



REUTERS FILE  
An AR-15-style rifle is displayed at the seventh annual Border Security Expo in Phoenix, Arizona, in March 2013.



GEORGE DANBY | BDN

## Can we speak the same language about guns?

Do Americans speak the same language anymore?

Within hours of the Orlando shooting, the predictable camps emerged. Many on the right pointed out Omar Mateen was a terrorist, like the San Bernardino assailants, the Tsarnaev Marathon bombers and the cells that attacked Paris and Brussels. Some used firearms, others used bombs, but they all shared an ideology of hate and violence.



MICHAEL CIANCETTE

It has been called “radical Islam,” shorthand for the beliefs put forward by groups such as al-Qaida and ISIS. The use of that label — or lack thereof — has led to very public fights between Barack Obama and Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton and Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse. We cannot even agree on how to name our adversaries.

Of course, after the shooting, demands were made that we “do something” about guns. Tom Brokaw

called for banning “AR-14s,” while Bernie Sanders said the problem was “automatic rifles.” The only problem with their proposals? AR-14s do not exist, and automatic weapons effectively have been banned for decades.

This misinformation is multiplied on the internet. Examples abound of well-intended people declaring we need to ban “semi-automatic” weapons, since “police don’t even have them.” They are wrong. A “semi-automatic” anything simply discharges one unit every time it is operated. That includes AR-15s, 0.22 rifles and nearly every handgun in existence, whether privately owned or issued to police. It also includes staplers.

Or we hear people talk about the “gun show loophole” and the need to close it. The fact is, there is no magic to a gun show that makes background checks disappear. If you are a firearms dealer, you are required to conduct a background check, period, no matter where the sale takes place. If you are a private seller, then you are not required to do so, whether

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What stands out about LePage’s approach to the economy:

## A focus on industries of the past

## Why it’s better for me to listen after Orlando

For days I have felt compelled to say something. It is always my immediate impulse to speak up in the face of glaring injustice, but I’ve kept reminding myself that this week has been a time when listening — when hearing — might be the best approach. I offer this while underscoring that I am here for my friends and fellow humans, particularly those who feel unsafe and under attack because of who they are or how they identify, in whatever way they need me to be.



ALEX STEED

I want to be clear that this is not about advocating for silence. We must not ever remain silent in the face of violence or sustained injustice toward queer communities and communities

of color. We must stand up and react, and when we are not doing that, we must be proactive, with our voices, our activism, our outreach, our money, our investments and our advocacy. Timidity in the face of violence, hostility and threats of mass murder is not an option.

Often, it is our impulse to say something — anything at all — to let our friends, loved ones and humanity at large know we will not stand for anything less than a community in which all people can feel safe, regardless of where they are from, regardless of where their families are from and regardless of how they identify.

I have read touching stories in the past few days in which my LGBT friends have found consolation by way of a neighbor’s kind words or an unexpected hug. It’s a sign that, for last weekend’s spectacle of concerted and hateful terror —

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BY CHRISTOPHER BURNS  
BDN STAFF

When he first ran for governor, Paul LePage pledged to make Maine a competitive and cost-effective place in which to do business.

The governor has focused his energy on eliminating the state income tax, reducing energy costs and lightening regulations in hopes of reviving the state’s flagging manufacturing and natural resource industries and attracting businesses from out of state. But the results of these efforts have been mixed, according to economists.

“If you look at the economic traction we’ve had during his administration, it’s horrifying,” Alan Caron, president of Envision Maine, said. “Maine is creating a fraction of the jobs created elsewhere.”

Maine is among the states with the slowest growing economies, according to the latest report card from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Maine’s economy grew by a sluggish 0.4 percent last year, lagging behind New England’s 1.3 percent growth rate and the nation’s 2.4 percent growth.

Maine also is among 10 states that haven’t recovered all the jobs they lost during the Great Recession.

One reason is that LePage relies heavily on the industries of the past — timber harvesting and mining, for example — as part of his growth strategy instead of focusing on growing, technology-driven enterprises.

The Maine economy already

has transitioned from one based on extracting natural resources to a largely urban service economy much like the rest of the U.S., according to Charles Colgan, a retired professor of economics at the University of Southern Maine. The question is, how can Maine, with a relatively small economy, continue to develop?

“Get behind innovators, entrepreneurs, small startups all across the state in all sectors. Build the capacity to help the little guys grow. We will get more jobs by doing that than by trying to prop up old industries.”

ALAN CARON, PRESIDENT, ENVISION MAINE

### Extract Maine’s way to prosperity

Few other sectors of the Maine economy get as much attention from the governor — and many other politicians — as those that revolve around natural resources, especially forest products. When LePage took office, he pledged to grow Maine’s economy by strengthening the state’s traditional industries.

“Through much of our history, fishing, farming and forestry have been Maine’s economic engine,” he said during his 2012 State of the State address. “We are committed

to reviving these industries to get Maine working again.”

But a shrinking demand for paper and growing foreign competition have led to seismic changes in the state’s forest product industries, which have seen employment drop precipitously over the last two decades. Paper mills employed about 5,200 Mainers at the end of 2015, according to the Maine Department of Labor, down from more than 15,000 in 1990.

Just in the last three years, five paper mills across the state have closed.

“For a century, what made the paper industry so special was that it was a large number of jobs,” David Vail, an emeritus professor of economics at Bowdoin College, said. “What we’ve got is paper mills shutting down, and who can be confident that they ever will open up again?”

The mill closures have had a ripple effect throughout the forest product industries, including biomass energy production and logging. A study conducted after the closure of mills in Old Town and Lincoln last year concluded that at least an additional 563 jobs could be lost as a result across Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock and Waldo counties. Among those hardest hit would be the loggers who supplied the raw material to the mills.

Despite these trends, LePage hasn’t turned his focus away from logging. He has sought to increase timber harvesting on public lands and start a logger training program at Good Will-Hinckley.

He hasn’t let up on his as yet unsuccessful push to revise mining regulations and make way for a mine on Bald Mountain in Aroostook County, where deposits of copper, zinc and other metals were detected in the late 1970s.

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DANISH SIDDIQUI | REUTERS

Participants hug each other behind a rainbow flag during a vigil in Mumbai, India, on Thursday in memory of the victims of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida.