



MAINE EQUAL JUSTICE

Finding solutions to poverty and improving the lives of people with low income in Maine

The Governor's 2016-2017 State Budget



Impacts on Maine People with Low Income

State budgets tell us how state leaders plan to move people and communities forward. This budget proposal sends a very mixed and troubling message to Maine people with low incomes about their futures.

This is a summary of what concerns us the most about the governor's budget for 2016 and 2017. Public hearings on the budget will be held over the next few weeks. This is when the public can weigh in on these proposals. This budget is only a proposal at this point. It will go through many changes before it becomes final at the end of June.

You can help push for changes to the harmful parts of this budget. Maine Equal Justice Partners will send an email alert when the hearings are scheduled.

The governor's budget cuts important programs that create opportunity in Maine.

15 February 2015

Here are some of the most serious cuts to supports and services:

- Thousands of seniors and people with disabilities will no longer get help with paying for prescription drugs and other Medicare costs through the Medicare Savings Program. For others this help will be reduced.
- Hundreds of New Mainers who are legally present in Maine will lose help with housing, food and other basic needs through the General Assistance, TANF, SSI and SNAP programs. Many New Mainers are people who have fled life-threatening circumstances in other parts of the world.
- This budget cuts nearly half of all state funding for the General Assistance program, Maine's most basic safety net program; and
- This budget ends needed medical treatment for people in recovery and struggling with addiction.

The governor's budget helps some vulnerable Mainers at the expense of other vulnerable Mainers. These are choices that we should not, and do not need to make.

- This budget proposes to end waitlists for home care services for certain groups of individuals. However, it pays for those services with cuts to the General Assistance and prescription drug and health care programs for the elderly and the disabled.
- This budget proposes to protect payments to physicians who take MaineCare. It pays for that by cutting the Fund for a Healthy Maine. The Fund helps people to, among other goals, quit smoking and prevent obesity.

The governor's budget includes big tax breaks for Maine's wealthiest residents while the sales tax – a tax that impacts low-income people most – goes up.

- Corporate and personal income taxes are lowered, giving large tax breaks to the wealthiest Mainers.
- The sales tax would increase to 6.5%.
- The estate tax is eliminated, which helps mainly wealthy people.
- The State Earned Income Tax Credit that helps low-income working families is eliminated.