

# Maine Economic Indicators

February 2021



Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services

Office of the State Economist

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Maine Economic Indicators is a monthly report assembled by the Office of the State Economist that provides a synopsis of current economic trends and indicators for the state in comparison to New England and the United States. The intent of this report is to provide the public with a single document containing data aggregated from different sources typically used to track current economic and demographic conditions in the state.

The appendix provides comprehensive information related to the data presented herein. Data included in this report are assembled from various sources, subject to frequent revision, and provided in this report “as is” at the time of publication. Therefore, data presented in this report are subject to change over time.

**Please note that changes in economic indicators cannot uniquely be interpreted as the impact of COVID-19.**

# 1 Snapshot

Indicators in this section provide a summary of Maine's current economic status. Figures for Maine are compared to New England and the United States. Sources are given in the appendix.

Reference Period		Maine	New England	United States
2019	Total population	1,344,212	14,845,063	328,239,523
2018-2019	Annual population percent change	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%
2010-2019	Cumulative population percent change	1.2%	2.8%	6.3%
2019	Average earnings per job	\$51,980	\$71,826	\$64,180
2018-2019	Average earnings per job percent change	3.6%	2.7%	2.6%
December 2020	Unemployment rate	4.9%	6.9%	6.7%
December 2020	Total private nonfarm employment	496,100	5,985,800	121,223,000
December 2020	Labor Force	673,596	7,766,813	160,567,000
December 2020	Labor Force Participation Rate	60.2%	N/A	61.5%

## Annualized Percent Change from the previous quarter and Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)

Real GDP	2019:Q4	2020:Q1	2020:Q2	2020:Q3	2019:Q3-2020:Q3
Maine	3.4	-6.5	-34.4	37.3	-3.4
New England	1.0	-4.8	-32.3	34.2	-3.3
United States	2.4	-5.0	-31.4	33.4	-2.8
Total Personal Income	2019:Q4	2020:Q1	2020:Q2	2020:Q3	2019:Q3-2020:Q3
Maine	3.7	5.0	55.9	-19.9	8.0
New England	2.4	4.5	44.0	-13.0	7.6
United States	3.5	4.1	35.8	-10.0	7.1
Per Capita Personal Income	2019:Q4	2020:Q1	2020:Q2	2020:Q3	2019:Q3-2020:Q3
Maine	23.2	4.7	55.4	-20.3	7.6
New England	2.2	4.5	43.9	-13.2	7.5
United States	2.9	3.7	35.1	-10.5	6.6
Wages & Salaries	2019:Q4	2020:Q1	2020:Q2	2020:Q3	2019:Q3-2020:Q3
Maine	4.6	4.5	-19.5	29.4	3.3
New England	3.5	5.0	-23.1	23.3	0.7
United States	4.9	4.4	-23.7	24.4	1.0

## 2 Annual Indicators

Indicators summarized below are updated annually on various release dates and provide a general summary of Maine's demographic and economic status.

Reference Period		Maine	New England	United States
2019	Total population	1,344,212	14,845,063	328,239,523
2018-2019	Annual population percent change	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%
2010-2019	Cumulative population percent change	1.2%	2.8%	6.3%
2019	Births	12,073	145,125	3,791,712
2019	Deaths	14,335	131,609	2,835,038
2019	Net migration	5,039	2,428	595,348
2018-2019	Annual rate of total net migration (Maine ranks 16 <sup>th</sup> in the U.S.)	5.6%	0.00%	1.8%
2019	Median age, years (American Community Survey)	45.1	40.9	38.5
2019	Associate degree: percent of population age 25 and above	10.0%	8.1%	8.6%
2019	Bachelor's degree: percent of population age 25 and above	20.8%	23.2%	20.3%
2019	Graduate or professional degree: percent of population age 25 and above	12.4%	17.8%	12.8%
2019	Percent of population below poverty level	10.9%	9.6%	12.3%
2019	Median family income	\$76,316	\$99,309	\$80,944
2019	Median household income	\$58,924	\$77,482	\$65,712
2019	Per capita personal consumption expenditures	\$47,351	\$53,985	\$42,757
2019	Per capita disposable personal income	\$45,508	\$60,060	\$44,276

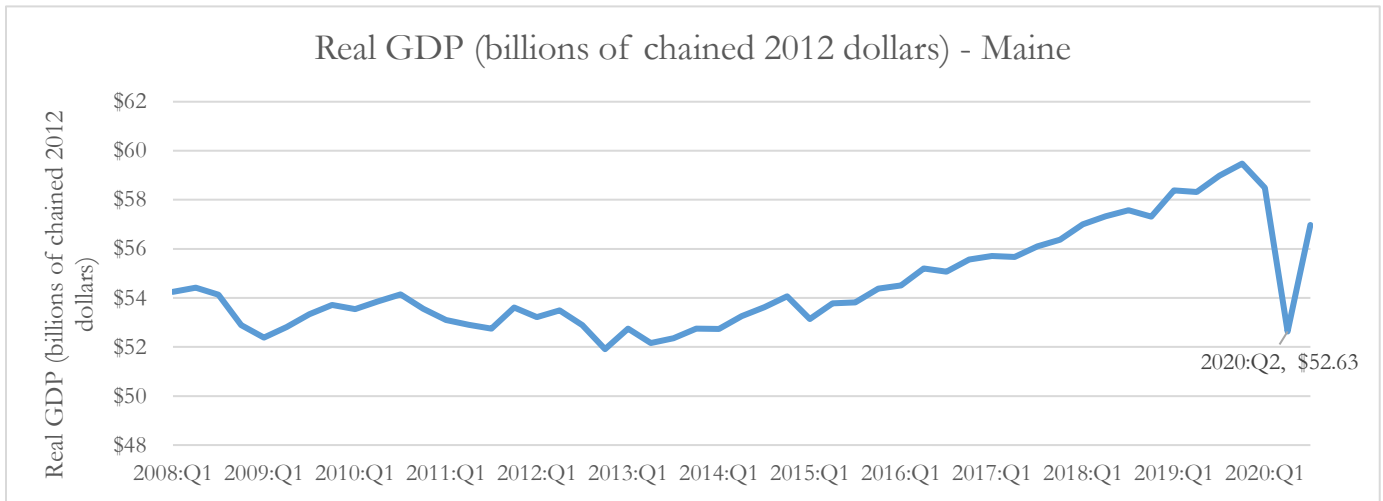
## 3 Quarterly and Monthly Indicators

### 3.1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Real GDP in Maine grew by 37.3 percent from the preceding quarter at an annual rate (2020:Q2 to 2020:Q3), higher than both New England (34.2 percent) and the United States (33.4 percent) and ranking 12th in the country. The industries that contributed the largest growth in GDP were Healthcare and Social Assistance (7.53 percentage points) and Accommodation and Food Services (6.87 percentage points). Maine's real GDP remains 4.2% below pre-pandemic (2019:Q4) levels.

Reference Period		Maine	United States
2020:Q3	Total GDP (Current dollars)	\$67.1 billion	\$21.2 trillion

### 3.1.1



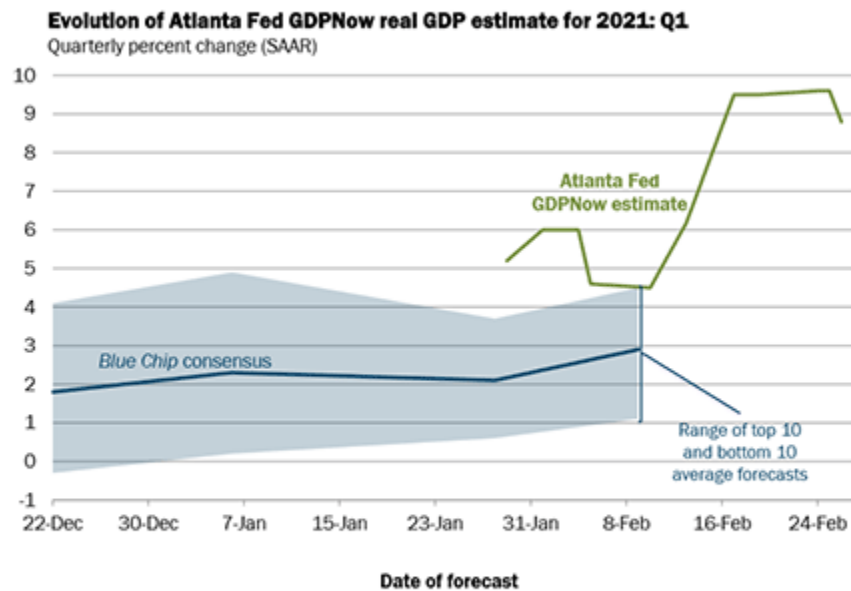
### 3.1.2 GDP Now from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

GDPNow, which is reported by the Atlanta Fed, is “a running estimate of real GDP growth based on available data for the current quarter.” This model uses a similar methodology to the one used by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis in their official GDP estimates and is revised each time the monthly source data is updated. The latest forecast (February 25, 2021) estimates that national real GDP will **increase by 8.8 percent** at an annual rate in the first quarter of 2021.



**GDPNow is not an official forecast of the Atlanta Fed.** Rather, it is best viewed as a running estimate of real GDP growth based on available economic data for the current measured quarter. There are no subjective adjustments made to GDPNow—the estimate is based solely on the mathematical results of the model.

In particular, it **does not capture the impact of COVID-19 and social mobility** beyond their impact on GDP source data and relevant economic reports that have already been released. It does not anticipate their impact on forthcoming economic reports beyond the standard internal dynamics of the model.

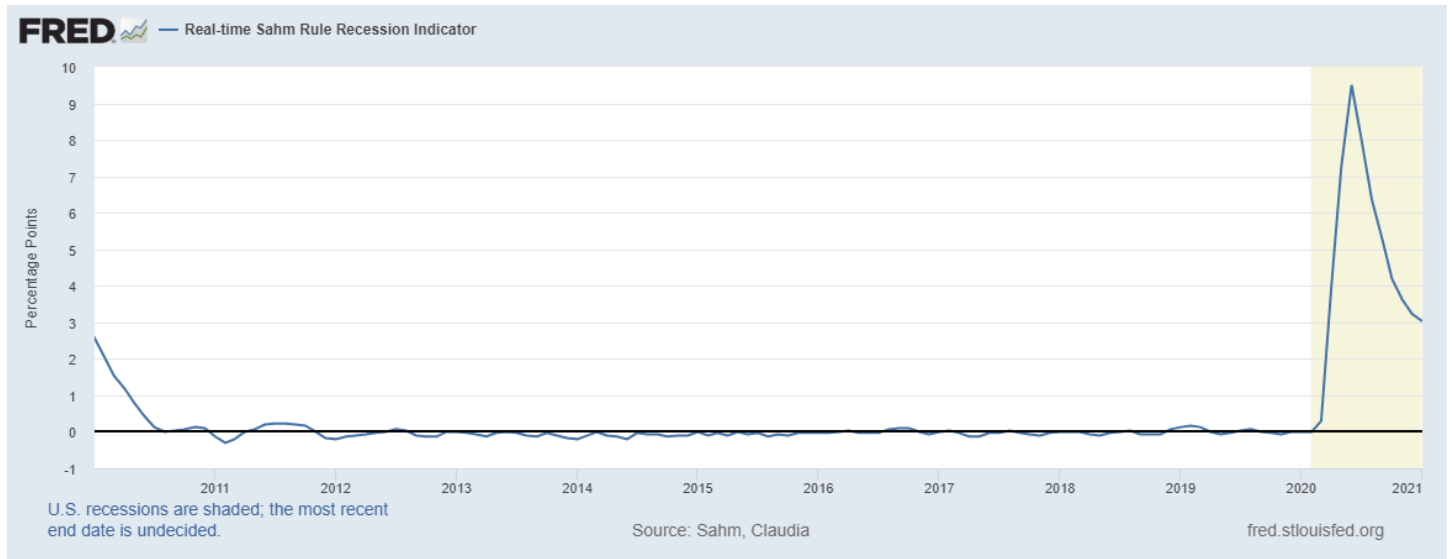


Sources: Blue Chip Economic Indicators and Blue Chip Financial Forecasts  
Note: The top (bottom) 10 average forecast is an average of the highest (lowest) 10 forecasts in the Blue Chip survey.

