

# Bangor Daily News

Founded in 1889

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## CITIES ARE THE WAY OF MAINE'S FUTURE

Nearly a decade ago, the report “Charting Maine’s Future” challenged the conventional wisdom that Maine is a rural state. “A closer look reveals that Maine is quite ‘suburban,’” read the report, put together by the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program in 2006.

Also nearly a decade ago, economists Charlie Colgan and Richard Barringer highlighted these economic realities in a policy paper:

— In 1969, nearly a third of all Maine jobs were in manufacturing; by 2004, that figure had dropped to one in 10.

— In 1969, the natural resource-based and textile, apparel and shoe industries accounted for one in four jobs; by 2004, they accounted for one in 19.

What do these transformations have in common?

They point to the increasing importance of cities to Maine’s economy. And in the decade since these two reports’ publication, cities and the metropolitan areas centered around them have only become more vital. Indeed, even in a state such as Maine known for its rural nature, cities are the way of the future.

In 1960, Maine was home to only one metropolitan area — a federally defined area of at least 50,000 people that revolves around a core city for jobs and services — that comprised only five Portland-area communities. Today, Maine has three metropolitan regions and two micropolitan regions (areas of at least 10,000 people with a smaller city or two at their core). In addition, much of southern York County belongs to the Portsmouth-Dover-Rochester metro area centered in New Hampshire.

The evolution of Maine’s metro regions (and micropolitan regions — the Augusta-Waterville and Rockland areas) doesn’t necessarily highlight explosive population growth in Maine’s largest cities — Portland, Lewiston and Bangor. Rather, it points to the reality that those who live around those cities are more likely today to commute to those cities for work and depend on them for key services.

The decline of manufacturing and natural-resource industries — largely located in rural areas — as the dominant job creators and the rise of service jobs (which tend to be more urban) go hand in hand with this geographic transformation.

Indeed, Maine’s metro areas have continued to grow as a portion of the state’s economy — particularly the Portland area, which has accounted for more than half of Maine’s gross domestic product since 2010. Altogether, the Bangor, Lewiston and Portland areas accounted for 68.7 percent of Maine’s economy in 2013, up from 66.6 percent in 2001, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

While it’s increasingly clear that Maine is little without its cities, those cities — particularly Portland — still face a political and cultural environment that largely favors Maine’s rural areas. State economic development policies and education and transportation funding models have largely reflected this rural favoritism. In politics, Gov. Paul LePage’s administration this year invested substantial political capital in characterizing Portland as a “welfare outlier” in order to justify a proposal to rework the state’s General Assistance reimbursement formula in a way that would have favored Maine’s smaller towns over its largest cities.

Meanwhile, Maine owes any population growth it has experienced over the past few years to the Portland area. The Portland area’s growth between 2010 and 2014 (by almost 10,000 residents) offset population declines elsewhere in Maine (whose total population increased by fewer than 2,000), according to Census data.

This November, voters in Maine’s two largest cities — Portland and Lewiston — will elect mayors.

Those mayors won’t only lead city council meetings. They’ll represent the interests of their cities to state government in Augusta and to the broader public. Maine’s cities need strong advocates who can make the case they are not outliers to the rest of the state. They are, in fact, key components and drivers of the state’s economy and culture; they are the areas where the innovation key to the state’s future economic growth is most likely to happen; and they are the areas most likely to host the state’s future population growth.

Maine’s rural character might distinguish it from other states. But its urban areas will more likely than not drive its growth. Those urban areas need strong advocates who can make the case for policies that help it along.

## OTHER VOICES

### HUNGARY’S XENOPHOBIA

Hungary’s response to Europe’s refugee crisis has been shaped more by domestic populist politics than by good judgment — and the results have been shocking and disgraceful. The European Union as a whole, though, hasn’t done much better. The disarray in Hungary shows the urgent need for a reassessment, and not just in Budapest.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has been linking immigration to most varieties of evil, up to and including terrorism, for months. He has built a fence along the border with Serbia, deployed the army, and blocked those refugees who get across from boarding trains out of Hungary only to then let them on the trains. On Tuesday, he shut down the stations, once more leaving the refugees stranded.

The result has been refugee camps at Hungarian train stations, with migrants forced to pay criminal gangs to smuggle them to Germany and other destinations in trucks — such as the one in which 71 people died last week on an Aus-

trian road. Many of these people have escaped the horrors of Syria and Darfur. They do not deserve such treatment.

In reality, Orban isn’t a stickler for EU rules. He’s a populist with an intense dislike for Brussels and all it stands for. Hungarians, he has said, don’t want immigrants — they “want to preserve a Hungarian Hungary.” It’s a line that goes down well, and guards against his government being outflanked by the ultraright Jobbik party.

This year’s sharp increase in refugees bound for Europe admits of only one solution: The EU needs a system that fairly distributes applicants for asylum across the union, as the European Commission has proposed. Frontier nations such as Hungary would register their arrivals, sending all but their own small quota on to others.

Xenophobia might work for a while as smart domestic politics, but only at great cost — worsening the refugees’ plight, putting lives at risk and ultimately weakening the glue that holds the EU together.

*Bloomberg News (Sept. 30)*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Dump Trump

Why are the press, presidential candidates and Republicans unwilling to take on Donald Trump? He is a thin-skinned, vindictive, whining, egotistical bully who is out to buy the presidency of the United States.

Trump admits he buys political access. He also says his four bankruptcies are all within the manipulated U.S. laws. He has no realistic agenda.

