

REFLECTIONS

The One Constant? Things Change

by Linda Silka

Welcome to the latest issue of *Maine Policy Review*, once again filled with articles that bring breadth and depth to the analysis of key policy concerns in Maine. Many of the articles address challenges that have long been important in Maine such as rural health care, workforce development, worker health and safety, and declining economic opportunities and their consequences for Mainers. Emerging policy topics are also brought to the readers' attention such as the need to develop an Arctic strategy for Maine and to encourage sustainability practices in new industries (e.g., Maine's emerging wine industry).

While some of these articles tackle longstanding policy concerns and others relatively new ones, all of these topics link the past, present, and future. If we only look at present contexts, we will likely be unable to understand the dynamics of what has led to Maine's current status, so we must examine our understandings of change: What is changing? How do we know when things are changing? How can we assess the rapidity of the change? What is causing the changes? Which parts of the change can we control in Maine and which parts of the change are outside our control in Maine? Finally, what do these changes indicate about the policies that need to be put in place in Maine? Across all the articles, we see the importance of analyzing topics across time to avoid a short-sighted view of policy needs.

Throughout the articles, readers will learn about the groups that continue to contribute to Maine's in-depth policy analysis, including government leaders, policy analysts, university researchers, nonprofit leaders, and business leaders. Experts holding different positions often bring differing perspectives to the issues, but as these articles suggest, it is important to bring these perspectives together if we are to enact policies that can be effective now and into the future.

A signature aspect of each *Maine Policy Review* issue is the Margaret Chase Smith Essay written by a notable Maine leader. It is with great pleasure that we announce that this issue's Margaret Chase Smith Essay is written by the new University of Maine President Dr. Ferrini-Mundy. The essay, "The University of Maine: Playing All Positions in the Policy Game," reflects the depth of knowledge and experience President Ferrini-Mundy is bringing to the University of Maine as she guides us toward the future.

Finally, we hope you will consider using the articles in *Maine Policy Review* to engage your colleagues, students, family, and friends in discussions of the important policy issues in *MPR* that touch each of our daily lives. By working together, we can continue to make Maine a strong, robust, and resilient state ready to tackle the new challenges and opportunities that come our way. We very much look forward to hearing from you about the discussions you have with family, friends, and colleagues. 🐟



Linda Silka is the executive editor of *Maine Policy Review*. A social and community psychologist by training, Silka was formerly director of the

University of Maine's Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center. In addition to her role with *MPR*, she is a senior fellow at UMaine's Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions.