

MECEP Highlights

from over the last year

210+ media citations

Published **6** major reports and briefs and **40** blogposts

3 coalitions coordinated that focus on economic justice and tax fairness

Responded to **125+** requests for information and analysis from lawmakers, the media, and partners

90+ pieces of testimony delivered before the Maine legislature

Provided messaging guidance and communications support to partners and coalitions on **5** priority issues

\$120,500 secured for justice-seeking partner organizations in Maine

Appointed to multiple committees that advance **racial equity** and provide **tax, budget, and economic insights**

11 webinars and in-person events hosted for policy makers, advocates, and supporters

Leveraged support from **242** donors to impact the lives of more than **270,000** Maine families

Stay up to date on our work

sign up for our email list: mecep.org/engage



Putting analysis into action

“Supporting tax giveaway programs in hopes they will solve the challenges facing an industry or Maine’s economy is putting a band-aid on a problem, rather than **finding solutions at a deeper systemic level.**” — *MECEP Brief: Are Tax Giveaways Worth the Money?*

“More than ever before, **Maine workers recognize their own value** — and want employers to recognize it too.” — *MECEP Report: State of Working Maine 2022*

“Lawmakers must act to **protect the most vulnerable** Mainers while **taking on corporate giants** whose profiteering is making people’s struggles worse.” — *MECEP Report: Feeling the Pinch: Inflation and Corporate Consolidation*

“And until we **act decisively** to address the issue of **poor worker compensation** and low provider reimbursement, we all will continue to suffer the consequences.” — *MECEP Report: The High Cost of Undervaluing Direct Care Work*

“When working Mainers have the **opportunities and tools** to build a good life and can afford supports like **child care** so they can work, take care of their family, and keep developing our economy, it’s good for all of us.” — *Portland Press Herald Op-Ed: If you want to empower Maine’s workers, pay a living wage*

“We have the resources available to change lives and create thriving communities, and when we choose to **fund improvements to health and economic wellbeing**, the entire state prospers.” — *Bangor Daily News Op-Ed: Maine lawmakers can transform Maine with the next budget*

“The **child tax credit** has such a transformational impact on children’s lives that **every dollar spent on the credit has a \$10 return on investment** to society in the form of increased future earnings, better health, and more education for impacted children. That’s a huge deal.” — *Bangor Daily News Op-Ed: Stronger Maine child tax credit is key for a more prosperous future*

“Do we want to be lining the pockets of wealthy out of state corporations or investing in the **people and small businesses of Maine**? The answer should be clear.” — *Bangor Daily News Op-Ed: Stronger Maine child tax credit is key for a more prosperous future*



Maine Center for
Economic Policy

Delivering insights & analysis

BLOGS

New year, new budgets, new ways to put working families first

MECEP January 5, 2023

Categories: Taxes and Budget
Tags: Budget, Child Tax Credit, Children, Education, Federal, Higher Education, Medicaid, Wages



In passing the 2023 budget plan, our representatives took an important step in providing the kinds of tools Maine families need, including supports that make food, child care, and housing more affordable. As with every compromise, there are missed opportunities. Maine legislators now have an opportunity to pick up where the federal budget left off by creating the kind of investments that build the high-quality jobs Maine workers want and the services Maine families deserve, and ensure that no one is left behind. Here's a quick run-down of what the federal budget missed, and what's ahead.

Maine Center for Economic Policy

The Debt Ceiling — An

What is the debt ceiling?

Imagine you have a credit card with a limit of \$1,000. This means you can only use up to \$1,000 on your credit card before you must pay it off. The debt ceiling is like that limit. It's the maximum amount the government can borrow from the Treasury.

The government needs to borrow money sometimes to pay for Social Security or Medicare; support workers, families, and economic decline; make long-term investments in infrastructure; respond to crises like natural disasters. When there are downturns or tax cuts that aren't paid for, the need for borrowing commitments increases.

Congress sets the debt limit and can adjust it at any time. It has done so 29 times since 1960 — 29 times under Democratic presidents. If spending exceeds the debt limit, the government must raise the limit. The resulting default would cause serious harm to the economy and economic upheaval across the nation and around the world.

Why is it important?

If the government can't pay its bills, all Americans would be affected.

- Social Security, Medicare, and veterans' benefits would be delayed or cut.
- Paychecks disrupted for federal employees, military, homeland security, border patrol, aviation, food safety, and disease control.
- Tax refunds won't be issued.
- Programs that pay for health care, child care, and student grants disrupted.
- Safety nets that address hunger and poverty would be cut.

If the government defaults on its debt, the US economy would suffer long-term damage:

- When the government doesn't pay people and businesses what they are owed, the ripple effect could result in millions of lost jobs and the economy into recession.

POLICY RESEARCH

REPORT: How the Child Tax Credit was spent in Maine

MECEP May 13, 2022

Categories: Taxes and Budget
Tags: Child Tax Credit, Children, Economic Security, Economy, Federal, Poverty, Taxes



INFLATION AND CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION

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American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Information for Elected Officials

Our recovery from the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic will be stronger if we move forward together — or whether we leave people and communities behind. Thoughtfully all of us can make a difference.

1. How can Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds be used?

- Five main categories:
- Support public health expenditures
 - Address negative economic impacts of COVID-19
 - Replace lost public sector revenue
 - Provide premium pay for essential workers
 - Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure

2. How can ARPA dollars fund an equitable recovery?

- Direct resources to people and communities most impacted by the pandemic, including those with low wages, people of color, and families and communities with low income
- Dedicate funds to the greatest needs in our communities, including general assistance, housing and homelessness services, food and fuel assistance, opioid recovery and health care, child care, health care outreach and vaccination

See <https://www.mecap.org/ARPA-equity> on funding an equitable recovery & how much money communities are receiving.

3. How are other communities spending ARPA funds to advance equity?

- York County: \$1.5 million for new teen center; \$750,000 for new resource hub for social services and affordable housing
- Cumberland County: \$4.5 million for new homeless shelters; \$11.8 million for nonprofits
- City of Portland: Growing Childcare Grant to help increase availability of child care

POLICY RESEARCH

Policy Brief: Are Tax Giveaways Worth the Money?

Maura Pillsbury May 1, 2023

Categories: Taxes and Budget
Tags: Budget, Revenue, Tax Breaks, Tax Fairness, Taxes



LEARN MORE →

Framing the issues

Stronger Maine child tax credit is key for a more prosperous future

BDN by Opinion Contributor
April 18, 2023



In this March 7, 2020, file photo, a swing sits empty on a playground outside in Providence, Rhode Island. Credit: David Goldman / AP

The BDN Opinion section operates independently and does not set newsroom policies or contribute to reporting or editing articles elsewhere in the newspaper or on bangordailynews.com.

Josie Phillips is a State Priorities Partnership Fellow at Maine Center for Economic Policy.

At a time when rising costs for housing and child care are stressing family budgets, many working families are struggling to afford everyday essentials. By helping families afford necessities like groceries, clothing and child care, the expanded federal child tax credit gave children the stable foundation critical for their healthy development.

Maine lawmakers can transform Maine with the next budget

BDN by Opinion Contributor
February 23, 2023



Gov. Janet Mills delivers her State of the Budget address, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, at the State House in Augusta, Maine. Credit: Robert F. Bukaty / AP

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Garrett Martin is the president and CEO of the Maine Center for Economic Policy

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April 4, 2023

Op-ed: We all pay the price for ineffective corporate tax giveaways



By Maura Pillsbury, Maine Center for Economic Policy

Through taxes, the people of Maine provide the ingredients for a great place to do business – roads, ports, healthy families, an educated workforce and infrastructure improvements. So, it's sensible and critical that we scrutinize efforts that restrict these vital investments in businesses, people and communities across Maine.

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Commentary: If you want to empower Maine's workers, pay a living wage

Let's rein in the power of corporate giants whose profiteering is hurting Maine workers, families and small businesses.

BY JAMES MYALL SPECIAL TO THE PRESS HERALD

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122 COMMENTS



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Workers are the engines of the economy. Their labor, skills and contributions make the economy run, and they have been the driving force digging us out of a global health and economic crisis. And meanwhile, millions of people working full-time still struggle to afford health care and housing costs. We need to build an economy that respects working people – with quality jobs and tools to weather unforeseen emergencies – so Mainers can work, take care of their families and contribute to their communities.

Thanks in part to federal support, the economic recovery from the COVID-19 recession has been strong. While this is a relief to many working people and families, Maine Center for Economic Policy's *State of Working Maine 2022* finds vulnerabilities in the economy remain that block tools and opportunities from working Mainers. Now more than ever, Maine policymakers need to show that we care about our workers and must ensure they're able to take care of themselves and their families.

Lifting voices

"We live paycheck to paycheck and we're one emergency away from being without a basic need."

— *Brandi,*
food service industry



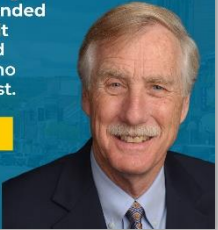
Advocating economic justice

THE FUTURE OF MAINE KIDS IS ON THE LINE.

Tell Senator King to make the expanded Child Tax Credit permanent and include kids who need it the most.

Contact King

Maine Center for Economic Policy



DON'T TAKE AWAY THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.

Tell Rep. Golden to make the expanded Child Tax Credit permanent and include kids who need it the most.

Contact Golden

Maine Center for Economic Policy



HEATING & HOUSING RELIEF CAN'T WAIT!

Testify on Emergency Heating Aid Plan (LD 3) Wednesday, 12/21 at 1:00 PM and urge your legislators to help Mainers struggling with the cost of heating and housing:

- In person at the State House
- Remotely by Zoom
- Submitted via e-mail

Sign up here: bit.ly/3V59VUw

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Thank you

Rep. Terry

for voting

to stand up against wealthy corporations and the loopholes they use to get out of paying local taxes they owe



Maine Center for Economic Policy

Thank you

Rep. Matlack

for sponsoring a bill

to stand up against wealthy corporations and the loopholes they use to get out of paying local taxes they owe



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Thank you

Sen. Libby

for voting

to stand up against wealthy corporations and the loopholes they use to get out of paying local taxes they owe



Maine Center for Economic Policy

Thank you

Sen. Brenner

for voting

to stand up against wealthy corporations and the loopholes they use to get out of paying local taxes they owe



Let's help Maine families **AFFORD THE COSTS OF BASICS**

EXTEND THE CHILD TAX CREDIT

"My chosen field required a college transcript to apply for entry-level jobs, but because of my debt, my transcript was withheld..."

This relatively small debt kept me from pursuing a career and kept me trapped in low-paying, part-time jobs for years, attempting to earn enough money to survive, pay my student loans, and save to be able to access my transcript."

Jillian, Brunswick

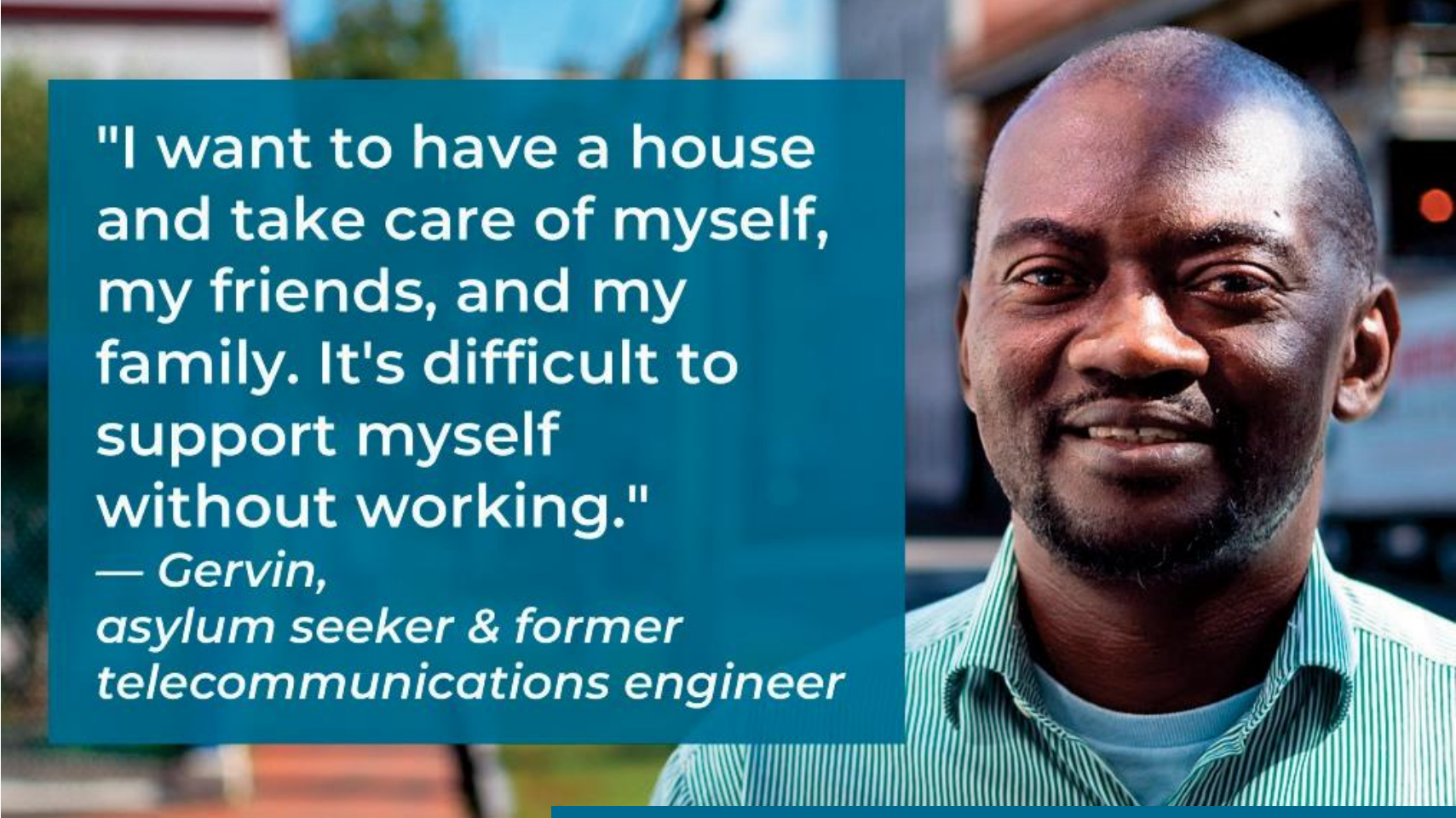
Had an outstanding balance of \$2000 because of a clerical error



