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The Lobbyist No. 31 (Winter 2001)

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Maine Women's Lobby

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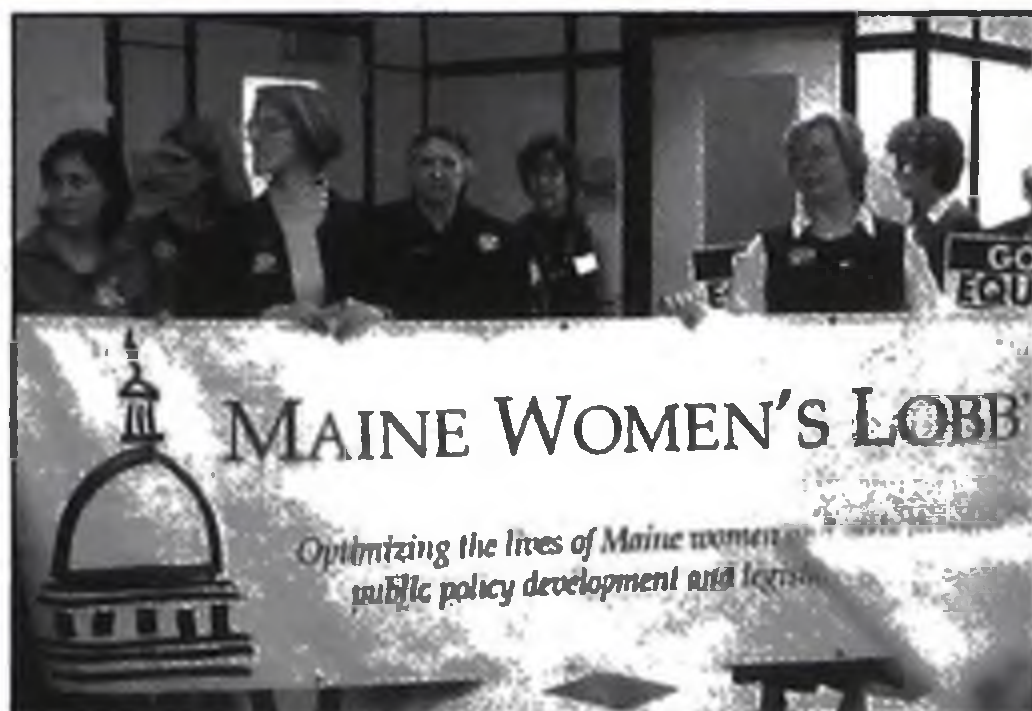
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Laura Fortman (at podium), Rep. Boyd Marley, and Chellie Pingree at the Equal Pay Day press conference.



Above: Liz Keith, Rep. Peggy Rotundo, Rep. Deb Simpson, Rep. Deb Hutton, and Carol Clapp show their support for fair pay.



a publication of the
**MAINE
WOMEN'S
LOBBY**
and the Women's
Development Institute

MWL CELEBRATES GOUNDBREAKING PROGRESS ON FAIR PAY

After 35 years, pay equity regulations go into effect!

You may have read the recent headlines or seen it on the evening news: Maine has become the first state to develop guidelines for implementing a law requiring that women are paid fairly for the value of their work.

Maine's Equal Pay law requires that men and women in both private and public sector workplaces be paid comparable wages for comparable work. That law has been on the books since 1965, but it has taken a hard fought five-year campaign to bring the promise of fair pay closer to reality for Maine women. Maine Department of Labor guidelines will strengthen enforcement of that law and provide employers with guidance and an incentive to comply. The public comment period on the rules ended on April 2nd.

This ground-breaking progress was celebrated at a press conference organized by the Maine Women's Lobby on Equal Pay Day, April 3, 2001. Equal Pay Day marks the point -- four months into the new year -- when women's earnings finally equal what men earned the previous year. On a national level, women earn only 72 cents for each dollar a man earns, according to the National Committee on Pay Equity. A recent report by the Maine Economic Growth Council indicates that in Maine, women earn just 73 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Laura Fortman of the Maine Women's Lobby was joined by Senator Beth Edmonds, co-chair of the Labor Committee, Senate President Michael Michaud, UNITE Vice President Clayola Brown, Center for Policy Alternatives Senior Flemming

Fellow and co-chair of the Maine Economic Growth Council Chellie Pingree, the Maine AFL-CIO, the Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community, the Maine Women's Fund and other supporters of equal pay for women.

"We know that the wage gap contributes in large part to the high poverty rate among women and children in our state," Laura Fortman said. "Fair pay is an important issue that both men and women care about. When women earn more, the whole family benefits. Fair pay strengthens the economic security of families today and enhances retirement security for women tomorrow."

Maine's 1965 law is one of the few in the country that goes beyond requiring equal pay for equal work. It requires comparable pay for work that has comparable levels of skill, effort and responsibility. As *Fair Pay*, a report produced by WDI last June, documented, many jobs are segregated by gender, and female-dominated jobs -- nursing, clerical work, book-keeping, teaching -- tend to be undervalued by the labor market. "Far from being objective," wrote *Fair Pay* author Nance Goldstein, "the pay determinations in today's labor market originate from more than fifty years of attributing lower value to women's workforce contributions and less importance to women's financial needs."

In the last several years, the issue of equal pay has gained momentum across the country. Maine's law is the most comprehensive and may serve as a model for fair pay advocates in other states.

Our campaign was successful because it was a collaborative, multi-dimensional effort that drew on the expertise and enthusiasm of dozens of groups and individuals, both nationally and here in Maine. The Maine Women's Lobby and the Women's

Continued - see "Equal Pay" on page 2

page 1

EQUAL PAY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Development Institute spearheaded the state effort, educating policymakers about pay disparities, coordinating a coalition of allies, monitoring the Department of Labor's progress, and documenting how the wage gap deprives Maine women and their families of much needed income.

As a supporter of MWL and WDI, you helped provide the foundation for this remarkable success. Thank you!!

WDI RECEIVES SPECIAL AWARD

Earlier this year, WDI received a special grant from Partners in Ending Hunger during their Annual Acknowledgement Ceremony for organizations who participate in Maine Ending Hunger Week, which takes place during the week of Thanksgiving. Partners in Ending Hunger chose to highlight WDI "with a special award for WDI's work in empowering women." Thank you, Partners in Ending Hunger! We look forward to joining the scores of other groups who will participate in Maine Ending Hunger Week this fall. Ending Hunger Week is designed to build an alliance of individuals and organizations committed to the common goal of ending hunger.

FMI, contact Partners in Ending Hunger at 1-800-STOP HUN(GER) or www.endhungernow.org.

WLP CULMINATES IN DAY AT CAPITOL

by Erin Clark, WLP Regional Coordinator

Participants in the 2000 Women's Leadership Project came together in late February for an activity-filled day at the State House. The women, who attended trainings in Farmington and Ellsworth in the fall, took a tour of the State House, participated in a mock public hearing, and spoke with legislative leaders such as Appropriations Committee Chair Senator Jill Goldthwait, Senate Democratic Leader Beverly Daggett, and Senate Republican Leader Mary Small.

The day began with a tour of the State House where participants reviewed the legislative process and were encouraged by women in legislative leadership to participate in public policy and the democratic process. Most of the women had never been to the State House before and said they enjoyed the comprehensive tour. Participants also participated in a mock public hearing. Split into groups of legislators, proponents and opponents, the women debated a bill that would study the feasibility of paid family and medical leave. Following the exercise, the mock legislators voted overwhelmingly in support of the study bill.

The day ended with an observation of an actual public hearing before the Health and Human Services Committee and the distribution of participation certificates. One woman remarked that her participation in the Project has made her aware of how legislation affects her everyday life while another woman nodded and said, "I've learned so much too. I never knew that I could make a difference as far as legislation goes. Now I know how to contact my legislators or talk about a bill with other people. It feels good knowing I make a difference." The Women's Leadership Project was funded in part though a grant from the Jewish Fund for Justice.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

FORGES AHEAD

In December of 2000, the Women's Development Institute (WDI) received a grant from the Rockefeller Family Fund to conduct a thorough evaluation of our operations and infrastructure and to develop a plan to help WDI and MWL enhance our internal and external capacity. Lael Stegall and Barrie Pribyl have provided expert and enthusiastic consultation throughout the process, guiding us through a period of remarkable planning and growth. Two-thirds of the way through the strategic planning process, we are delighted to report the headway we've made in developing an ambitious but achievable plan for meeting the increasing demand and need for our work.

The strategic planning process was launched at a 1 1/2 day Board retreat in June, where we reviewed an assessment of our work and agreed on ways to enhance our organizational infrastructure. Board and staff worked hard all summer to strengthen fundraising, management and governance skills and systems. Extensive internal and external assessments during those months allowed us to refine a set of strategic priorities, which were unanimously affirmed at our second Board retreat in October. Those priorities include:

- Building sound and sustainable funding systems and sources to adequately support our work;
- Improving the communications and outreach capability of WDI to extend and deepen outreach to women and girls throughout the state;
- Building strategic partnerships with other Maine organizations working on the same goals and objectives;
- Increasing the capacity and size of the staff to meet the growing program and management demands of the organization.

Undoubtedly, we are at an exciting crossroads. Board and staff have a unified, clear vision of the greater role MWL and WDI can play in optimizing the lives of Maine women and girls. This spring, we will be refining implementation plans to address our strategic priorities and achieve that vision. Perhaps most importantly, though, the strategic planning process has affirmed that the values and needs MWL was founded upon over 20 years ago are as pressing as ever today.

With the help of our members and supporters, we hope to build stronger and even more effective sister organizations that are fortified to take on essential research, education, leadership development, and action on behalf of Maine women and girls. We look forward to sharing more exciting developments with you in the months ahead!

Special Mother's Day Offer

Mother's Day is coming soon...so what's the perfect gift for the woman who has inspired and supported you?

How about a gift membership to the Maine Women's Lobby?

Just in time for Mother's Day, mom will get an introductory packet including gift card, a Lobby brochure, and the most recent edition of our newsletter, *The Lobbyist*. Gift memberships are being offered at a special rate of \$25 - that's \$10 less than a regular membership. Throughout the year, your mother will receive:

- *printed and email legislative alerts on urgent policy issues;*
- *invitations to participate in our leadership programs and events;*
- *our quarterly newsletter;*
- *materials and support to become an effective advocate for issues she is concerned about;*
- *and information about other opportunities to make a difference for Maine women and girls.*

Sound like the kind of gift your mom would enjoy? Just fill out and return the form on the back by May 7th. Don't forget - gift memberships can be purchased for anyone year-round!

**Mother's Day Gift
Membership**

Order Form

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Your Email: _____

**Mother's Day gift memberships are being
offered at a special rate of \$25!**

Payment method:

___ check (please make payable to the Maine Women's Lobby)

Visa/MC #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Cardholder's signature: _____

The gift membership is for:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

**Please return by May 7, 2001 to: MWL, PO Box 15,
Hallowell, ME 04347 or fax to (207) 621-2551.**

Legislative Update

Below is a list of bills that are priorities for the Maine Women's Lobby this legislative session. Although we have not specifically addressed the budget bill in this section, LD 300 is probably the most significant piece of legislation that will be voted on this session. How money is allocated has an enormous impact on everything we care about: health care, child care, violence against women, etc. To emphasize the importance of this bill, we have included a budget "primer" on page 3 of this newsletter. Also on page 3 is a reminder about how the legislative process works. Keep yourself informed and be active on the issues that concern you.

Status at time of printing: OTP = Ought to Pass by the Committee ONTP = Ought Not to Pass by the Committee

Civil Rights and Anti-Discrimination

L.D. 512: An Act to Encourage HIV Testing of Pregnant Patients. Sponsor: Rep. Marrache (D-Waterville) Judiciary Committee. This bill would reduce the amount of pre-test counseling for pregnant women and replaces written consent with verbal consent. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: ONTP**, but the Committee recommended all stakeholders meet over the summer to develop a bill to address consent and counseling for all patients.

L.D. 974: An Act to Create the Civil Rights Act in Public Employment, Education and Contracting Act.. Sponsor: Rep. Waterhouse (R-Bridgton) Judiciary Committee. This bill would prohibit the State of Maine from participating in affirmative action plans. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: In Committee.**

L.D. 1396: An Act to Encourage and Support a Mother's Decision to Breast-Feed in the State. Sponsor: Rep. Simpson, (D- Auburn) Judiciary Committee. This bill amends the Maine Human Rights Act to declare that a mother has the right to breast-feed her baby in any location whether public or private. **MWL Position: Support. Status: In Committee**

Economic Security

L.D. 17: An Act to Expand Earned Income Tax Credit. Sponsor: Rep. Povitch (D-Ellsworth) Taxation Committee. Last year Maine established a state earned income tax credit of 5%. This bill would expand that credit to 10%. **MWL Position: Support. Status: On Appropriations Table**

L.D. 1591: An Act Raising the Minimum Wage. Sponsor: President Michaud (D-Penobscot) Labor Committee. This bill raises the minimum wage to \$5.75 per hour starting 1/1/02 and to \$6.25 per hour starting 1/1/03. **MWL Position: Support. Status: 12-1 OTP**

L.D. 195: An Act to Place a Time Limit on the Award of Spousal Support. Sponsor: Rep. Collins (R-Wells) Judiciary Committee. This would limit the payment of spousal support to no more than half the length of the marriage for partners married under 40 years and cap the payment of spousal support to no more than 20 years for those married over 40 years. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: Killed.**

L.D. 489: An Act to Provide Pay Equity. Sponsor: President Michaud (D-Penobscot) Labor Committee. This bill proposes to make the first Tuesday in April "Equal Pay Day" and requires the Department of Labor to report the status of gender wage gap to the Legislature on that date every year. **MWL Position : Support. Status: Unanimous OTP**

L.D. 695: An Act to Expand Opportunities for Education, Training and Employment for Displaced Homemakers. Sponsor: Rep. Tessier (D-Fairfield) Appropriations Committee. This act will increase funding for Maine Centers for Women, Work, and Community to help sustain and expand their services throughout the state of Maine. **MWL Position: Support. Status: In Committee**

L.D. 1209: An Act to Assist Families in Meeting Their Basic Needs. Sponsor: Senator Rand (D-Portland) Health and Human Services Committee. This would increase the basic TANF grant by 5%. **MWL Position: Support. Status: In Committee**

L.D. 1258: An Act to Make the Unemployment Insurance Compensation System More Responsive to the Need of Today's Workforce. Sponsor: Rep. Matthews (D-Winslow) Labor Committee. This bill would make unemployment insurance accessible to thousands of Mainers. It prevents disqualification of persons who lose their jobs because of a child care or transportation problem, and it removes a provision in current law which penalizes seasonal workers even though they are actively seeking full-time, year-round employment. **MWL Position: Support. Status: Public Hearing 4/17.**

L.D. 1466: Resolve, to Study the Benefits and Costs for Increasing Access to Family Medical Leave for Maine Families. Sponsor: Rep. Norbert (D-Portland) Labor Committee. This bill will establish a commission to conduct a comprehensive study to assess the benefits and costs of providing family and medical leave benefits. **MWL Position: Support. Status: 11/1 OTP**

L.D. 1624: An Act Concerning the Payment of Child Support. Sponsor Rep. Hawes (D-Standish) Judiciary Committee. This bill would require employers to report the name and address of persons hired on a contract basis, and dedicates excess funds collected to go toward TANF benefits. **MWL Position: Support. Status: Carried over to next session.**

Contact your legislators and speak out about these bills that concern you!

For Senators call 1-800-423-6900 (TDD: 287-1583)

For Representatives call 1-800-423-2900 (TDD: 287-4469)

Healthcare and Reproductive Rights

L.D. 119: An Act to Ban Partial-Birth Abortion in the Third Trimester Except to Save the Life of the Mother. Sponsor: Rep. Davis (R-Falmouth) Judiciary Committee. This removes the exception that protects the “health” of the woman as a valid reason for having an abortion. Current Maine law restricts post-viability abortion to cases where the life or health of the woman is in danger. By removing the health exception, this bill could grievously threaten the safety or future fertility of a woman in a crisis pregnancy. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 8/5 ONTP**

L.D. 135: An Act to Ban Partial-Birth Abortion. Sponsor: Sen. Davis (R-Piscataquis) Judiciary Committee. This is virtually identical to the abortion ban referendum defeated by voters in 1999. It would prohibit physicians from choosing the most appropriate method of termination required when a woman’s health is threatened by a pregnancy. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 13/0 ONTP**

L.D. 540: An Act to Coordinate and Improve Access to Health Care for Women. Sponsor: Rep. Jacobs (D-Turner) Health and Human Services Committee. Directs the Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health to apply for a federal grant to fund a coordinator for women’s health services and build partnerships with community-based organizations, academic institutions and federal agencies. **MWL Position: Support. Status: Unanimous OTP**

L.D. 1204: An Act to Preserve the Life of and Health of Women. Sponsor: Sen. Kneeland (R-Aroostook) Judiciary Committee. This bill has two components. One, that abortions have excessive and intrusive reporting requirements and two, that abortions be prohibited after 20 weeks. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 10/3 ONTP**

L.D. 1261: An Act to Promote Abstinence Only Education. Sponsor: Rep. MacDougall (R-North Berwick) Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. This bill suggests curriculum and materials emphasizing abstinence for sex education and human sexuality instruction in public schools. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 11/2 ONTP**

L.D. 1303: An Act to Increase Access to Health Care. Sponsor: Speaker Saxl (D-Portland) Health and Human Services Committee. This bill contains a number of provisions to expand access to health care. It would increase eligibility for Medicaid to parents. It would provide Medicaid eligibility to childless adults and increase the tobacco tax by 50 cents per pack and establish the Maine Health Access fund. **MWL Position: Support. Status: In Committee**

L.D. 1391: An Act to Ensure Safety Health Standards in Outpatient Medical or Surgical Facilities. Sponsor: Rep. Kasprzak (R-Newport) Judiciary Committee. This bill requires that facilities in which abortions are performed, other than hospitals, be defined as “ambulatory surgical facilities.” This bill is another anti-choice strategy to impose excessive and unnecessary regulations on abortion providers. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 9/4 ONTP**

L.D. 1406: An Act Creating Offenses Against Unborn Children. Sponsor: Rep. Andrews (R-York) Criminal Justice Committee. This bill creates a new class of crimes against “unborn children.” Intentionally causing the death of an unborn child would be treated the same as murder under the law. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 10/2 ONTP**

L.D. 1494: An Act to Require Parental Notification of Abortion. Sponsor: Rep. MacDougall (R-North Berwick) Judiciary Committee. This bill requires notification of a parent or other adult family member before an abortion can be performed or induced on a minor. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 9/4 ONTP**

L.D. 1602: An Act to Prevent Violence Against Pregnant Mothers. Sponsor: Rep. Mendros (R-Lewiston) Criminal Justice Committee. This bill creates a new crime against unborn children and pregnant women. It is unnecessary because Maine law already allows the court to take into consideration “aggravating and mitigating” factors when making sentencing decisions. Therefore, a woman’s pregnancy would already be considered if a violent act is committed against her. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: Tabled**

L.D. 1670: An Act Regarding Child Abandonment. Sponsor: Sen Kilkelly (D-Lincoln) Judiciary Committee. This bill is similar to “safe surrender” legislation that is being proposed in numerous states. As written, this bill raises several concerns, specifically the bill creates an affirmative defense (not immunity) to the crime of abandonment of a child 31 days or younger when delivered safely to a hospital room, police officer, firefighter, medical service provider or hospital staff member. The committee is working to fix concerns raised at the public hearing. **MWL Position: Neither for nor against. Status: Carried over to next session.**

L.D. 1689: An Act to Amend the State’s Abortion Reporting Law. Sponsor: Sen. Kneeland (R-Aroostook) Judiciary Committee. This bill would require reports to DHS providing very specific information about each abortion performed, and makes failure to report a class D crime, while falsifying a report would result in up to \$1000 in fines. **MWL Position: Oppose. Status: 9/3 ONTP**

Freedom from Violence

L.D. 352: Funding for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program. Sponsor: Rep. Norbert (D-Portland) Judiciary Committee. This creates a position in the Attorney General’s office to coordinate the SANE program. **MWL Position: Support. Status: 12/1 OTP**

L.D. 524: An Act to Fund Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Intervention Prevention Programs. Sponsor: Rep. Colwell (D-Gardiner) Appropriations Committee. This bill would provide funding for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and intervention by allocating \$4.8 million per year to direct services for victims. Of that, \$1,200,400 would go toward school-based prevention work. **MWL Position: Support. Status: In Committee**

BUDGET BASICS

An introduction to understanding the State Budget

By Eliza Townsend, Executive Director of the Maine League of Conservation Voters, former Representative and co-chair of the Appropriations Committee

The Budget(s)

The state of Maine operates on a biennial budget, meaning it develops a budget for two years at a time. The Governor presents a proposed budget to the Legislature early in the beginning of the First Regular Session of the Legislature for its review. Maine's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 (in contrast to the federal government and many municipalities) and the fiscal year is referred to by the year in which it ends. We are currently in FY 01, for instance, and the Governor's proposed biennial budget covers the fiscal years FY 02 and 03.

The timing of the fiscal years and of the Legislature's passage of the budget are critical, because unless a budget is in place by midnight on June 30, no government functions can continue. In 1991 the Governor and lawmakers failed to reach agreement on a budget before July 1, triggering a shutdown.

Maine in fact has at least two distinct budgets. The Highway Fund Budget derives revenues from the gasoline tax and a variety of fees and fines and is used for transportation purposes such as highway maintenance and funding the State Police. It is reviewed by the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. The General Fund Budget derives revenues primarily from the income and sales tax (both individual and corporate) lottery ticket sales, and a variety of fees and fines. (There are other revenue sources, such as federal and dedicated funds, which are allocated in sections of the General Fund budget.) It is reviewed by the Legislature's Joint standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. The two budgets were constitutionally separated in the 1950's. Each budget has the same structure.

The budget is broken into two basic parts: Part I and Part II. Part I funds current services, with a built-in inflation factor. It is sometimes referred to as what is needed to "keep the store open." In other words, it is the cost to continue all obligations including those that are constitutional (i.e. debt service on general fund bonds); statutory (i.e. K-12 per pupil guarantees set in law); and legal (i.e. the AMHI consent decree.)

Part II consists of new and expanded programs, usually those initiatives which form the cornerstones of the Governor's agenda, and the reorganizations of state agencies. Because it is in addition to the Part I budget, Part II is sometimes referred to as a supplemental budget. This can be confusing because many Legislative sessions begin with a smaller supplemental budget needed to adjust spending levels in a limited number of programs. Such a supplemental can be necessary to cover shortfalls or spend a surplus. In times of budgetary retrenchment such as the early 1990's a supplemental is a reduction or flat-funded budget.

