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Fall 1-1-2006

## The Maine Women's Advocate (2006 - Fall)

Maine Women's Lobby Staff

*Maine Women's Lobby*

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## Keep Maine Pro-choice

Last session, the Maine Legislature considered several bills that would restrict access to abortion and roll back Maine's successful programs that prevent unintended pregnancy.

That's why the Maine Women's Lobby has partnered with the Family Planning Action Fund of Maine and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England Action Fund to launch the web site



"Maine is just one of four states with a pro-choice legislature and executive branch, and we can be very proud of our tradition of reproductive privacy," said **Kate Brogan**, Vice President of Public Affairs for the Family Planning Action Fund of Maine. "The commitment of Maine's elected officials on both sides of the aisle is enduring. However, freedom needs constant vigilance."

"Reproductive freedom is rooted in deep respect for women and families -- trusting them and supporting their right and responsibility to make reproductive health care decisions according to their individual beliefs and values and in consultation with their medical providers," said **Chris Quint**, Public Affairs Director with Planned Parenthood of Northern New England. "Maine policies and politicians shape women's futures. That's why it is up to each of us to find out where our candidates stand."

## TABOR ... BIG Problems. Vote NO on 1!

TABOR will hurt services  
Maine people depend on.

- ...health care
- ...public school education
- ...higher education
- ...transportation
- ...conservation
- ...state emergency response services

For more information, go to [www.notabor.org](http://www.notabor.org)



## Special Election Issue: What's at Stake for Women

### Vote NO on Question 1!

On November 7, Maine voters will consider the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). TABOR proposes two things:

- ◆ It limits state and local budgets to a formula of population + inflation, as measured by the consumer price index.
- ◆ It requires a 2/3 approval of a governing body (whether it be a town meeting, city council, school board, or the legislature) followed by a majority vote by citizens to raise any tax or fee.

While it may sound appealing, TABOR is riddled with rules and red tape and has too many unintended consequences. And, it won't cut taxes, close a single loophole, or eliminate any exemption.

Instead, TABOR proposes a one-size-fits-all formula for state and local budgets that would slowly and steadily result in cuts for funding of programs such as health care, education, and public safety.

A similar version of TABOR has been in Colorado's constitution since 1992. Colorado then faced serious problems because there was not enough money to run state operations effectively. The results of TABOR in Colorado were weakened roads and bridges, deteriorated schools, and an economy hurt by lack of money for development and infrastructure. In 2005, Colorado taxpayers voted to suspend TABOR.

Everything we know about the Maine TABOR proposal suggests that it is even more sweeping and stringent than the Colorado plan. Every local school budget, every municipal budget, and the state budget will be subject to strict and arbitrary limits under Maine's TABOR.

TABOR pretends that issues of government spending can be reduced to one arbitrary formula, regardless of human needs or the necessity of government to respond to new challenges. So what's at risk for women? Domestic violence and sexual assault services to help women in crisis; higher education, which enables women to access living-wage jobs; MaineCare, which provides long-term care for our elderly family members; public health programs that keep our children and families safe; and, economic development to secure a strong Maine future.

**With TABOR, it's all at risk.  
Join us in voting NO on 1 on November 7.  
FMI, visit [www.notabor.org](http://www.notabor.org).**

### Economic Security, Choice, and TABOR: Subjects of New Voter Guide

Check your mailbox! For the second time, the Maine Women's Policy Center has joined with the Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community and the Maine Women's Fund in releasing a guide which offers concrete information on issues of importance to Maine women and provides specific questions to ask candidates about where they stand on those issues.

Promoting women-owned businesses, ensuring reproductive choice, and protecting health care, education, and access to higher education from cuts are among the issues detailed in the guide. "From our work throughout the state, we know that economic security issues - from jobs that pay a living wage to affordable health care to entrepreneurship opportunities - are women's top concerns," said **Gilda Nardone**, Executive Director of the Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community and an author of the guide. "The voter guide describes what's at stake for Maine women and offers concrete tools and information for first-time and returning voters."

**Karin Anderson**, Executive Director of the Maine Women's Fund, states that, "Political leadership begins with informed voting. We are delighted to support this guide as the first step towards women's involvement in a lifetime of political advocacy. We hope this guide will give women the tools they need on how to register to vote, how to engage their candidates, and how to continue to stay involved with issues of concern to Maine women and girls."

The guide offers concrete information on issues such as family leave, access to education and training, reproductive choice, and women-owned businesses, and suggests questions to ask candidates to find out where they stand. Information on how to learn about a candidate, and how you can now register to vote using **Maine's Address Confidentiality Program** for victims of violence is also included.

**For a copy of the guide, visit:  
[www.mainewomen.org/homeMWPC](http://www.mainewomen.org/homeMWPC)**



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## Women's Voices, Women's Votes

### Candidates Address Women's Issues at Annual Breakfast of Champions

Another election season, and another Breakfast of Champions series drew gubernatorial candidates, policy makers and interested citizens to events in Portland, Bangor, and Presque Isle. "We know the first step into political leadership is participation," according to **Mary Denison**, Chair of the Maine Women's Policy Center Board. "We are delighted to offer this candidate forum as an opportunity for women to learn where candidates stand on issues of importance to them."



Mary Denison, Board Chair, welcomes the crowd.

In Portland, **Governor John Baldacci**, **Representative Barbara Merrill**, and **Pat LaMarche** attended the forum, responding to a range of questions posed by moderator **Professor Cabanne Howard** from the University of Maine School of Law. In Bangor, the same candidates addressed a large audience in a forum moderated by **Donna Gormley**, Anchor/Reporter with WLBY channel 2.



