

# Maine Policy Review

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Volume 12 | Issue 3

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2003

## Letter from the Managing Editor

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### Recommended Citation

Acheson, Ann. "Letter from the Managing Editor." *Maine Policy Review* 12.3 (2003) : 6 -6,  
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol12/iss3/2>.

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## Dear Readers,

"Maine is on the move" was the hopeful motto put forth by Governor Angus King. If we as a state are on the move, what form is this taking? In what ways should we be on the move? Directly or indirectly, the authors in this issue tackle these questions in a variety of arenas, ranging from health care and economic development to campaign finance reform, tourism, consolidation of educational resources and school quality.

Maine is "on the move" in health care, and the Dirigo Health program has put us in the national spotlight. An Associated Press story by Glenn Adams recently noted, "Other states have tried—and failed—to create universal health care. Now Maine intends to show them how it's done." In this issue, state senators Sharon Treat and Michael Brennan and co-author Ann Woloson provide an overview of Dirigo Health—how it came to be enacted, its provisions, structure, financing, and challenges. Commentaries by Godfrey Wood, CEO of the Portland Regional Chamber, and Deborah Cook, executive director of the Maine Small Business Alliance, offer varying viewpoints on Dirigo Health from the perspective of small businesses.

Several authors suggest that Maine policymakers and citizens need to consider making some serious changes if the state is to be "on the move." William Knowles gives his personal views of Maine's economy, and raises the provocative question of whether Maine's culture or belief system may have contributed to restraining economic development over the years. John Melrose describes the situation of Maine's 77 "service center" communities, which are home to three-quarters of the state's commerce and jobs. To create vibrant service centers, he suggests that changes need to be made in state tax and expenditure policies, local government administration, the delivery of public services, investment, and local planning and zoning regulations.

Continuing the theme of economic development, our Margaret Chase Smith Essay and the article by Gabe Lynch and McConnon on the cruise ship industry in Bar Harbor both address tourism, offering suggestions for tourism development that go beyond just marketing. As Kathryn Hunt writes in her essay, we in Maine need to ask, "What do we want to be when we grow up?"

The cost and quality of education in Maine are concerns that have been addressed a number of times in *Maine Policy Review*. Now, there are projections of a sharp decline in our school-age population, and major public concern about school funding, including the recent citizen's initiative for a property tax cap. We revisit the important topic of educational cost and quality with two articles. Economist Philip Trostel suggests that some schools and districts in Maine may be too small to be cost-efficient. Consolidation not only could produce cost-savings, but also might enable more opportunities for students. Janet Fairman expands on the discussion of education quality. She notes that small schools have certain strengths compared to larger ones, and that these strengths could be incorporated in schools of any size as we redesign school systems with cost-efficiency in mind.

Our cover features a portrait of Senator Margaret Chase Smith by Robert Shetterly from his collection "Americans Who Tell the Truth." We think Senator Smith would be pleased with the topic addressed by Derek Langhauser in this issue: the December 2003 decision by the Supreme Court to uphold the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002, whose provisions aim at regulating soft money and issue ads in political campaigns. In this important election year, the nation and Maine can expect to see immediate changes in our electoral and political processes. We hope we will see more of the kind of truthful but civil dialogue championed by Margaret Chase Smith.

We think the articles in this issue give you something to think about. Hope you enjoy them.

  
Ann Acheson