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Letter from the Guest Editor

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Dear Readers,

As a gerontologist (someone who studies old age and the aging process), it may come as no surprise that I would argue that there is no more noteworthy a phenomenon sweeping through the state of Maine than the aging of its citizenry. You may be thinking that aging is my business—of course it will dominate my thinking. Yet, if you will take the time to read the articles in this special issue of *Maine Policy Review*, I am willing to bet that you, too, will recognize the overriding significance of Maine's "demographic revolution." And, by significance, I refer to both the wonderful opportunities and the complex challenges that confront us as our parents, our children, and we ourselves survive into extended old age.

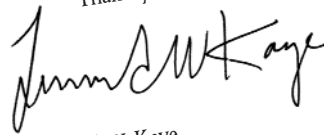
What follows is not a discussion of gloom and doom. Nor is it an exercise in naïve thinking. Rather, in this issue of *Maine Policy Review*, we present the reader with a range of perspectives, both personal and technical, illustrating the major transformation that is already well under way in the state's population profile. Here, you will find articles on the impact that population aging is having on our family life, housing, long-term care system, economy, art and culture, education, and our own vision of what it means to live and grow old in Maine. A wide range of authorities and keen-eyed observers of the aging experience—from both within and beyond the boundaries of our state (several of them "elders" themselves)—have contributed their insights in the articles in this

issue, including Nancy Grape, Helen Miltiades, Paul Saucier, Julie Fralich, Stephen Golant, Frank O'Hara, Sandra Butler, Laurie Lachance, Lois Lamdin, Willard Hertz, and Harry Sky. Taken together, their messages paint in no uncertain terms a dramatically changing human and economic landscape—one that I firmly believe provides us with the unique opportunity to reinvent ourselves and, in the process, make the state of Maine a national model of how state government and its people can give back to and benefit from its elders.

I have been honored to serve as a special editor in assembling the wonderful compilation of articles contained within. It has been a joy working with Kathryn Hunt and Ann Acheson at the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy during the past year on this project. Kathryn and Ann certainly represent an extraordinary editorial team, bringing great expertise and class to the process.

I am hopeful that this issue will become a standing reference source for policymakers, program planners, students, and so many others who feel strongly about the future of an aging Maine and nation.

Thank you.



Lenard W. Kaye