

Maine Legislature

Speaker's Office

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Speaker Eves calls for focus on strengthening Maine's economy, growing middle class

Good morning, I am Rep. Mark Eves from North Berwick -- the Speaker of the Maine House.

Thank you for tuning in.

It is truly an honor to serve the people of Maine.

This week the newly elected legislature officially began its work.

The challenges before us are great.

We face a sluggish Maine economy with 50,000 Maine people still out of work. While many states in the country are recovering from the recession, Maine's economy has slipped backwards.

Maine was the only state in New England where the economy shrank last year and we were one of three states in the nation to have revenues fall below projections.

We must do better.

While we face this significant economic challenge, we must also address our ongoing budget challenges. Governor LePage released his budget proposal yesterday and we are deeply concerned that it will further damage Maine's economy and our efforts to strengthen and grow the middle class.

We need solutions that truly reform government and make it work better for the people. We need a budget that invests in education, job creation, healthy families, and lowering our energy costs. This is what will get our economy back on track. This is real fiscal responsibility, and it's just common sense.

We can't cut our way to prosperity. We must outline a vision for economic growth in our state. That means developing (1) Maine's workforce, (2) Strengthening Maine's public schools, (3) Lowering health care and energy costs for more Maine families and small businesses, and (4) Investing in Maine's future through research and development and roads and bridges.

We must work to put more money in the pockets of Maine families and small businesses – so they can spend it locally and help create jobs on our Main Streets.

We have a lot of work to do. There is no doubt. But we knew that when we signed up for the job. And it is what the people of Maine need us to do. To get things done, we must work together. The challenges we face are too big for one party to solve alone.

We need to come together in order to solve our problems. We must do better, and if everyone pitches in, we can make Maine a better state.

We want to work with our Republican colleague in the legislature and the Governor to move Maine forward. While we might not always agree, we will always seek common ground to strengthen the economy and grow the middle class.

Thank you for listening; I'm Speaker Mark Eves from North Berwick.