### 3.2 Recession Indicators

On June 8, 2020, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) declared that the United States was officially in recession starting in February.

#### 3.2.1 Real-time Sahn Rule Recession Indicator



The Real-time Sahn Rule Recession Indicator<sup>1</sup> signals a recession when the 3-month moving average of the national unemployment rate (U3) rises by at least 0.5 percentage points relative to its low in the previous 12 months. In January 2021, this indicator showed that the three-month average of national U3 was 3.03 percentage points over its 12-month low. This is lower than the previous month, as the unemployment rate has fallen, however it still is a strong confirmation that the economy remains in recession.

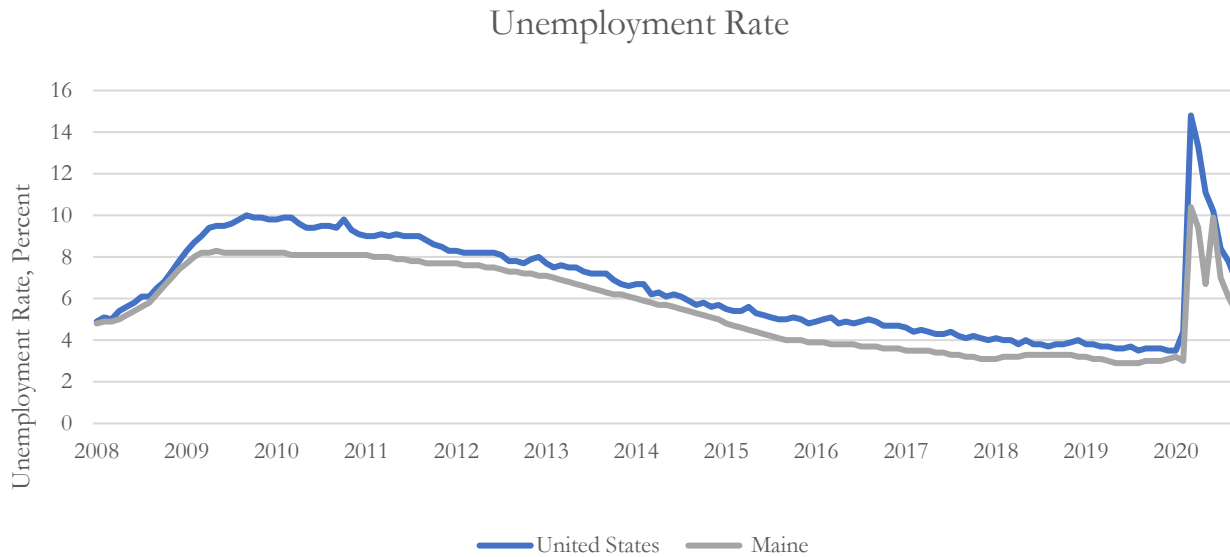
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<sup>1</sup> Created by Dr. Claudia Sahn, Federal Reserve Board of Governors  
Maine Economic Indicators – February 2021

### 3.3 Labor Markets<sup>2</sup>

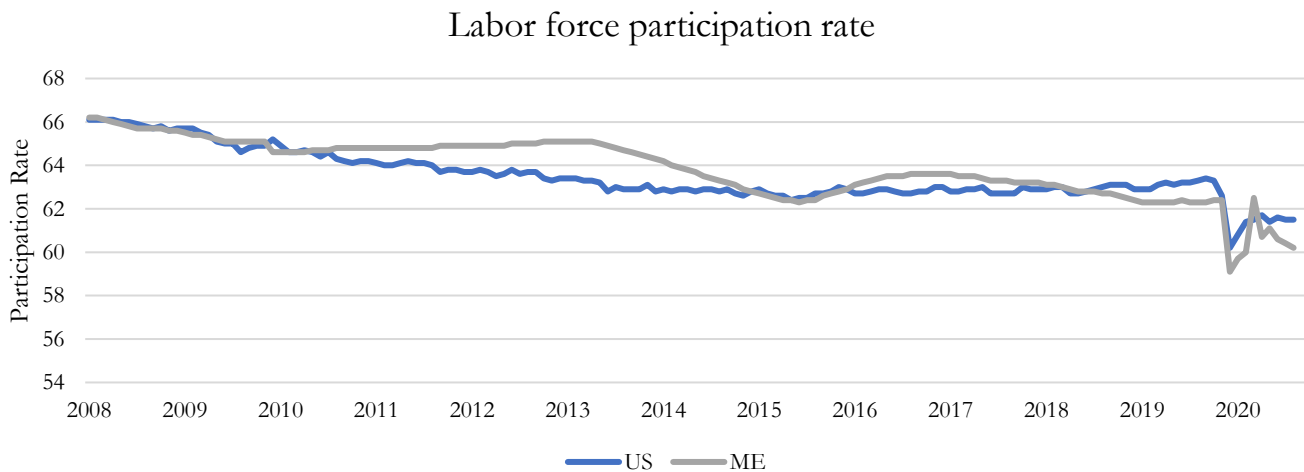
#### 3.3.1 Unemployment Rate: December 2020 = 4.9%

The unemployment rate was unchanged in December in Maine at 4.9%, compared to 6.7% nationally (also unchanged) and 6.9% in New England, an increase from 6.5%. Maine Department of Labor notes that there has been a significant drop in the labor force, and those not currently searching for work are not considered unemployed. Therefore, MDOL estimates an alternative unemployment rate of slightly over ten percent in December.