How to Read It

A budget is further broken down into a series of parts, labeled alphabetically. Part A-1 adjusts spending levels in the General Fund via appropriations (spending) or deappropriations (cuts). Deappropriations appear in parentheses.

The budget also allocates funds from other sources: federal funds, federal block grants, and dedicated revenues, known as Other Special Revenues. Examples of Other Special Revenue accounts include revenues from certain licenses dedicated to programs in the Department of Marine Resources. There are many such special revenue accounts, including the Fund for a Healthy Maine, which derives from Tobacco Settlement payments. A quick way to recognize whether you are in a General Fund section or another is to note the verb. General Funds are appropriated, all non-General Fund revenues are allocated. Also, each section begins with language spelling out the funding source, i.e. "There are appropriated from the General Fund for the fiscal year XX to the departments listed the following sums."

Within the section, spending is organized by department in alphabetical order: Administration and Financial Services; Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, and so on.

Any additions to the budget follow these and are given their own Part, still labeled alphabetically. A completed budget can contain so many Parts they are labeled ZZZ, for instance, or QQQ.

Performance Budgeting

Beginning with the 2002-2003 budget, the Governor and Legislature are required to develop and enact a "performance budget." This method attempts to link agency budgets to strategic plans, with a focus on how spending will impact the public. The theory is to emphasize results over methods. The new approach, as yet untested, will change the way the budget looks and may alter the budget process as well.

Reprinted with permission from the Maine League of Conservation Voters.

HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?

Ever wonder how the legislative process works? Here's a quick overview! A draft bill is introduced by a legislator to the entire legislature. The bill is assigned to the appropriate committee, which holds a public hearing on the bill. Next is the work session, where the bill may be amended. The committee members then vote ought-to-pass or ought-not-to-pass and send it to the House and Senate with the committee's report. The bill is read twice, and then if approved moves on to a floor debate, where it may be amended. After final revisions, the bill passes through each chamber one last time for enactment. Any bill which requires expenditure of money must be approved by the Appropriations Committee. If a bill makes it through this entire process, it lands on the Governor's desk, who can then sign, veto, or decline to sign the bill.

For more information on the legislative process, guidelines for testifying at a public hearing, or tips for lobbying your legislator, contact the Maine Women's Lobby at 622-0851 or email MwomenL@aol.com

EXCITING CHANGES AFOOT AT MWL/WDI!

In addition to our legislative initiatives and programmatic work, there's always a lot going on behind the scenes at the Maine Women's Lobby and Women's Development Institute. The past few months have been especially busy. Our hard work on our strategic planning process has already begun to pay dividends. Below are just a few of the developments that illustrate the spirit of innovation and growth that characterizes MWL and WDI at the start of the 21st century.

In January, MWL and WDI moved into spacious new offices on Sewall Street in Augusta. Just a minute's walk from the State house, we've already had several legislators stop by for a tour! Our building is shared with the Maine Center for Economic Policy and our next door neighbor (and landlord) is the Maine Equal Justice Partners. We're delighted to be in a location with room to grow - and with easy access to the hub of policy making in Maine.

Thanks to a multi-year grant from the Lake Fund of the Maine Community Foundation, we'll need that extra room for a new staff person. Earlier this year, WDI received a grant from the Lake Fund for a part-time administrative assistant. Additional staff is one of the cornerstones of our strategic plan. We're thrilled that the Lake Fund has supported such a vital step. The addition of an Administrative Assistant will permit a shift in the responsibilities of current staff. While Laura Fortman remains Executive Director and continues to be responsible for lobbying, Liz Keith has been promoted from Program Assistant to Director of Development and Communications. This reconfiguration will enhance the fundraising, communications, and outreach capabilities of MWL/WDI. Congratulations, Liz and welcome, Carol Clapp!

Our strategic planning process has leveraged support on another front: our technology-based communications. The Rockefeller Family Fund has linked us up with TechRocks, non-profit technology consultants, to provide WDI with 20 hours of one-on-one strategic consulting on our internal and external communications needs. In February, Laura Fortman, Liz Keith, and MWL Board member Ruth Lachance met with Holly Ross of TechRocks to discuss website development, online organizing, and database enhancements. We'll continue to work with Holly and TechRocks over the next several months to develop a technology plan and explore resources for implementing it.

FORUM PARTICIPANTS RUN FOR OFFICE - AND WIN!

