

Dear Friends:

It's a great honor to have the opportunity to serve the people of Senate District 17 in the 128th Legislature. If you have a question or comment about what is happening at the State House, I would like to hear from you. Please use the information provided above to contact me, or email me at [drtom16@hotmail.com](mailto:drtom16@hotmail.com).

Here's an update on what is happening in Augusta.

Sincerely,

Tom Saviello

*Senator Tom Saviello represents Senate District 17 which includes all Franklin County communities, as well as the Kennebec County communities of Belgrade, Fayette, Mount Vernon, and Vienna.*

## State News Updates

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### Labor Committee to Hold Public Hearing on Tip Credit Bills

**Who:** Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development Committee

**What:** Public hearing on LD 673, "An Act To Restore the Tip Credit to Maine's Minimum Wage Law," LD 702, "An Act To Restore the Tip Credit to Maine Employees," and LD 831, "An Act To Base the Minimum Wage on a New England State Average and To Restore the Tip Credit."

**Where:** Cross Building, Room 208

**When:** 10:00 AM & 1:00 PM, Wednesday, April 5

"Of all the things going on in Augusta, the tip credit is one of the issues that I've heard the most about from constituents and restaurant owners in my district," said Sen. Roger Katz (R-Kennebec), sponsor of LD 673. "That's because this new law fundamentally changed the server-customer dynamic in restaurants all across Maine and is already causing some significant misunderstandings. Proponents of this provision sold it to the voters as a way to increase wages for these individuals, but it has actually decreased wages in many cases as customers have begun to tip less, resulting in a much lower hourly wage.

"The elimination of the tip credit is also detrimental to restaurant owners, who already operate on razor thin margins. It is already forcing them to raise prices, reduce hours, eliminate benefits, reduce pay for back-of-the-house staff, switch to a computerized business model, eliminate positions or take a significant hit.

"Many Mainers have earned a very decent wage working in restaurants and bars for tips which are often times significantly higher than the minimum wage. But this new policy threatens that, hurts our businesses and will result in higher menu prices and a lower quality in service for the consumer."

"The new minimum wage law puts Maine at a serious disadvantage, both on a regional and a national scale," said Sen. Dana Dow (R-Lincoln), sponsor of LD 831. "We can't afford to have one of the highest minimum wages in the country, the highest tax rate, high energy rates and still expect to attract businesses and employers to Maine."

"That's why I've sponsored LD 831. This bill would ensure that our minimum wage is competitive with the rest of New England by ensuring that we have neither the highest nor the lowest minimum wage in the region. By aligning our minimum wage the regional average, our rate will automatically go up any time another New England state raises their minimum wage. This will ensure that our wage keeps up with the times."

"My bill would also reinstate the tip credit, because this system works well for restaurants, servers and customers. The restaurant industry is an important part of Maine's economy, particularly in my coastal district. I intend to do everything I can to ensure that this industry continues to thrive."

## **Maine Revenue Service Offers Online Tax Filing System**

The 2017 tax filing deadline, April 18, will be here before you know it. If you haven't yet filed, Maine Revenue Services is offering an online tool called the Maine Fastfile service, which provides three options to quickly file using a secure tax filing system. Filing options include Modernized e-File, Maine e-File and Maine i-File (free for Maine taxpayers). For more information, visit [maine.gov/revenue/fastfile/index.html](http://maine.gov/revenue/fastfile/index.html).

## **Maine Legislative Memorial Scholarship Fund Seeks 2017 Applicants**

Each year the Maine Legislature awards a \$1,000 scholarship to one student from each county who is pursuing a two- or four-year degree at a Maine college or technical school. To apply, students must demonstrate academic excellence, demonstrate a financial need on the student's Student Aid Report, provide two letters of recommendation and an essay explaining his or her educational goals and intentions. [Applications](#) are due by May 1. The application can be found on the Finance Authority of Maine's website, [www.famemaine.com](http://www.famemaine.com).

## **Apply Now for 2017 Maine Moose Permit Lottery**

The 2017 Moose Permit Lottery is now open. The online application process is fast and simple and you receive instant confirmation that you have successfully entered the lottery. To apply, visit: [www.maine.gov/online/moose](http://www.maine.gov/online/moose).

The deadline for online applications is 11:59 p.m. on May 15, 2017. The moose permit drawing will take place on June 17 at Caribou Parks and Recreation. If you have any questions, contact the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department at [\(207\) 287-8000](tel:(207)287-8000).

## **Maine Job Seekers Affected by Job Website Data Breach**

The Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) has announced that America's JobLink (AJL), the outside vendor MDOL contracts with to connect job seekers with employers online, has been hacked. This data breach has affected 4 million job seekers in ten states, potentially compromising 283,000 Maine records.

While MDOL is unsure exactly how many Maine job seekers have been compromised, they are advising anyone who has entered their social security number into the state's JobLink website before March 16 to consider freezing their credit report. MDOL is currently working with the Kansas-based vendor to learn more about how to protect those who have been affected.