

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE
ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION
December 1, 1982 to June 24, 1983
Chapters 453-End

AND AT THE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
September 6, 1983 to September 7, 1983
Chapters 583-588

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LEGISLATIVE ADDRESS

December 1, 1982

by

GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN

to the

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

One Hundred and Eleventh Legislature

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN
TO THE 111th MAINE LEGISLATURE
December 1, 1982

One hundred and ten times in the history of our state, new Legislatures have convened to do the peoples' business.

The elected representatives of our cities, our towns and our villages have met to fulfill their constitutional duties.

The first day of a new session is a time for enthusiasm, determination, and hope.

Today is the ninth time I have been privileged to be here on the first day of a new Legislature.

And I can well remember my first session.

I was elected to the House in 1964, helped, no doubt, by the great Democratic landslide that year.

One of the other green freshmen that year is in this chamber today.

He is the very able new President of the Senate, my long-time friend, the Honorable Gerard P. Conley.

Another member of the freshman class of 1964 is down the hall, presiding over the other body, Speaker John Martin.

All three of us arrived here, as many of you have today, not really knowing what to expect.

Surely whatever ambition we had was limited to trying to do a good job on behalf of the people who elected us.

I am fairly certain that Gerry Conley didn't come to the House in 1964 from the streets of downtown Portland intending to become the savior of the moose. And frankly that has been but a sideline for him. His major interest has been human services.

And I suspect, though I am less certain, that John Martin did not come here knowing Robert's Rules of Order as intimately as he knew Eagle Lake.

But we learned the procedures and the rules.

We made some mistakes along the way.

And we discovered, through a process of trial and error, that this system does work.

It does respond to the will of the people, the needs of the state, and the demands of the times.

Those of you who have been here before have already discovered that for yourselves.

Those of you seated here for the first time will find it out.

And all of you will leave here next May or June with a deeper, truer understanding of where Maine is today, where Maine is going, and what more needs to be done.

And so, I am pleased to congratulate you on taking office. And I welcome all of you — men and women, Democrats and Republicans, old friends and new faces.

And I wish each of you great success during the life of this, the 111th Legislature.

No one should underestimate the importance of the duties that await you.

It is your charge to approve an operating budget for state government for the next two years; to pass judgment on the men and women who will administer the peoples' agencies and those who will serve as judges in our courts; and most of all, to be the final voice on the public policies of our state.

The responsibilities are heavy indeed.

But I am hopeful that this will be another successful Legislature.

If I could, I would confine my welcoming comments to these few optimistic words.

But I cannot.

Another time, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to devote this day solely to ceremony.

But we do not have the leisure this year.

For the job ahead is a tough one.

These have been difficult times for our nation and for our state.

And yet, we have seen in Maine some encouraging signs of hope and of progress.

The private sector has enjoyed a period of growth in recent years.

Unemployment has been well below the national average.

The success Maine has enjoyed in preserving our unique way of life has made us the envy of many of our sister states.

The very name "Maine" has come to stand for some very positive ideas: excellence in workmanship; an unhurried, tranquil way of life; clean air and water; and the sense of community that has been lost in so many other places.

To us, and to those not so fortunate to live here, Maine is a special place.

But at the same time, there are difficulties that cannot be denied, difficulties that will influence you every time a bill comes before this body.

We remain captives of the troubled national economy, and while we are doing better than many states, we still live in a time when too many people can only dream of a better life.

We are faced with the problems of tax indexing, and specifically, it may fall to this Legislature to regrettably undo some of the work of the last Legislature — work of many of you here today — by cutting \$32 million, or some part of that amount, from programs that are not frills, but are, rather, programs such as school subsidies, homemaker services, guards at the prison, aides at Pineland, and so many others.

We face continued uncertainty from Washington and the undeniable need to reduce the enormous federal deficit.

And Washington may well make its cuts from monies that go to the states and cities and to our needy families.

And so, for you men and women of conscience and for the members of my Cabinet, and for myself, this will not be an easy year.

We will have to say “no” when we want to say “yes.”

We will have to postpone things that should not be put off.

We will have to disappoint many of our fellow citizens.

And we will find it impossible to do some of the things we came here dreaming of doing.

But these financial realities do not mean we should just pack up our ideals and go home.

For much is still possible.

We will be introducing legislation in such areas as economic development, human services, energy and natural resources, capital construction and government reform.

We can, and we will, continue to build a better business climate for our people.

And to that end, I will ask this Legislature to enact a major program to support the people who make their living in the tourist industry.

I will ask for your help in better promoting the products of our farms and of our forests.

And I will ask for a further commitment to improve our excellent vocational education system, so our young people can be better prepared to work in the world of high technology.

We can, and we will, take steps to remove great burdens from our people.

And to that end, I will ask this Legislature to enact a far-reaching bill to come to grips with the soaring cost of health care.

We can, and we will, improve our roads and bridges.

And in the process, I will submit for your approval a measure to solve once and for all the chronic problem of highway financing — and we will do it in a way that treats fairly all those who use our roads.

We can, and we will, continue our progress toward social justice.

And to that end, I will ask this Legislature to change our Constitution, so that it will finally guarantee full protection, full rights, and full opportunities to the women of our state, by enacting the Maine Equal Rights Amendment.

I can assure you, the next one hundred legislative days will be a time of trial and challenge for all of us.

But I also know that you have in both parties dedicated and capable leaders of good will, leaders who share with you and with me the determination to see the system work again.

And I can promise you full cooperation and assistance from my Cabinet, from my staff, and from myself as we work together in service to those who sent us here.

So, again, I congratulate you.

And I wish you all a happy holiday season, and a successful and productive session.