Maine Center for Economic Policy

Maine lawmakers: end transcript withholding. Support LD 1838.

Lifting voices

A portrait of Gervin, a Black man with a short haircut and a light beard, wearing a light blue and white striped button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with buildings and trees.

"I want to have a house
and take care of myself,
my friends, and my
family. It's difficult to
support myself
without working."

— *Gervin,*
asylum seeker & former
telecommunications engineer

Partnering for change



Providing opportunities to learn

MECEP Policy Insights: Lunch & Learn

Yes, legislation can change lives

Solutions and actions to advance economic justice in Maine



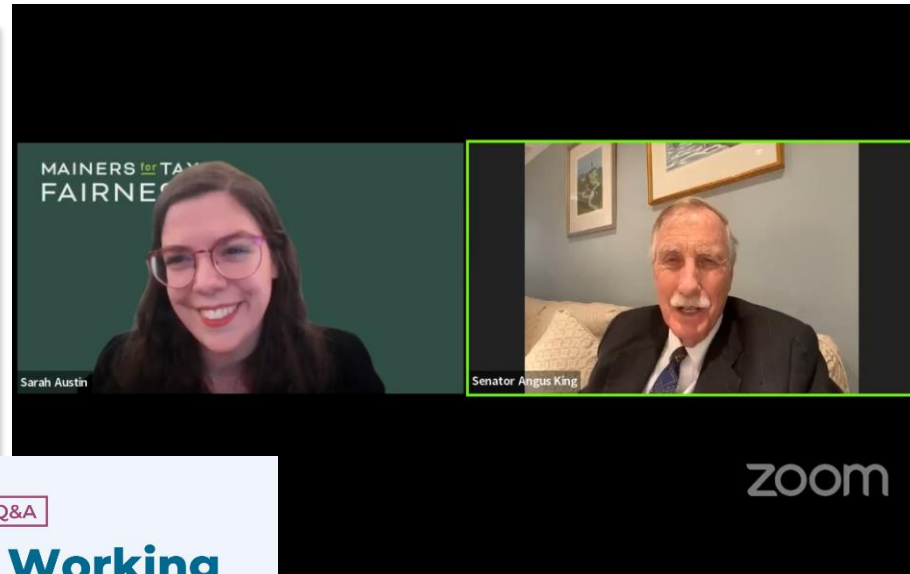
Karin Leuthy
Community engagement manager

Maura Pillsbury
State & local tax policy analyst

Ryan Tipping
Director of campaigns & strategy

Wednesday, March 1 on Zoom | 12:30 - 1:45 PM

Maine Center for Economic Policy



MAINERS for TAX FAIRNESS

Sarah Austin

Senator Angus King

zoom

MECEP Policy Insights: Conference

Challenging Corporate Power

Wednesday, March 22 on Zoom | 11 AM - 1 PM

Featured presenter:
Stacy Mitchell, Co-Executive Director
Institute for Local Self-Reliance




Conversation and Q&A

State of Working Maine 2021:

COVID-19 and Maine workers

Tuesday, November 16 | 12 PM



James Myall
Policy Analyst,
MECEP

Matt Schlobohm
Executive Director,
Maine AFL-CIO

Maine Center for Economic Policy

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) Advocacy Webinar



Donna Dwyer
My Place Teen Center
CEO

Emily Flinkstrom
Fair Tide
Executive Director

Maura Pillsbury
MECEP
Policy Analyst

Lifting voices



"Early childhood educators need livable wages, benefits, and appreciation for the work they do... everywhere is short staffed right now."
— Terry,
childcare worker

Advancing policy solutions



LD 258: Funding Maine's future with the state budget

We are living through the recovery of an economy built on a foundation of inequality. We now have a choice to make better policy decisions that intentionally fund the brightest future for the Mainers who face significant hardships and barriers.

