

Maine SHRM State Government Affairs Update, 125th Maine Legislature Convention Edition

December 1, 2010

Please feel free to contact Sarah Conroy, Maine SHRM State Government Affairs Director with questions on any of this content at seconroy@gmail.com or 207.713.8337. Thank you!

125th Leadership

The first session of the 125th Maine Legislature is slated to run from December 1, 2010 through June 15, 2011. The leaders are:

Senate President - Kevin Raye			
Senate Majority Leader	Jonathan Courtney	Senate Minority Leader	Barry Hobbins
Senate Assistant Majority Leader	Deborah Plowman	Senate Assistant Minority Leader	Justin Alford

Senate Secretary – Joseph Carleton

House Speaker - Robert Nutting (Maine's 100 th Speaker!)			
House Majority Leader	Philip Curtis	House Minority Leader	Emily Cain
House Assistant Majority Leader	Andre Cushing	House Assistant Minority Leader	Terry Hayes

House Clerk – Heather Priest

Assistant Clerk – Sean Roderick

Speaker's Chief of Staff – Alison Sucus

House Majority Chief of Staff – Diane Johanson

125th Constitutional Officers

Secretary of State	State Treasurer	Attorney General
Charles Summers	Bruce Poliquin	William Schneider

More information on these leaders and officers may be found at <http://www.maine.gov/legis/>.

What's Next?

Not much is known at this point about what bills will be offered. Bills are in the Revisor's Office and have not been reported out yet. Senate President Raye did reference LD 1 in his acceptance speech this morning without detail. Check back here to learn what that bill and others entail as the session takes off.

The Republican majority had planned to merge the Labor Committee in with the Business, Research and Economic Development committee during the adoption of joint rules at today's swearing in. We learned today that the Joint Rules Committee will now take up the issue instead on December 15th. The full Legislature would then meet either on the evening of December 16 or the morning of December 17 to accept the new rules.

An action alert was issued to SHRM members in ME so that you might have a say in keeping the Labor Committee. For your convenience, here is a copy of the alert.

Hi All – I write just now on an urgent matter. I ask that you share this with your membership and others who might wish to weigh in. You may not have yet heard that the new Republican majority led legislature is planning to merge the Labor Committee with BRED (the Business, Research, Economic Development committee). While these bills would likely still be heard by BRED, it is too much for one committee not only in volume, but expertise. It is hard to see how committee members can be experts or even have more than a passing knowledge in all these matters. A move to dissolve a committee of such long standing certainly impacts our HR

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profession and our workplaces. We recommend caution here and a stop to the proposed change until the ramifications of the elimination of such an important committee can be explored. It certainly impacts our HR profession and our workplaces.

Please:

1. Call the Senate Republican Office (287.1505) and the House Republican Office (287.1440) to leave a message for Senate and House Republican leadership to ask them to oppose eliminating the Labor Committee.
2. Please call your own State Representative and State Senator to ask them to oppose eliminating the Labor Committee.

When you call, be sure to mention your name, why you oppose and that you are an HR professional in Maine. That makes you a subject matter expert as well as an important constituent! Suggested talking points follow.

As always, we recommend you ensure this position is not contrary to your company's official position on the matter and do not mention that you are representing your employer's views if you are not (if you are, so much the better!)

Talking Points on Preventing the Elimination of Maine Legislature's Labor Committee

- No need to eliminate something that is working with no evidence of cost savings or better outcomes to support the move.
- The Maine Legislature's Labor committee is a necessary part of legislating in Maine. The matters that come before the committee are many, of great weight and deserve fair hearing. *They are: Department of Labor; wage and hour laws; working conditions, including health and safety; workforce development; unemployment compensation; workers' compensation; labor relations; collective bargaining; retirement eligibility and benefits for state and municipal employees, including teachers; judicial and legislative retirement systems; Workers' Compensation Board; and Maine State Retirement System*
- Merging all the labor committee matters like Workers Comp, wage and hour and others will be too many matters to be considered by one committee in sheer volume
- This will also make the Business, Research and Economic Development committee too broad as it is the purview of business matters like licensing and trade zones. Specifically this includes: *Business regulation, including automobile and fuel sales; professional and occupational licensing; retail pricing; franchising; advertising; returnable containers; real estate practices; insulation; credit law (business related); consumer protection; Maine State Housing Authority; affordable housing; homelessness; Finance Authority of Maine (FAME); economic planning and development agencies; venture capital and trade programs; opportunity zones; import competition; product marketing; public services; research and development; technology commercialization; technology transfers (Maine Science and Technology Foundation); tourism; and defense facility conversion.* Please see here for all current committee jurisdictions: <http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/committe.htm> .

There are no doubt other reasons you have in mind, please accept these as suggestions only, **but do act quickly!** The legislature convenes tomorrow and this will be addressed asap. This is not like legislative action where we might have breathing room and built in places for public comment. We need a groundswell of opposition to the elimination of the committee to ensure it does not become fact before we know it!

While there is a lot going on for your Government Affairs team with a new Congress and new Republican-majority Maine Legislature and a new Governor and cabinet, one thing I hope you will rely on is our biennial **Human Resources Professionals (HRP) Day!** We are already hard at work planning and ask that you plan to save the date of **Wednesday,**

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April 6th to join us at the Statehouse in Augusta. As we are still planning, we invite your input. If you would like to have a hand in the planning, please contact me at your earliest convenience. We are happy for suggestions as well as helping hands. Stay tuned as the program unfolds so you thank me for making you save that date!

If you have not already signed up for our legislative update list, please consider doing so at mainelegregupdate@gmail.com (enter "subscribe" in the subject line please). Or better yet, join our *Government Affairs Team* so you can catch a piece of the grassroots action! Please contact Sarah if you wish to join the team.

For more information/ongoing updates, please visit our Maine State Council Government Affairs site at any time <http://tinyurl.com/MaineSHRMLegNews> or consider following our efforts on **Twitter: @mainelyhr**

Thank you for your ongoing interest in SHRM Government Affairs.