



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage  
GOVERNOR

17 June 2013

The 126<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the State of Maine  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 126<sup>th</sup> Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1066, "An Act To Increase Access to Health Coverage and Qualify Maine for Federal Funding."

In the early 2000s, Maine began a massive increase in welfare expansion. The goal was to provide health care for those without insurance through government-sponsored care. This was very well-meaning, tugging at the heart-strings of people across the political spectrum. Unfortunately, it did not work.

The story is one we all know well: Maine ran up massive debts to our hospitals as the system outgrew the taxpayers' ability to pay. At the same time, the uninsured population remained almost the same – 136,000 in 2001 to 133,000 in 2011. The only change was thousands upon thousands of Mainers leaving the commercial market for "free" health care, expanding the welfare rolls from nearly 200,000 to 338,000.

Now we stand at a crossroad. The federal government promises they will shoulder nearly all of the cost over the next decade. Proponents argue that the cost to Maine people will be minor and that we are somehow protected by statutory language if Washington goes back on its promise. We have heard that before.

When we expanded in the 2000s, we were promised we could reduce eligibility if the goals were not met. Now the federal government has tried to change the rules and lock our earlier generosity in place. Nothing prevents them from attempting to do the same with this new expansion envisioned in this bill.

Now is not the time to push forward on expansion. Maine must negotiate with Washington to ensure that our citizens and taxpayers are protected. We need flexibility in our program to improve delivery and root out fraud and abuse. We deserve recognition for our earlier generosity. Quite simply, Maine can do better.



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For these reasons, I return LD 1066 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul R. LePage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "L".

Paul R. LePage  
Governor