Governor Baldacci addresses the Bangor audience. Representative Merrill, Pat LaMarche, and moderator Donna Gormley from WLBY 2 sit left to right.

**Senator Chandler Woodcock** declined his invitation to the forums. "The purpose of the forum is to hear directly from the candidates

how their visions encompass the social, economic, and political needs of Maine women and girls. This is our opportunity to understand how their service would affect our lives," said **Sarah Standiford**, Executive Director of the Maine Women's Policy Center.

The events also honored **KeyBank** with the 2nd annual *Action Award* for their Key4Women program, designed to increase access to capital and networking for women business owners. **Steve Woods**, President of KeyBank Maine, accepted the award on behalf of Key Bank. "We are extraordinarily honored to accept this award from the Maine Women's Policy Center. Our Key4Women program truly was designed with the idea of economic empowerment in mind. We are working to give women business owners and managers - part of the fastest growing sector of the U.S. economy - the tools they need to succeed."

## Women's Health & Toxic Chemicals

### Policy Center Helps Launch Efforts to Engage Women in Advocacy for Safer Alternatives

Women have an important role to play.

That's the message of a new collaborative effort to engage women as advocates for a safer chemicals policy. We know that learning disabilities, autism, breast cancer, asthma, and other health problems are on the rise. Our environment at home, at work, and at school affects these health problems in a complex mix with social factors and the genes we inherit. In fact, scientists have linked exposure to toxic chemicals to 180 different diseases and conditions.

Research has also shown that women and children are disproportionately affected by exposure because our physiological systems respond differently than men's do to toxic chemicals, and we encounter toxins frequently in our homes, schools, and workplaces. Many toxic chemicals have specific negative effects on our reproductive systems and fertility.

"Simply put, our system to prevent exposure to dangerous chemicals is broken. Thousands of industrial chemicals are used in common consumer products. But no laws exist to require safer alternatives or safety testing for the vast majority of chemicals on the market," says **Mike Belliveau**, Executive Director of the Environmental Health Strategy Center.

The Maine Women's Policy Center recently joined with the Environmental Health Strategy Center and the Maine Conservation Voters Education Fund to kick off a new campaign focused on women's health and the environment. This cutting-edge, collaborative project is empowering women to act on their beliefs about family and environmental health by making it easier for them to engage in public actions - like meeting with others, sharing information with friends, communicating with policy makers, and voting - that will lead to change.

**Kristine Jenkins**, Project Organizer, says, "Women can take action to protect their own health and the health of their families. But it shouldn't stop there. We must encourage policy makers to advocate for a safe chemicals policy that replaces hazardous chemicals with accessible alternatives." The Women's Health and the Environment Campaign is engaging women in Southern Maine to advocate for environmental health.

To find out more, go to [www.ProtectMaineFamilies.org](http://www.ProtectMaineFamilies.org).

## Maine Women's Lobby Welcomes New Lobbyist

### Laura Harper Will Join the Organizations as Director of Public Policy

In September, we bid farewell to **Lauralee Raymond**, Maine Women's Lobby's Legislative Coordinator and Director of Public Policy for nearly four years. Lauralee moved out of state to try new things, leaving behind a legacy of legislative success, strong relationships with decision makers, and exceptional leadership within the organizations.

Ready to step into those big shoes is our new Director of Public Policy, **Laura Harper**. Laura is currently a Legislative Aide in the Senate Majority Office, where she supports several Senators in constituent work, writing legislation, and drafting press releases and materials, as well as working with organizations and advocates.



Laura Harper, cheerful about her new position

Laura has also worked with the Secretary of the Senate and has served over several years as a field organizer most recently with the No on 1 Maine Won't Discriminate campaign and with Planned Parenthood of Northern New England organizing the 1.3 million person March for Women's Lives. Laura currently lives in Hallowell with her partner, Lauren, where she is serving a three-year term on the Hallowell School Board. **Sarah Standiford**, Executive Director of the Maine Women's Lobby, said on behalf of the hiring committee. "We were particularly impressed with Laura's commitment to social justice and demonstrated ability to forge relationships with diverse legislators, activists, and constituents. I am delighted to welcome her to the team!"

## Maine Blueprint Project

### Progressive Organizations and Individuals Creating a New Way To Build a Better Maine

Imagine what life in Maine would be like if politics and policies were firmly grounded in progressive and socially responsible values.

More than 100 leaders representing 40 progressive organizations throughout the state spent nearly a year working together to describe just such a vision. Rooted in those conversations, a new consortium is forming with the goal of implementing a unified strategy that will sustain the work necessary to achieve that vision.

"Maine Blueprint Project is a 10-year strategy for remodeling the way progressive organizations and individual activists work together," said **Sarah Standiford** Executive Director of the Maine Women's Policy Center and Maine Women's Lobby, who participated in the work group process and is Chair of the consortium's steering committee. "It will also infuse new resources so that progressive organizations can increase our communication and messaging capabilities, apply innovative mapping and targeting technologies, strengthen our community organizing efforts, fundraise more effectively, and work together to win policies that will benefit Maine people."

"This effort is unlike any coalition or alliance that has existed in Maine before and is more encompassing than any one organization could be," according to Standiford. "Maine Blueprint will be the architectural framework for positive social change built by informed, engaged, and empowered citizens."

The Maine Women's Policy Center and the Maine Women's Lobby are hosting Blueprint's start-up interim field staff. Deb Hutton is serving as the Blueprint Field Organizer working intensively in the Lewiston/Auburn area to engage citizens in the elections. The formal launch of Maine Blueprint Project and its web site are expected after the November elections.

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