#### 3.3.2 Labor Force Participation Rate: December 2020 = 60.2%

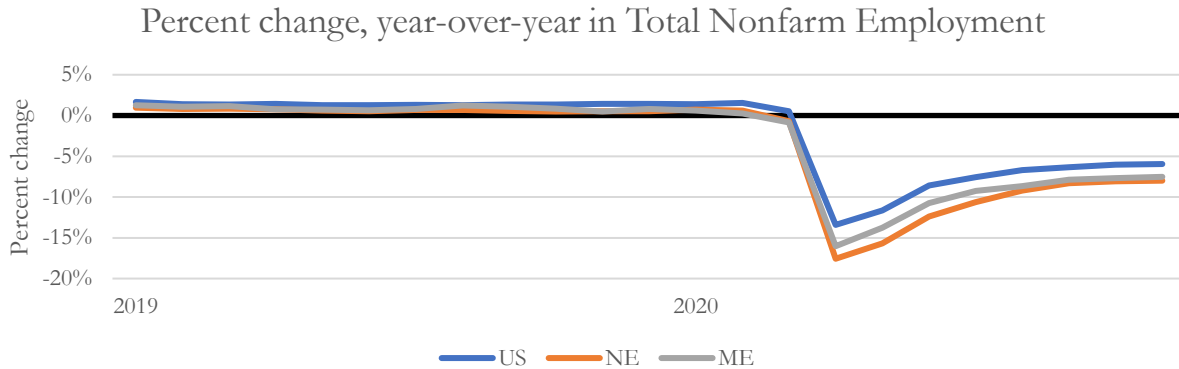
Labor force participation continued to fall in Maine in December to 60.2 percent, below the nation's 61.5 percent.



<sup>2</sup> The data for unemployment rates and labor force are derived from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program and data for nonfarm payroll jobs are derived from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program. The numbers presented below are estimates which vary month to month in either direction and are subject to substantial revision. The Maine Department of Labor cautions users to analyze general trends over several months as opposed to making conclusions based on changes month to month.

### 3.3.3 Total Nonfarm Payroll Job Estimates: December 2020 = 588,900

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm jobs were essentially unchanged (+400) in Maine in December, while falling by 13,700 in New England and by 140,000 nationwide. Losses were primarily felt in Accommodation and Food Services (-1,800), and public higher education (-1,200). Maine's employment level remains 7.7% below December 2019 levels (-49,200), while New England and the U.S. fall below December 2019 by 8.2% and 6.2%, respectively. Over 94.8% of total job loss in ME since February 2020 is in the service sector.



## 3.4 Housing

### 3.4.1 Sales

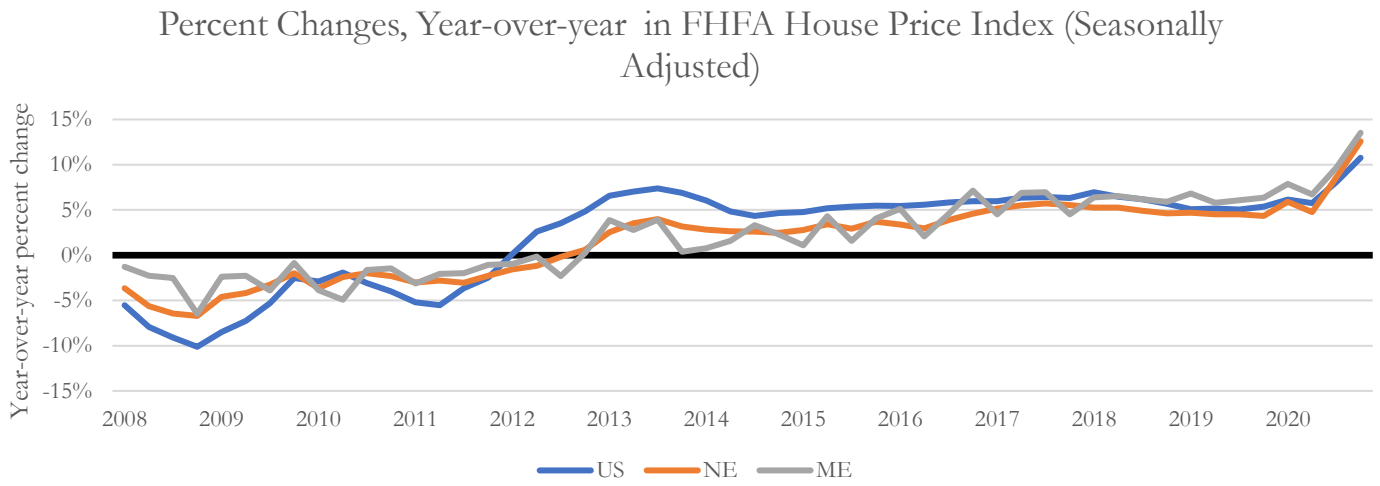
January 2021 saw continued growth in the number of units sold: 1,256 homes were sold, 15.8% higher year-over-year. Meanwhile the median sale price of \$255,300 was 5.4% down compared to last year. The growth rate was highest in Franklin County, which saw the number of sales more than double compared to last year, while Cumberland and Lincoln Counties saw sales decline.

Geography	No. of Units Sold	One Year Change (units)	Median Sale Price	One Year Change (Price)
Androscoggin	73	20%	\$199,900	18.3%
Aroostook	54	42%	\$97,375	24.9%
Cumberland	224	-6%	\$349,500	6.2%
Franklin	45	105%	\$187,000	25.9%
Hancock	79	52%	\$320,000	43.2%
Kennebec	94	12%	\$212,500	27.8%
Knox	55	57%	\$241,500	7.8%
Lincoln	32	-3%	\$352,000	71.7%
Oxford	70	56%	\$197,502	6.8%
Penobscot	123	16%	\$160,000	-0.3%
Piscataquis	31	55%	\$135,000	8.4%
Sagadahoc	34	10%	\$320,000	34.7%
Somerset	50	35%	\$129,450	-1.2%
Waldo	44	29%	\$199,450	24.3%
Washington	39	44%	\$140,000	-9.7%
York	209	6%	\$380,900	31.8%
<b>Maine</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>\$255,300</b>	<b>15.8%</b>

### 3.4.2 House Price Index

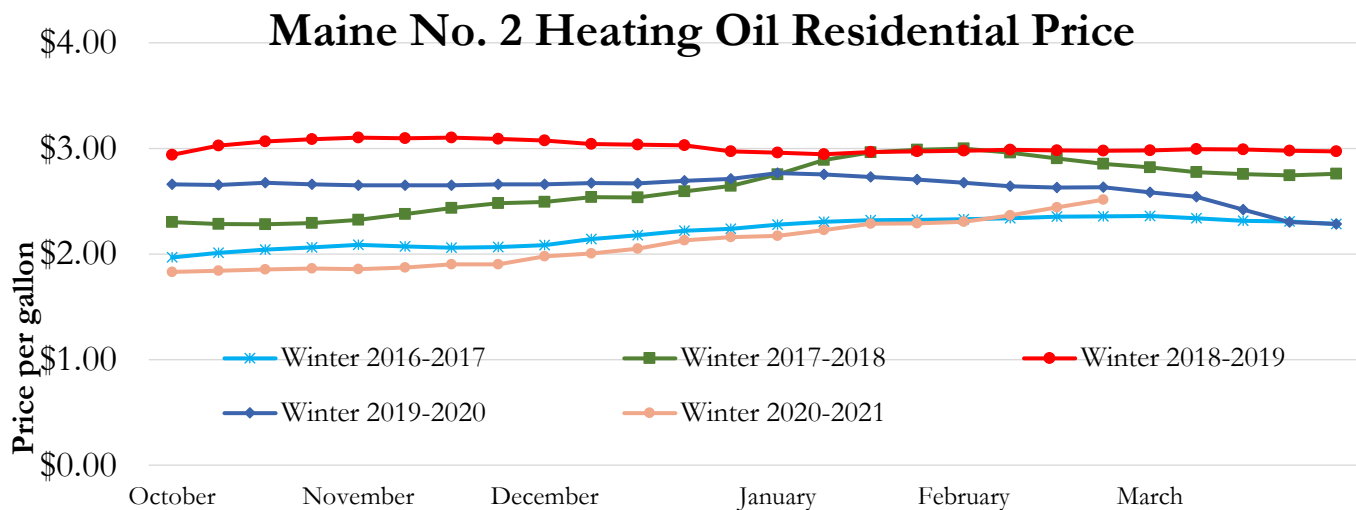
In the fourth quarter of 2020, the housing price index (HPI) in Maine, New England, and the U.S. continued to rise rapidly. According to the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), the HPI “measures average price changes in repeat sales or refinancing on the same properties.” Maine’s year-over-year HPI growth rate was higher than both the regional growth rate and the national growth rate at 13.5% compared to 12.6% in New England and 10.8% in the U.S. This is the highest growth rate for both Maine and the U.S. since the index has been recorded, and the highest for the New England since 2001:Q1.

Reference Period		Maine	New England	United States
2019:Q4-2020:Q4	HPI percent change from previous quarter	13.5%	12.6%	10.8%



### 3.4.3 Home Heating Oil

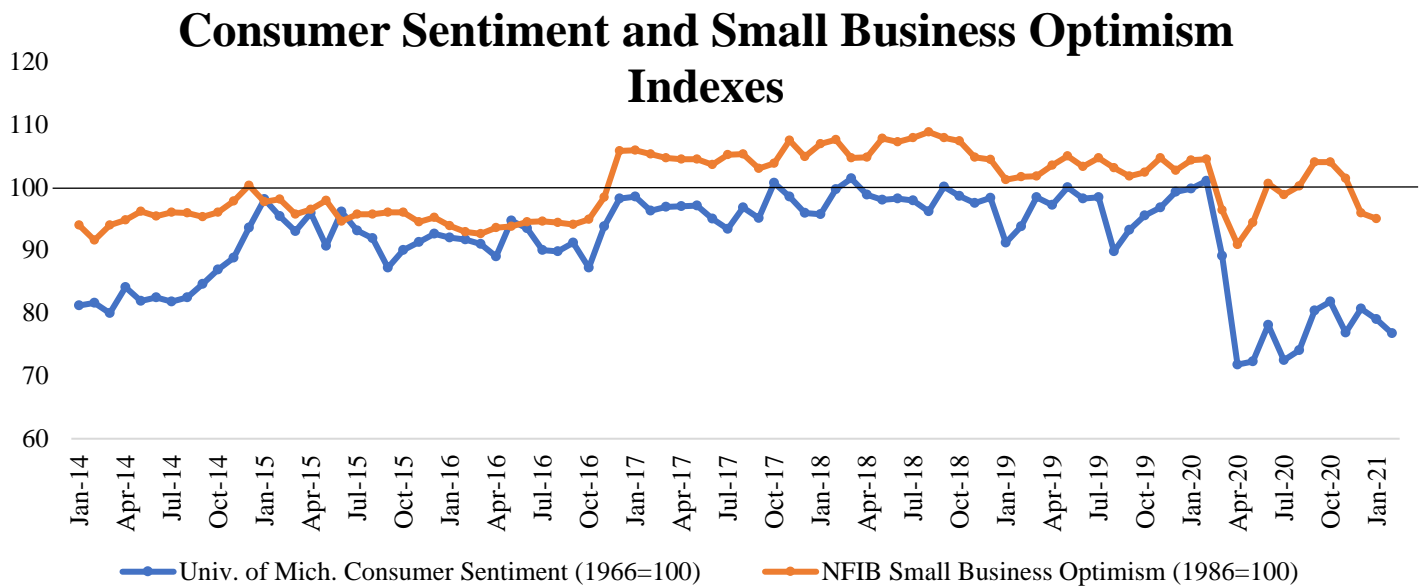
The Energy Information Agency collects residential heating oil price data during the heating oil season, October-March. The 2020-2021 heating oil season began with its lowest prices in the last five years, though prices have steadily increased throughout the season and are nearing last season’s levels. On February 22, 2021, the average weekly price for residential heating oil in Maine was \$2.514 per gallon, about \$0.12 less than the same week last year but \$0.07 higher than the previous week.





## 4 Sentiment

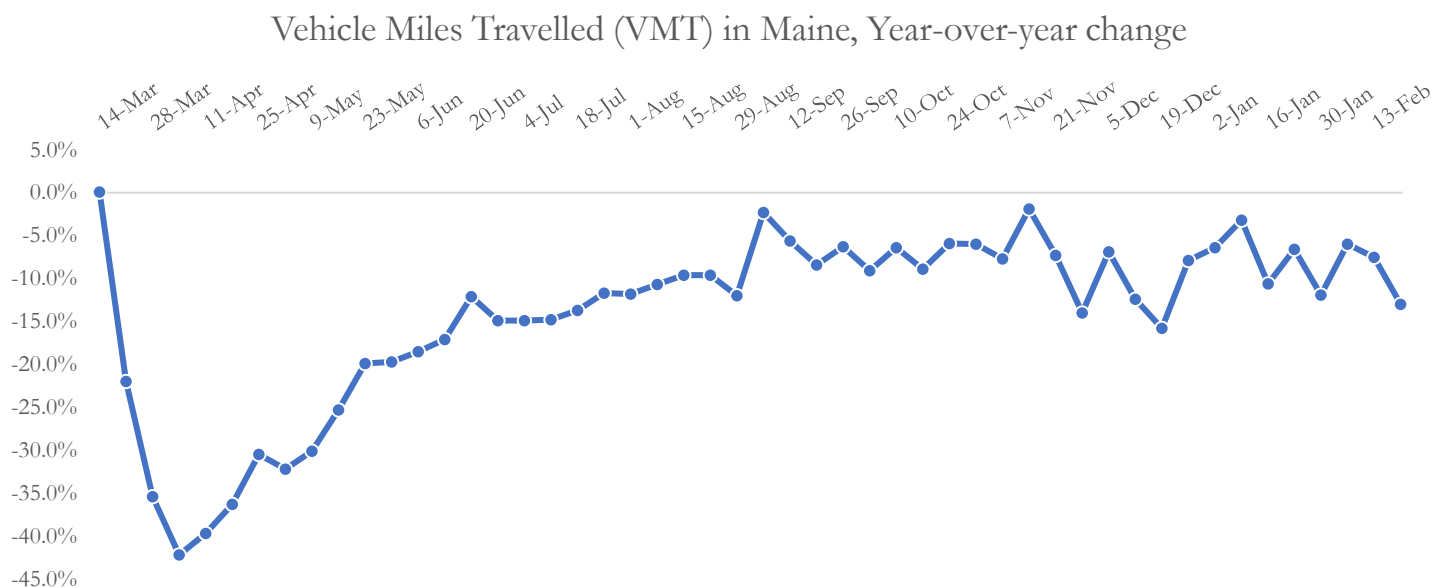
The Michigan Survey of Consumers indicates that the index of overall consumer sentiment fell in February, -2.1% month-over-month. This index remains 24.0% lower than February 2020. The National Federation of Independent Business's Small Business Optimism index also fell from December to January, at -0.9% month-over-month and by -8.9% year-over-year.



## 5 COVID-19 Indicators

### 5.1 Traffic changes


Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) measures the amount of travel that has taken place for all vehicles throughout the state and can be interpreted as the sum of miles traveled across all vehicles. During the third week of February, statewide VMT was 13.0% lower than it was in the same week of 2020, mostly due to winter weather. The gap was widest in Kennebec County (-16.8%) and narrowest in Aroostook County (-6.2%).

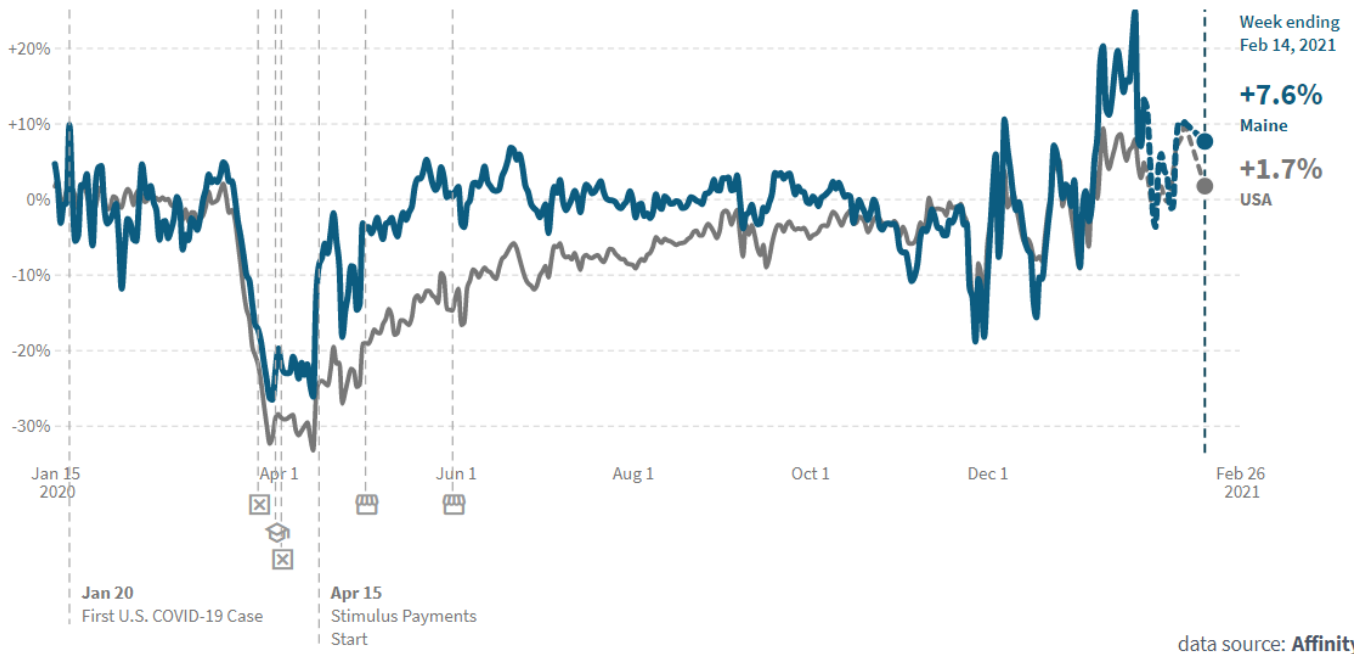


## 5.2 Consumer Spending

Credit and debit transactions data<sup>3</sup> shows that consumer spending by Mainers as of February 14<sup>th</sup> is 7.6% above the average level of spending in January 2020, seasonally adjusted, compared to 1.7% nationally.

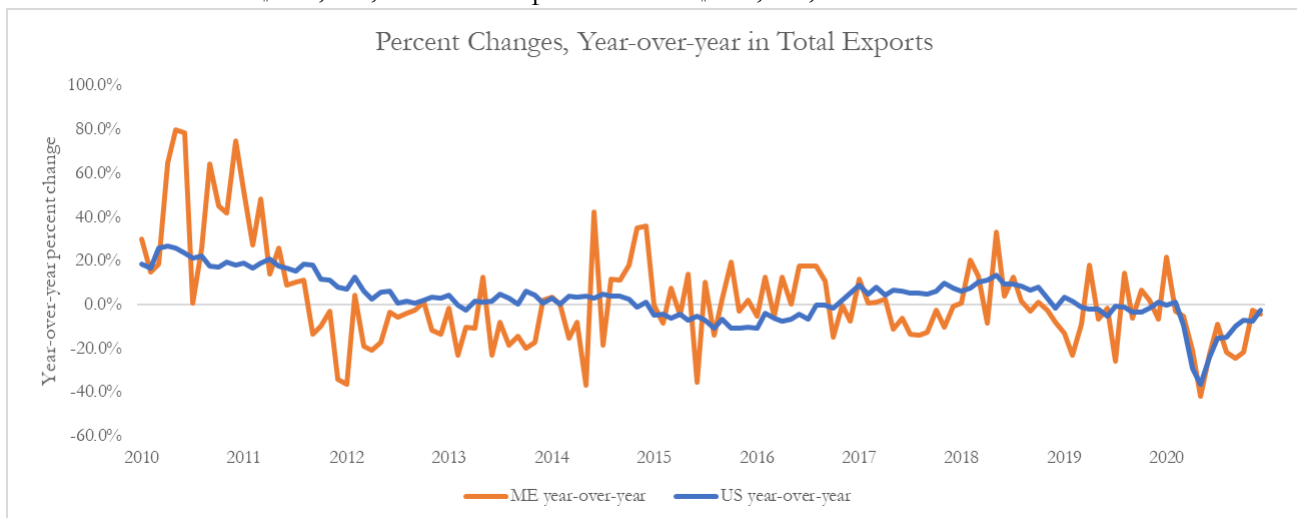
In **Maine**, as of February 14 2021, total spending by all consumers increased by **7.6%** compared to January 2020.

DOWNLOAD CHART 



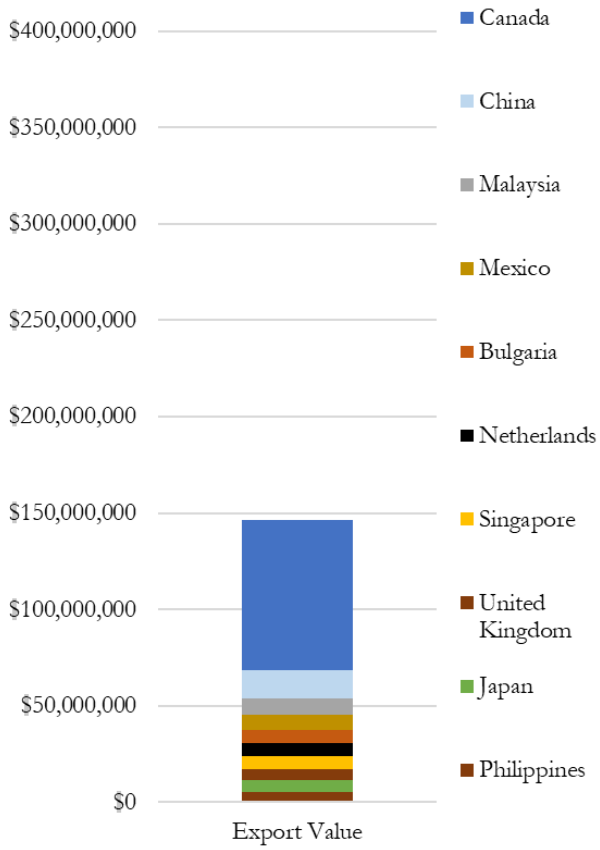
## 6 Trade Outlook

In December 2020, total exports were down 4.2% in Maine and 2.4% nationwide compared to December 2019. Maine's top trade partner was Canada, which accounted for 67.3% of imports and 41.0% of exports. Total imports to Maine were valued at \$437,920,533 while exports totaled \$189,289,838.

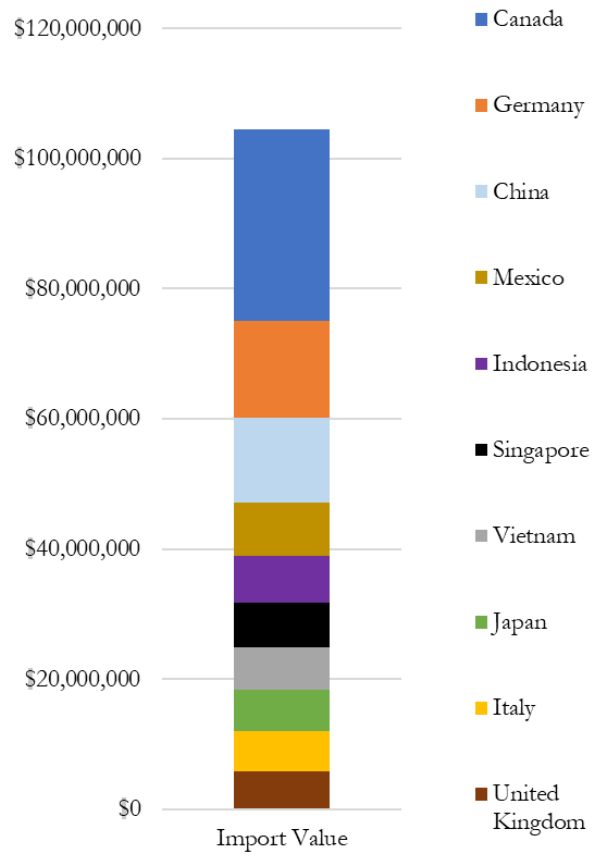


<sup>3</sup> The Opportunity Insights Economic Tracker compiles credit and debit card spending to measure overall consumer spending in all states in the U.S. Note that this data collates spending by cardholders based in Maine, not by location of the transaction.