In the sea of political confusion surrounding November's presidential elections, we found a clear cause for celebration here in our home state. Two of the women who participated in our November 1999 Women's Political Leadership Forum ran for state office - and won! Deb Simpson was elected State Representative in Auburn, and Sue Hawes won a seat as State Representative from Standish. Congratulations, Deb and Sue! We look forward to working with them to protect and promote women's rights in their new roles as legislators. If this news inspires you to give running for elective office a try, stay tuned! We'll be hosting the second Women's Political Leadership Forum in November 2001.

THE 2001 GIRLS' DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE WAS SPONSORED BY:

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SAVE THE DATE

April 21, 2001: Women in the Trades & Nontraditional Occupations Conference. Sponsored by the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. Featuring a career fair and apprenticeship open house, the conference will be held from 8 AM - 5 PM at the Radisson Hotel in Cromwell, CT. FMI; call (860) 240-8300.

May 11, 2001: S.A.V.E.S.' 2nd Conference on Bulling, Teasing and Harrassment. Sponsored by Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services, the Conference will be held from 8:30 AM - 4 PM at UMF. FMI, call 778-9522 or email saves@ime.net.

FOURTH ANNUAL GIRLS' DAY AT THE CAPITOL A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

By Carol Clapp

Photographs by Rebecca Goldenthal

AUGUSTA - More than 80 "Girls' Day" participants blocked a wide staircase in the Hall of Flags as they grilled Angus King about his job and how he got it. The Governor seemed to enjoy their questions, ignoring a staff member's prompt to meet his next appointment.

The young women represented 29 schools from Fort Kent to Kennebunk. Hosted by the Women's Development Institute, the 4th annual "Girls' Day at the State House" featured mock legislative hearings and job shadowing of representatives and senators. Erin Clark, WDI intern, coordinated this year's event.

"I just want you to know that someday one of you will probably be governor," King told his attentive audience. "There are no limits to what is possible in government." He also mentioned that his wife Mary Herman once served as Executive Director of MWL, a post now held by Laura Fortman. He listed his 91-year-old mother as one of his top role models -- right up there with Thomas Jefferson and Joshua Chamberlain.

Divided into small groups, coached by mentors, the girls assumed roles of lawmakers and lobbyists during mock hearings in the Capitol. Two sessions handled an authentic bill to be considered this year: Legislative Document 1223: "An Act to Allow a School Board to Suspend a Student for Rest of Term for Violent Behavior."

Mock testimony addressed questions posed by role-playing lawmakers. One proponent explained how to determine whether or not behavior is violent enough to warrant suspension from school.

"Bone breakage would be a standard," said Chelsea Brugger of Charleston. "That and bringing a gun to school would be serious enough to deserve a longer suspension." Other would-be lobbyists said the severity of violence should be measured by counting the number of punches per incident.

Ironically, nearly all role-playing legislators declared that they would vote in favor of the bill, even though they heard much stronger arguments against than for the proposal.

"Our coach warned us about that," said Lauren Lobikis, a 7th grader from Brunswick. "She said not to be surprised if people already had their minds made up before listening to us. We were just pretending, but I guess that's the way it works in real life."

Brenda Sue Currier of Eagle Lake played the role of House Chair. In the end, she voted for the bill with an amendment allowing shorter suspensions for less violent behavior. "This has been so helpful for me," she said of the role play. "I've never been into politics, but now I know how it might feel. I learned more by doing it than just being told."



Girls' Day participants designing buttons as part of a "message development" exercise.

Throughout the day, girls met dozens of legislators in clusters and one-on-one. Besides Governor King, they were briefed by Speaker of the House Michael Saxl, Senators Beverly Daggett, Sharon Treat and Mary Small, plus Representatives Patrick Colwell, William Schneider and William Norbert.

Legislators encouraged the girls to become involved in politics and to run for elected office when they get old enough. They frequently mentioned that all of Maine's governors, thus far, have been men. The current House of Representatives is male-dominated, they said, with just 41 women among 110 men, plus there has been just one female House Speaker.