Learn more:

- [MECEP blog \(1/24/23\)](#): Gov. Mills budget protects wellbeing. Lawmakers should choose to do more.
- [MECEP blog \(1/9/23\)](#): Yes, a budget can change lives
- [MECEP blog \(1/5/23\)](#): New year, new budgets, new ways to put working families first



Supporting Maine families with kids

LD 1544: Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit

The federal experiment of monthly, direct aid to families led to a massive reduction in child poverty. We can do that on the state level as well by modernizing and increasing Maine's existing child tax credit and making it accessible to people who need it most.

Learn more:

- [MECEP blog \(5/13/22\)](#): MECEP report shows the Child Tax Credit made a tangible difference for Maine families
- [MECEP report \(5/13/2022\)](#): How the Child Tax Credit was spent in Maine
- [MECEP op-ed \(4/18/2023\)](#): Stronger Maine child tax credit is key for a more prosperous future
- [MECEP explainer \(5/2/2023\)](#): The Child Tax Credit



Ensuring corporations pay their fair share of taxes

We will pursue the following bills aimed at closing tax loopholes used by powerful corporations.

Real Profits Tax (Conformity)

Uses the momentum created by the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act to create a new minimum tax for large, profitable corporations who currently pay little to no taxes.

- [MECEP blog \(3/27/23\)](#): Maine should tax big corporate tax dodgers

Corporate Income Tax Transparency

Taxpayers and legislators should know whether or not the millions of dollars that are being spent on tax breaks for corporations are effective and which companies are actually paying what they owe.

- [MECEP blog \(7/5/22\)](#): Lack of corporate tax transparency hurts Maine



Increasing worker power

LD 1964: Paid Family Leave

Mainers shouldn't have to choose between spending time with their newborn and paying their rent, or between putting food on the table and caring for their aging parents. A statewide paid family and medical leave policy would solve this problem.

- [MECEP blog \(2/22/22\)](#): Surveys show strong support and widespread need for paid family and medical leave
- [MECEP blog \(2/14/2023\)](#): Legislative commission recommends strong, progressive paid family leave program for Maine
- [MECEP explainer \(4/5/2023\)](#): Paid Family and Medical Leave



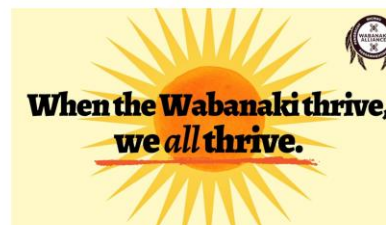
Strengthening Maine's child care system

LD 1726: Supporting Child Care for Working Families

Maine needs more child care opportunities in more places that is more affordable. This package we're supporting with partners in the Right from the Start coalition will immediately seek to increase subsidies for the current providers while seeking better, actionable information about how to strengthen the child care system as a whole in the long term.

Learn more:

- [MECEP State of Working Maine \(2022\)](#): Recognizing the value of labor
 - In the words of workers: [Bouncing Bubbles Child Care](#), [Creative Play Childcare](#), [Youth and Family Outreach](#)
- [MECEP blog \(5/9/2023\)](#): Child care legislation to benefit Maine workers and families



Fighting for tribal sovereignty

The Wabanaki Tribes in Maine are the only federally-recognized tribes in the United States that are denied the rights and protections guaranteed under Federal Indian Law. We stand with the Tribes' call to reform the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and the Maine Implementing Act which limit the Tribes' inherent rights to self-govern. When the Wabanaki have the tools they need to thrive, all who live within Maine borders benefit.

Learn more:

- [MECEP blog \(2/25/22\)](#): Equal footing for Maine tribes

Meet MECEP's Policy Analysts



James Myall

ECONOMIC POLICY
ANALYST



**Maura
Pillsbury**

STATE/LOCAL TAX
POLICY ANALYST



Arthur Phillips

ECONOMIC POLICY
ANALYST



Josie Phillips

STATE PRIORITIES
PARTNERSHIP FELLOW



Sarah Austin

DIRECTOR, POLICY AND
RESEARCH

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