

Maine Legislature Office of the Speaker

Democrats release State of the State video ahead of LePage's speech

Speaker Eves calls for "fair and responsible" proposals to meet Maine's challenges

February 5, 2013

Tonight, Governor Paul LePage will deliver the State of the State.

Democrats encourage him to outline fair and responsible proposals to address the challenges we face.

Yesterday, Democratic leaders met with the Governor for the first time. During the next two years we know we won't always agree, but we must work together to meet our challenges.

The problems we face are too big for one party to solve alone.

Here in Maine, we face a sluggish economy with more than 50,000 people still out of work. We rank dead last in the country for personal income growth. And, while many states in the country are recovering from the National recession, Maine's economy has slipped backwards.

We must do better. With every challenge there comes opportunity. Democrats are ready to meet that challenge head on.

If we are to truly strengthen our state's economy, we need leaders who believe in Maine, trumpet our success and herald our state.

There is no place like Maine. National study after study touts the things that make our state great: our clean air, clean water, small towns, schools and strong families. These are the reasons my wife and I chose Maine as the place we would live and raise our family.

Maine has a lot to be proud of.

Like so many of you – Democrats believe in Maine. We believe in our people, our places, our communities. We are all in this together.

Democrats have outlined our plan to invest in our future -- to strengthen our economy and grow the middle class in our state. We will focus on four key areas: workforce development, education, lowering the costs of energy and health care and making key investments in our roads and bridges and research and development.

Ingenuity and hard work are built into Maine people – but we need to give them the skills to compete. As leaders, we will use our resources and private sector partners to close the skills gap and get ahead of the curve. Nothing is more important for a vibrant economy and robust middle class than a well-trained workforce.

We want the classroom to be the best learning environment it can be. That means supporting early education and strengthening our public schools, not undercutting them or our teachers.

In addition, we must work to lower energy and health care costs. Reducing these costs means the middle class and small businesses will have more money in their pockets.

Solving Maine's energy challenges will require short- and long-term solutions. We must support energy efficiency now and embrace a comprehensive energy strategy for the future, including renewable energy and natural gas. This is how we will lower our electric and heating bills, while creating good-paying jobs.

We must meet Maine's health care challenges head on: We must stop insurance companies from hiking rates without review, place greater emphasis on the prevention and treatment of chronic illness, and pay doctors for healthier outcomes -- not for the number of tests performed.

We must truly reform our anti-poverty programs to ensure that more Maine people can climb into the middle class – not fall out of it.

Moreover, our economy needs a significant economic investment package that will fix our crumbling roads and bridges and lay the groundwork for the jobs of the future.

It is impossible to cut our way to prosperity. The Legislature must work to put more money in the pockets of Maine families and businesses, so they can spend it locally and help create jobs. The Governor's budget proposal will do just the opposite.

It threatens to further undercut our economy by shifting the cost of a tax cut that largely benefits the wealthy onto the backs of the middle class, the poor, our seniors and our small businesses. Instead, we need a budget that is fair and responsible.

We have an ambitious agenda for Maine. When we work together building pathways to success for every child in Maine, our economy and our communities will grow and thrive. Strong schools, a clean environment, and a family doctor for every family – this is the foundation for Maine’s future prosperity.

We’re all in this together and we have a lot of work to do.

Thank you for watching. I’m the Speaker of the Maine House Mark Eves of North Berwick.

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