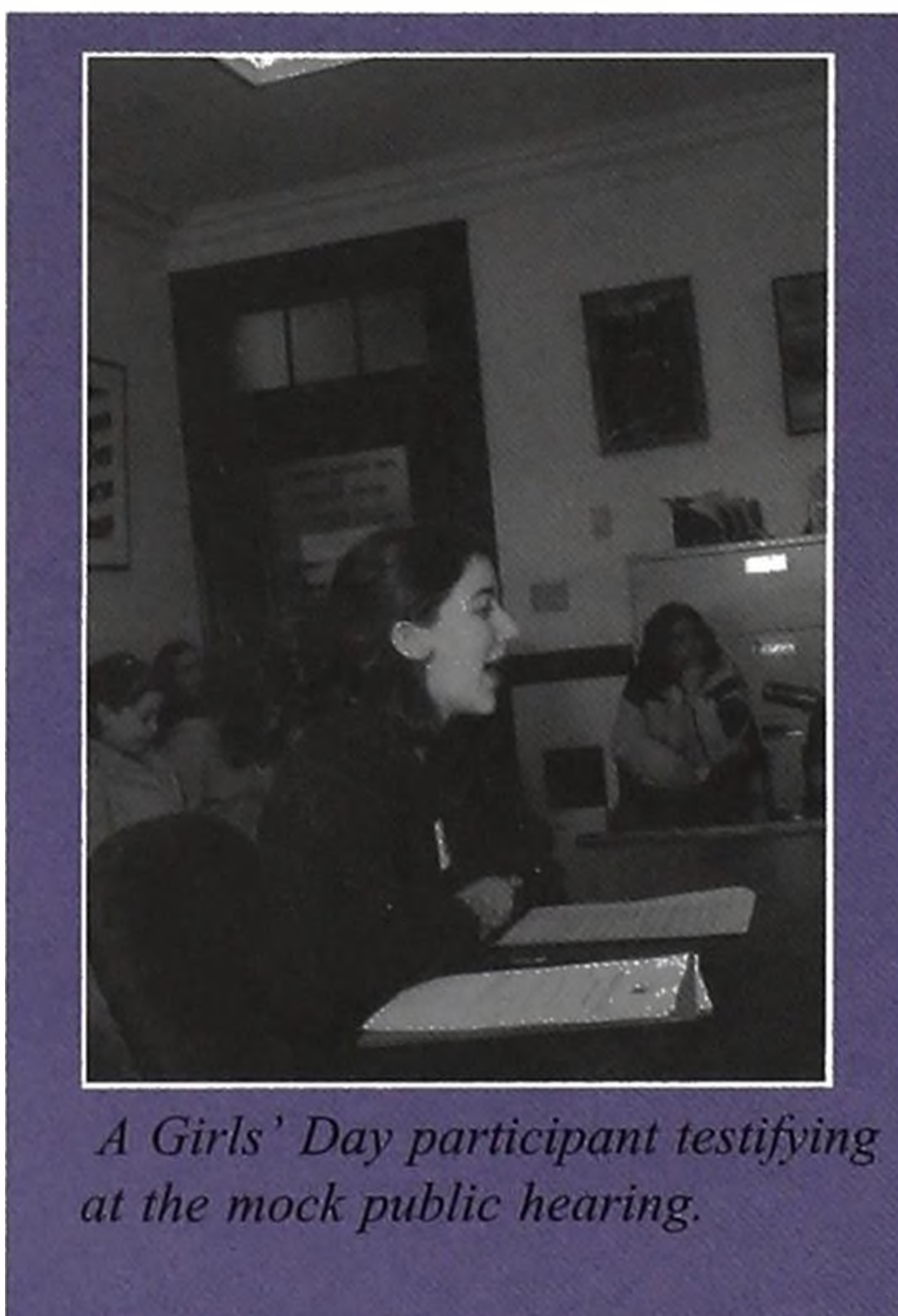
If the girls didn't get the message, it wasn't the lawmakers' fault for not delivering it.

"When women run for office, they win," declared Rep. Norbert in the House Chamber.

"But you have to get involved," echoed Rep. Schneider.

"I agree," said Jennifer Belanger, a student from Fort Kent. She said she intends to write to her representatives and tell them about her recent State House experience.

Girls' Day at the State House was made possible by the generous support of corporate sponsors. A special thanks to the adult mentors, lobbyists, and other volunteers who helped make this year's event such a terrific success!



A Girls' Day participant testifying at the mock public hearing.



Governor King with Girls' Day participants in the Hall of Flags

ABOUT THE MAINE WOMEN'S LOBBY AND WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Maine Women's Lobby and the Women's Development Institute work in partnership in optimizing the lives of Maine women and girls through public policy development and legislative action.

MWL (founded in 1978) is a statewide nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization. Annual membership dues are \$35. However, MWL is committed to representing women of all economic means and any contribution you are able to make entitles you to membership. Because the Lobby is engaged in lobbying activities, contributions are not tax-deductible.

WDI (founded in 1990) is a non-lobbying organization focusing on public outreach, education, leadership development, and research. Contributions are welcome and are tax-deductible.

The **Lobbyist** newsletter is published jointly by MWL and WDI quarterly. MWL also produces printed and email legislative alerts during the legislative session. If you would like to receive email alerts, please email us at MWomenL@aol.com and write "subscribe to email alert" in the body of the message.

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