

MAINE ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE WORKING LIST

March 5, 2010

<u>LD #</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>POLICY AREA</u>
192	An Act to Index the State Minimum Wage to Inflation	Rep. John Tuttle (D-Sanford)	Workplace Issues
1565	An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the Knowing Misclassification of Construction Workers	Rep. John Martin (D-Eagle Lake)	Workplace Issues
1588	An Act to Change the Penalties for Writing Bad Checks	Rep. Michael Shaw (D-Standish)	Workplace Issues
1626	An Act to Amend the Unemployment Compensation Laws Regarding Vacation Pay	Speaker Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven)	Workplace Issues
1665	An Act to Prevent the Spread of H1N1	President Libby Mitchell (D-Vassalboro)	Workplace Issues
20	An Act to Require Insurance Companies to Cover the Cost of Prosthetics	Rep. Mark Bryant (D-Windham)	Healthcare
425	An Act to Require Private Insurance Coverage for Certain Services for Children With Disabilities	Rep. Gary Connor (D-Kennebunk)	Healthcare
821	An Act to Support Collection and Proper Disposal of Unwanted Drugs	Rep. Anne Perry (D-Calais)	Healthcare
1198	An Act to Reform Insurance Coverage to Include Diagnosis for Autism Spectrum Disorders	Sen. Peter Bowman (D-Kittery)	Healthcare
1339	An Act to Improve Oversight of Pharmaceutical Purchasing	Rep. Sharon Treat (D-Hallowell)	Healthcare
1620	An Act to Protect Health Care Consumers From Catastrophic Debt	Rep. Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham)	Healthcare
1708	An Act to Expand the Opportunities for Persons to Acquire Health Care Coverage Under the State's "Mini-COBRA" Program	Rep. Ed Mazurek (D-Rockland)	Healthcare
1773	An Act to Improve Dental Insurance Coverage for Maine Children	Sen. Justin Alford (D-Portland)	Healthcare
272	An Act to License Home Building and Improvement Contractors	Rep. Bruce MacDonald (D-Boothbay)	Business Regulation
1256	An Act to Prohibit Pre-dispute Mandatory Binding Arbitration Clauses in Consumer Contracts	Rep. Sean Flaherty (D-Scarborough)	Business Regulation
1569	An Act to Clarify the Informed Growth Act	Rep. Stephen Beaudette (D-Biddeford)	Business Regulation
1677	An Act to Protect Minors From Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices	Sen. Elizabeth Schneider (D-Orono)	Business Regulation
1706	An Act to Create the Children's Wireless Protection Act	Rep. Boland (D-Sanford)	Business Regulation
1779	An Act to Prohibit Surcharges on the Use of Debit Cards	Rep. Sharon Treat (D-Hallowell)	Business Regulation
1662	An Act to Improve Maine's Air Quality and Reduce Regional Haze at Acadia National Park and Other Federally Designated Class I Areas	Sen. Seth Goodall (D-Richmond)	Environmental



MERI WORKING LIST BILL DESCRIPTIONS

This report is the Maine Economic Research Institute's (MERI) most recent Watch List of proposed legislation. This legislation is of interest to Maine employers because of the impact or potential impact to their businesses and the Maine economy. This list was developed by MERI's Economic Advisory Board, which comprises governmental relations professionals of many of Maine's most respected business associations and industry trade groups, including the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Maine Merchants Association, the Maine Auto Dealers Association, the Maine Motor Transport Association, the Maine Forest Products Council, the Maine Association of Health Plans, the Maine Beverage Association, and the Maine Restaurant Association.

The MERI Watch List is a fluid document, and is subject to change based on amendments, the introduction of new bills, and the disposition of the Watch List legislation. MERI will update the Watch List and be sure to inform elected officials of any changes to the list regularly during legislative session. For more information, please contact Chris Jackson (info@me-ri.org or 622-9075).

LD 192 provides for the state minimum hourly wage to be adjusted for inflation beginning January 1, 2010 and annually thereafter.

