

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

January 3, 1979 to June 15, 1979

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1979

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

January 4, 1979

by

GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN

to the

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

One Hundred and Ninth Legislature

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the 109th Legislature, Mr. Chief Justice and Members of the Judiciary, Mr. Secretary of State:

One hundred and sixty years ago, two hundred and seventy-four delegates representing all of the towns of a remote district of Massachusetts assembled at the First Parish Church in Portland to frame a constitution for a new state.

We are the heirs to that vision of 1819.

We are the successor trustees of that small band who set Maine on its own.

We convene today to remember their faith in the future, and to renew our belief in the ability of a free people to govern themselves.

For the one hundred and ninth time in our history, the work of the Maine Legislature begins again.

Each of us have come here through the political process rooted in that historic assembly in Portland so long ago.

To each of you, I acknowledge that common sense of pride which I know we share.

Members of the House and Senate: for eight years I served with you, and for four years I worked for you as your Attorney General.

From you, I learned that the sincere desire to serve well is not the sole possession of one political party, just as I learned that no single branch of government has every solution to every problem.

I know from personal experience the sacrifice you make to come here to represent your neighbors.

I am proud to have come from your ranks.

I pledge to work with you in a spirit of trust and respect.

You will find me always willing to listen and to hear and to solve our differences in a spirit of compromise.

I am proud now to assume the office once entrusted to Joshua Chamberlain, Percival Baxter and my distinguished predecessors who honor us with their presence tonight: Governor Cross, Governor Muskie, Governor Haskell and Governor Curtis.

I am honored, above all, by the source of our mandate—the decent and generous people of the State of Maine: the millworker from Millinocket, the waitress from Portland, the teacher from Biddeford and the shopkeeper from Lewiston.

I will not forget them.

We begin our task with their spirit of integrity, with their dedication to hard work, with their concern for their neighbors and with their modest sense of what good government can do to preserve and enhance our way of life.

Maine can take pride in its record of leadership among the states.

A few years ago, we set an example for the nation in our determination to preserve our natural beauty and to protect our environment.

More recently, this state was among the first to recognize that its scarce tax dollars must be spent with prudence and restraint.

We can again set an example for other states by facing up to another great challenge and working together to again earn the confidence of the public.

In the next several weeks, this administration will deliver for your consideration messages addressing corrections, energy, taxation, economic development and other pressing issues.

History ultimately will judge the work we begin today, in substantial part, by the constructive legislation we enact, by the needless regulation we forgo and by the past mistakes we correct.

The measure of this Legislature, the worth of this administration, however, depend on something more than the quality of bills we pass or the number of dollars we save.

Our government does more than tend to a cash register.

Our government does more than mind an administrative store.

It sets the tone for civic dialogue.

It affects the level of confidence in the institutions of a democratic society.

It influences the standards of expectations which our people hold for themselves and for their communities.

And for many of those in need—for the people in Pineland, for the elderly in nursing homes and for the ill in state hospitals—government is often their only hope for a better life.

This administration will never abandon its commitment to them.

For us, who are blessed to live in Maine, our government must draw upon and respect the independence of our people, their pride in the place they share and their trust in one another.

In that spirit, let us renew today our pursuit of the goals we seek for those who call this special place home.

For our young people, who have attended our vocational schools, colleges and university only to find more attractive job opportunities far from their own backyards, let us continue to build better alternatives, quality jobs throughout the State of Maine, so that their home state can also be their childrens' home state.

This administration recognizes that progress will depend upon a working partnership between the government and the private sector to create those jobs.

And to those young people who seek to stay in their native state, let them know this administration will work for them.

For those who are entrusted with the higher education of our youth, let us recognize that the quality of their lives and the future of our state depend upon the quality of that education.

This administration recognizes that Maine's university ought to meet the highest standards.

It is our firm conviction that the University of Maine is an investment in the future of the sons and daughters of the working men and women of this state.

Let them know that this administration is dedicated to building a university of which we can be proud.

For those who seek to advance themselves through vocational education, let us invest in their future and in ours by the development of occupational training second to none, for our economic future depends on the quality of the work force we can offer.

Let them know that this administration has a special commitment to them.

And for our small businessmen and women, the lifeblood of our economy, I promise a government that knows when to leave them alone.

For our fishermen, and for all of those others who depend upon our ocean resources for their livelihoods, let us resolve that our ports be developed to meet their full potential so that Maine's earliest industries can again mean a full life for those who live along our coast.

For those who endure Maine's harshest climate to raise our potato crop, let us accept the challenge of their troubled industry and provide the support and leadership that is needed to restore the prestige of our principal crop and encourage the survival of the independent family farm.

For our senior citizens, we will encourage policies that recognize the valuable contributions they can make to our state, and we will oppose policies that undermine their fixed and limited incomes or which in any way rob them of their human dignity and their ability to maintain their own households.

Let them know that we will keep faith with them, as they kept faith with us.

For those who are victimized by crime, let us work for changes that will make our courts deliver justice swiftly and certainly, ending the delays that breed more crime and undermine confidence in our criminal justice system.

This administration knows that the first duty of government is to provide for the safety of its citizens, and we intend to meet that responsibility.

For state employees, this administration recognizes the contribution you make to the well-being of our state. Your dignity, your morale, your commitment are of genuine concern to me as we entrust to you the implementation of the plans we shall propose.

I pledge to work for fair and equitable agreements.

I pledge to bargain in good faith.

For all the people of Maine, you who come from Sanford and from Madawaska, from Rangeley and from Calais, from all the plantations and towns and cities of our state, I ask for your good will, your encouragement, and your counsel, for this government belongs to you.

To the members of the press, I welcome your watchful eye, your criticism, your helpful commentary, for to you are entrusted the means by which government and the people keep in touch with each other.

I pledge to remember at all times that the government's business is the public's business.

To the distinguished members of the Maine judiciary, I recognize the importance to our people of attaining the highest standards of wisdom, of integrity and of scholarship in our courts.

To that end, I promise to continue the good work of Governor Longley of seeking out the best of the Maine bar for the Maine bench.

Finally, to the members of the 109th Legislature, let us recognize our common constituency, our community of interests, that which binds us together, for it is our duty to reflect, to enact and execute the will of the people.

I ask for your good counsel.

Let us engage in open discourse, open disagreement, open conciliation and open compromise.

My door will always be open to you.

Let us remember, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, that "every differ-

ence of opinion is not a difference of principal." But let us put aside our pride and forge new trust in one another.

To all the people of Maine, too many of whom now regard government with distrust and suspicion, let us prove through our actions, through our priorities, through what we do and what we choose not to do, that our political process is worthy of their respect and their confidence.

Many of us have had to readjust our expectations about what government can do.

But that does not mean we should give up hope.

I believe that the choice we face is not between a strong government and a weak government, but between a government that works and a government that wastes; between a government that serves us and one that controls us; between one that builds opportunity and one that stifles it.

This administration will work to make government live up to the ideals of those who met so long ago in Portland to plan a state.

In keeping faith with them, let us work to end the alienation of the people from their government and encourage their participation in its work, its goals and its hopes, for this government belongs to them.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph E. Brennan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

GOVERNOR OF MAINE