- Our digital and print newsletter dedicated to legislative and regulatory issues and more, **Impact**, publishes 24 editions annually, each reaching 1,200 print and 2,400 electronic subscribers, members, legislators, and policy leaders.
- **The Bottom Line** podcast featuring top business and policy issues celebrates its 75th episode in July 2022. With 39,000 impressions and 13,600 downloads by listeners annually, the podcast has featured discussions on pandemic recovery and reopening, broadband expansion, federal policy updates, workforce education and development initiatives, and more.
- Our **Daily Business Headlines** delivers top business news articles by email to thousands of member subscribers every workday morning.

ADVOCACY

During the past decade, your membership investment dollars in the Maine State Chamber have generated a **1,300-to-1** return.

During the First and Second Regular Sessions of the 130th Legislature, our team of respected advocacy professionals worked tirelessly on behalf of businesses of all sizes, and in every sector and region of our state. Each session's legislative outcomes were impacted by pandemic restrictions and partisan politics. Thankfully, from the halls of the Statehouse and beyond, our team of experienced professionals stand ready each legislative session to tackle the complex issues and proposals that impact Maine's business community. Examples of key successes in the last legislative session include:

HUMAN RESOURCES LEGISLATION

Through the Maine State Chamber's grassroots efforts, **LD 607, *An Act to Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers***, was greatly amended into a less harmful version of the bill. The bill originally proposed increasing the salary threshold between salaried employees and hourly employees in the state of Maine. The bill would have increased the current threshold from its current amount of \$38,250 to \$58,000 by 2024 – not accounting the yearly CPI adjustments. LD 607 would have increased the cost of doing business on small and large employers by **thousands, even tens of thousands of dollars each year**, and made our state an outlier, discouraging employers from coming to or remaining in Maine.

Working with a broad coalition of other business associations, the Maine State Chamber helped prevent the passage of one of the most restrictive "biometric identifier" laws in the nation. **LD 1945, *An Act to Regulate the Use of Biometric Identifiers***, sought to put in place strict regulations and requirements over the use of "biometric identifiers" in Maine, such as voice, fingerprint or facial recognition used to access our phones, online banking services, credit services, or voice recognition programs. In addition to unreasonable and poorly developed regulations and requirements, the bill authorized extremely broad private rights of action, including allowing for class action lawsuits, for which **the average cost to defend these are \$500,000 per case**.

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, & UTILITIES LEGISLATION

The Maine State Chamber helped defeat **LD 489, RESOLUTION, *Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to a Healthy Environment***. Enshrining environmental protections in the Maine Constitution and elevating them above the current statutory framework could lead to one outcome – a more litigious regulatory environment at the local and state levels. This would have stopped or slowed down the permitting process, which could have resulted in job loss and investment loss. By defeating LD 489, we saved businesses **tens of thousands of dollars each year** in not having to pay legal fees.

The Maine State Chamber helped defeat **LD 1532, *An Act to Protect Maine's Air Quality by Strengthening Requirements for Air Emissions Licensing***. This bill would have increased the fees for new air emissions licenses or renewals. It also would have required them to be renewed every two years,

instead of every 10 years. It also would have required a public hearing be held every time one was renewed as well as notice given to every resident in a five-mile radius. The cost of fees and the public forum would have increased costs of doing business on small and large employers by **thousands, even tens of thousands, of dollars each year**.

The Maine State Chamber helped defeat **LD 1634, *An Act to Create the Maine Generation Authority***. Creation of a state authority authorized to issue revenue bonds backed by Maine electric ratepayers for renewable energy generation projects is a significant shift away from private investment and generation. A generation authority paid for by ratepayers would increase costs. A new government entity structured like the Maine Turnpike Authority **costs millions, potentially billions, of dollars**. This would be a significant increase on Maine's businesses and ratepayers.

TAXATION LEGISLATION & INVESTMENT INCENTIVES

The Maine State Chamber helped defeat numerous anti-business bills that would have resulted in higher taxes on Maine businesses.

As originally drafted, **LD 428, *An Act to Prevent Tax Haven Abuse***, would have required corporations that filed unitary income tax returns in Maine to include income from certain jurisdictions outside the United States in net income when apportioning income among tax jurisdictions. This would have resulted in potentially double taxation of these corporations' income. The bill was amended to require a study of what it would take for Maine to convert to worldwide combined reporting.

LD 1289, *An Act to Cut Property Taxes for Maine Residential Homeowners*, would have increased the top individual income tax rate from 7.15% to 7.95%. It would have cost Maine taxpayers, including pass-through entities such as partnerships, LLCs and S-corps, between **\$30 million to \$40 million**.

LD 1704, *An Act to Change the Exclusion Amount Under the Estate Tax and Provide Additional Funding for the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund*, would have reduced the Maine estate tax exclusion amount from \$5.6 million to \$1 million. As originally drafted, the bill would have lowered the threshold on Maine's estate tax, exposing Maine's small family businesses that pass along assets to keep their businesses operating to job-killing taxes. **Total cost to Mainers: approximately \$30 million**.