LD 1565 authorizes the Workers' Compensation Board to issue a stop-work order if a hiring agent or construction subcontractor has knowingly misrepresented one or more employees as independent contractors, knowingly failed to provide a workers' compensation insurance policy or knowingly provided false, incomplete or misleading information to the board concerning the number of employees. This bill also prohibits that hiring agent or construction subcontractor from performing work on a public building or other public works for a period of 3 years.



LD 1588 increases the maximum civil penalty for passing bad checks from \$50 to \$150. This penalty, in addition to reasonable attorney's fees, may be imposed by the court when the person liable does not pay the amount of the check, plus costs and interest, before the hearing.

LD 1626 removes the restriction in current law that disqualifies any individual from receiving unemployment compensation benefits for any week in which the individual receives, is entitled to receive or has received remuneration in the form of vacation pay. Passage of LD 1626 would further burden Maine's unemployment insurance trust fund, which has already raised taxes on Maine businesses by \$54 million so far in 2010.

LD 1665 would mandate a costly paid sick leave requirement on all employers in Maine. No other state in the country imposes this type of requirement on their employer community. As originally drafted, LD 1665 would require that employers with more than 25 employees provide their full and part time workers with one hour of sick time for every 40 hours worked, up to a maximum of 52 hours or 6.5 days annually. Employers with 24 or fewer employees would be required to provide one hour of leave for every 80 hours worked, up to a maximum of 26 hours or 3.25 days.

LD 20 requires health insurance policies, contracts and certificates to provide coverage for prosthetics.

LD 425 requires individual and group health insurance policies and HMOs to provide coverage for children's early intervention services after a referral from a primary care provider for children from birth to 3 years of age if the child has an identified developmental disability or delay. Health insurance mandates, such as those described in LD 425, LD 20 and LD 1198 increase the costs of health insurance for the business community.

LD 821 would create a "medicine mail-back" program that would require people to mail unused prescription drugs to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. This legislation would directly result in higher costs for the medicine people in Maine count on every day.

LD 1198 requires group health insurance policies, contracts and certificates covering fewer than 50 members to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for persons 21 years of age and under.

LD 1339 requires pharmacy benefits managers to register with the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, Bureau of Insurance before entering into any contracts for pharmacy benefits management in the State. The bill also sets forth standards for audits conducted by pharmacy benefits managers. The bill requires the State Auditor to develop audit procedures to ensure state agencies that have pharmacy benefits management contracts are compliant with state law relating to pharmacy benefits management and prescription drug rebates.

LD 1620 prohibits health plans covering Maine residents from including provisions that terminate payment of further claims after a defined maximum specified aggregate amount of health care claims has been paid on an annual, lifetime or other basis on behalf of an individual, family or group.

LD 1708 modifies Maine's so-called mini-COBRA law to make persons permanently laid off from their employment eligible to maintain, at their expense, coverage under their former employer's group health plan.

LD 1773 requires health insurance policies, contracts and certificates that provide dental plans to provide coverage of dependent children from birth if the policyholder elects to participate in the dependent coverage plan.

LD 272 This bill creates the Maine Home Contractor Licensing Act, which contains requirements for licensure of general contractors who work on residential dwellings.

LD 1256 prohibits predispute mandatory binding arbitration clauses in consumer contracts.

LD 1569 improves the Informed Growth Act (IGA) by creating an exemption to a retail business that locates in an existing building where the most recent occupant was a large scale retail business. LD 1569 also exempts renovation from the definition of large scale retail development.

LD 1677 prohibits the collection and use of personal information collected on the Internet from a minor who is at least 13 years of age and under 17 years of age for the purposes of pharmaceutical marketing in violation of rules adopted by the Attorney General.

LD 1706 provides that a manufacturer may not sell a cellular telephone unless, at no cost to the Maine retailer or Maine distributor, the cell phone and its packaging bear a warning label relating to the potential for brain cancer associated with the use of the device.

LD 1779 prohibits surcharges on the use of debit cards.

LD 1662 establishes reductions in the sulfur content of fuel oil, which has the potential to increase energy costs.