Trump has taken civility, respect and decency to a new low. He is, in my opinion, a chauvinist and a scurrilous man.

We need the likes of former U.S. Sen. Margaret Chase Smith to give a “Declaration of Conscience” regarding the Trump candidacy.

**Doris M. Russell**  
*Castine*

### LeClair for council

I have succeeded in qualifying to have my name placed on the Nov. 3 ballot for election to the Bangor City Council.

I graduated from St. Mary’s High School in Orono in 1960, the last graduating class at St. Mary’s. I am a veteran of the U.S. Navy, having served between 1960-1966 during the Cold War. I was on board an ammunition ship (USS Great Sitkin) during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

My goals for the City Council are: transparency; accountability; no increase in property taxes; being open to public suggestions; reduce financial waste; do not cater to special interest groups; update the city charter regarding attendance and retirement; equal support and enforcement of services for all citizens; reduction of code restrictions on businesses; spend taxpayer money wisely;

serve in citizens’ interests; review and reduce waste in both the city and school budgets; listen to citizen issues and resolve them effectively; promote citizen’s involvement in city government; use a common-sense approach to council matters; ask the questions no one else will ask; and seek “win-win” for all parties.

I would appreciate Bangor’s vote Nov. 3 for the Bangor City Council.

**Paul LeClair**  
*Bangor*

### WRITE TO US

Letters must be 250 words or fewer and include a full name, town of residence and daytime phone number. OpEds may be 700 words. Letters may be edited or rejected for clarity, taste, libel and space. If a letter or OpEd is published, submissions by the same writer will not be considered for 60 days.

Letters may be sent to letters@bangordailynews.com. OpEds may be sent to OpEd@bangordailynews.com or P.O. Box 1329, Bangor, ME 04402-1329.

### Fire LePage

Gov. Paul LePage is asking Mainers who wish he’d sail away into the sunset to email his office. And if the people want him to leave, he said he will. He’s setting everybody up, kind of like that letter they send to alleged lawbreakers, telling them they’ve won a prize. They show up, they get arrested.

Everything LePage does is vindictive. Don’t think for a minute he won’t make all who send requests to leave sorry they did. If it looks like impeachment is warranted, he’ll resign.

We deserve better. Who does

the stuff this guy does daily with no consequences? We are the ones paying for his actions, not him. Dictators think they are invincible. He forgets who hired him. We did. Anybody else in Maine would have been fired long ago.

He has proven he can’t handle the pressure of being a good citizen. He is everything our parents taught us not to be. Since his first day in office, he has attacked working people, labor unions, the less fortunate among us. He forgets his roots as a poor child in Maine.

The state of affairs for the average person in Maine is dismal at best, “We the people” deserve his best effort. It would seem that LePage has some serious issues that are prohibiting him from serving all the people of Maine, in a stately manor.

His days of being a bully in “our” china cabinet, must come to a screeching halt.

**Dennis Mitchell**  
*Glenburn*

### Collins on Iran

Concerning the Iran nuclear deal, U.S. Sen. Susan Collins is taking the responsible path, as she always does, when faced with voting on an important national issue. The responsible path is taking time to read and review all information available, talk to as many of her constituents as possible and make a decision without undue partisan or media assertions that what is responsible is their position.

Collins will make her position known when she has finished this process and she will have my continued support as a responsible senator, whatever she decides.

**Ralph Leonard**  
*Old Town*

## .COMMENTS

**Editorial, “More Maine kids are getting vaccinated, but opt-out rate still too high”:**

The author is right on target. The law needs to change to disallow the philosophical exemption. I’d disallow the religious exemption as well, but it may not be necessary to prevent outbreaks. My kid’s immunity is not fully developed, even with vaccines and boosters, until they’re a few years old. That’s why I advocate mandating vaccination.

— *seamus37*

If vaccines are so lifesaving, why is the U.S., which recommends the highest number of vaccines in the world, ranked 34th in infant mortality and even worse in child mortality? Is it coincidental that during the time when the number of vaccines given has skyrocket-

ed, childhood cancer has doubled in the U.S.? Why has there never been a study comparing the health of vaccinated versus unvaccinated children? Why has there never been a study determining the impact of giving five, six or seven vaccines to a small infant at once?

— *mdwooten*

There needs to be no exemptions nationwide except for the very rare verified medical reasons. No philosophical and definitely no religious exemptions. If you won’t vaccinate your kids and they or others get sick, make sure you’re paying for the whole tab — no insurance companies or other payments.

— *Jeff*

Mandatory vaccine laws are arbitrary and have nothing to

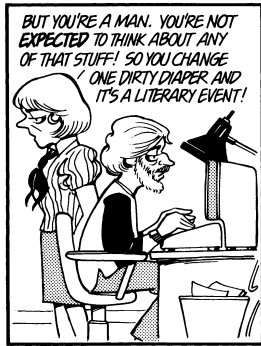
do with public safety. Passing them hinges on the drug companies having the right set of whores in office to go along with their “business development” plans. Nothing to do with public safety and everything to do with drug company profits.

— *nrbkr*

The unvaccinated child poses no risk to vaccinated children who are immune. If a vaccinated child is not immune, than that child poses the exact same risk as the non-vaccinated child. I am immunocompromised. I don’t expect, nor would I support, efforts forced on any individuals to make the world safer for me. Vaccines are good and should be encouraged. They should not be forced on the public, even for its own good.

— *jonstamos*

## DOONESBURY



## GARRY TRUDEAU