Value of exports to top 10 export partners



Value of imports from top 10 import partners



## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Data Sources

Indicator	Source	Reference Period	Release Date
<a href="#">Population: estimates and percent change</a>	Census Bureau – Pop. Ests.	2019	December 30, 2019
<a href="#">Net migration: total and percent change</a>	Census Bureau – Pop. Ests.	2019	December 30, 2019
<a href="#">Median age</a>	American Community Survey 1 year	2019	September 17, 2020
<a href="#">Educational attainment</a>	Census Bureau – ACS 1-year	2019	September 17, 2020
<a href="#">Poverty level</a>	Census Bureau – ACS 1-year	2019	September 17, 2020
<a href="#">Income</a>	Census Bureau – ACS 1-year	2019	September 17, 2020
<a href="#">Per capita personal consumption expenditure</a>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	2019	October 8, 2020
<a href="#">Per capita personal income</a>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	2020:Q3	December 17, 2020
<a href="#">Average earnings per job</a>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	2019	September 24, 2020
<a href="#">Gross domestic product</a>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	2020:Q3	December 23, 2020
<a href="#">GDPNow</a>	Atlanta Fed	2021:Q1	February 25, 2021
<a href="#">GDP-Based Recession Indicator Index</a>	Hamilton, James/FRED	2020:Q2	October 30, 2020
<a href="#">Real-time Sahm Rule Recession Indicator</a>	Sahm, Claudia/FRED	January 2020	February 5, 2021
<a href="#">Personal income: total, per capita, and wages and salaries</a>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	2020:Q3	December 17, 2020
<a href="#">Unemployment rate</a>	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	December 2020	January 26, 2021
<a href="#">Labor force participation</a>	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	December 2020	January 26, 2021
<a href="#">Nonfarm payroll job estimates</a>	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	December 2020	January 26, 2021
<a href="#">Housing price index</a>	Federal Housing Finance Agency	2021:Q4	February 23, 2021
<a href="#">Housing: Units and Median Sale Price</a>	Maine Association of REALTORS®	January 2021	February 22, 2021
<a href="#">Home Heating Oil</a>	Energy Information Association	February 20, 2021	February 2021
<a href="#">Index of Consumer Sentiment</a>	Michigan Survey of Consumers	February 2021	February 2021
<a href="#">Small Business Optimism Index</a>	National Federation of Independent Businesses	January 2021	February 2021
Vehicle Miles Traveled	Maine Department of Transportation	February 20, 2021	February 23, 2021
<a href="#">Consumer Spending</a>	Affinity Solutions & Opportunity Insights	February 14, 2021	Accessed February 26, 2021
<a href="#">Imports &amp; Exports</a>	USA Trade Online	December 2020	February 5, 2021

## 7.2 Glossary

**Average earnings per job:** Total earnings, which is the sum of wages and salaries, supplements to wages and salaries, and proprietors' income, divided by total full-time and part-time employment.

$$\text{Compound Annual Growth Rate:} = \left( \frac{\text{Final Value}}{\text{Initial Value}} \right)^{\frac{1}{\text{No. of Periods}}} - 1$$

**Gross Domestic Product:** The measure of the market value of all final goods and services produced within a state in a particular period of time. GDP by state differs from national GDP for the following reasons: GDP by state excludes and national GDP includes the compensation of federal civilian and military personnel stationed abroad and government consumption of fixed capital for military structures located abroad and for military equipment, except office equipment. **Real GDP:** Real GDP by state is an inflation-adjusted measure of each state's gross product that is based on national prices for the goods and services produced within the state. The real estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) by state are measured in chained (2012) dollars.

**Housing Price Index:** A weighted, repeat-sales index, meaning that it measures average price changes in repeat sales or refinancing on the same properties.

**Labor Force Participation Rate:** The labor force as a percent of the civilian noninstitutional population ages 16 years and older.

**Net Migration Rate:** The U.S. Census Bureau defines the net migration rate as the difference between the number of migrants entering and those leaving an area in a year, per 1,000 midyear population. May also be expressed in percent. A positive figure is known as a net immigration rate and a negative figure as a net emigration rate.

**Personal Consumption Expenditures by State:** A measure of spending on goods and services purchased by, and on behalf of, households based on households' state of residence divided by the resident population of the area.

**Personal Income:** Income that persons residing in the area receive in return for their provision of labor, land, and capital used in current production as well as other income, such as personal current transfer receipts. *Per capita personal income:* The personal income of a given area divided by the resident population of the area. *Per capita disposable personal income:* The income available to persons for spending or saving (personal income less personal current taxes) of a given area divided by the resident population of the area.

**Poverty Level:** The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty.

**Real Trade Weighted Value of the Dollar:** An index that calculates the inflation-adjusted value of the U.S. dollar against the currencies of countries with which the state trades.

**Total merchandise exports:** Total exports are calculated by adding domestic exports (goods that are grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States) to foreign exports (foreign-origin goods that have previously entered the United States, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands for consumption, entry into a CBP bonded warehouse, or a U.S. **Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ)**, and at the time of exportation, have undergone no change in form or condition or enhancement in value by further manufacturing).

[Total Private nonfarm employment](#): Each month Current Employment Statistics (CES) surveys a sample of about 2,700 nonfarm private employers (plus federal, state, and local government employers) in Maine asking them to report the number of jobs, hours, and earnings of workers on their payroll during the week including the 12th day of each month. The sample accounts for just 7% of employers, but 34% of nonfarm jobs in the state because a high share of large employers are surveyed.

[Unemployment Rate](#): Number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force. To be classified as unemployed, persons must be aged 16 years and older with no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the 4-week period ending with the reference week.

[Wages and Salaries](#): Remuneration receivable by employees (including corporate officers) from employers for the provision of labor services, measured before deductions such as social security contributions, union dues, and voluntary employee contributions to defined contribution pension plans.