

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

December 5, 1984 to June 20, 1985
Chapters 384-End

AND AT THE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

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LEGISLATIVE ADDRESS

December 5, 1984

by

GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN

to the

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

One Hundred and Twelfth Legislature

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN
BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WELCOMING THE 112th LEGISLATURE
December 5, 1984

Mr. Speaker, Honorable Members of the House of Representatives.

You have come together, as have one hundred and eleven previous legislatures, to fulfill your constitutional duties and to do the peoples' business.

It is a tribute to our chosen form of government that the actions you take today, and the political process you have set in motion, differ very little from that which our predecessors utilized more than one hundred and sixty years ago.

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

Today is the tenth time I have been privileged to be here on the first day of a new legislature to participate in the reaffirmation of the process of self-government.

Our democratic system is slow, and sometimes frustrating.

But 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 soon find out.

And when we finish our work for this session in a few months, you will leave here with a deeper 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 112th Legislature.

No one should underestimate the importance of the duties that await you, or the difficult choices.

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 agencies of our government 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 optimistic that this will be another successful Legislature.

If I could, I would confine my welcoming comments to these few optimistic words, but I cannot.

For the job ahead is particularly difficult, and these difficulties will influence you every time a bill comes before this body.

The coming session will be filled with challenges, not the least of which is the uncertainty of our nation's fiscal health.

Washington has shown an inability or unwillingness to meet its responsibility for the enormous and growing federal deficit.

Nearly one-half of the entire national debt accumulated since George Washington has been created in the past four years.

Yet we see no clear indication or intent to address this crisis in any kind of responsible manner.

The President has repeatedly said that he will not touch defense expenditures or the Social Security system in any effort to reduce the deficit and our obligation to make interest payments on the national debt cannot be reduced.

These untouchable areas of the Federal budget amount to almost two-thirds of the total.

The reasonable person can expect to balance the budget or to reduce the deficit through spending reduction . . . taken from the remaining one-third of the Federal budget.

It can't be done.

And while the politicians spin their wheels in Washington, the economy is cooling down rapidly making it more difficult for the President and the Congress to fashion a realistic solution to the deficit problem.

If cuts are made, as the President insists, they will be cuts in programs.

And though the money is eliminated, the need does not go away.

The problems faced by Maine and other states due to these huge federal deficits is compounded by the new tax proposals advanced by the current administration which threaten many programs for states and municipalities.

While none of these proposals have been considered by Congress, it does not bode well for Maine and our sister states to have an administration in Washington so insensitive to the problems of towns, cities and states that such proposals should even be considered.

It is a great concern that our national government is unable, or unwilling, to meet its grave fiscal responsibilities.

In the face of such a monumental problem, will the State of Maine be responsible?

The answer is yes!

We face difficult times, but with the challenges come opportunities.

Let us look for opportunities which allow us to turn our challenges into successful solutions for the people of Maine.

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

Thank you.