

# **The Institute for Civil Leadership**

*The Annual Gathering for Civic Leadership  
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## ***LEADERSHIP FOR A MULTICULTURAL FUTURE: An Opportunity for Maine***

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Attorney General of Maine (1980 - 1990)***

While I am delighted to be here this evening, I must admit to being more than a little surprised.

I have been more or less out of sight here in Maine for over a decade. While flattered to have been asked, it does surprise me to see so many of you are gathered here tonight at least in part to hear what I have to say about Maine's future.

In order to do my part, I will be as non-judgmental as I can. Frankly, I believe that the problems facing our wonderful state are so grave that none of us really has the time for those who indulge in the a blame game.

I have written a more extended version of what I will say tonight and Deb and Ellen have told me that it will be posted on the Institute's web site. That version is replete with statistics that I believe proves my case in excruciating detail. So if I touch you in any way this evening, I hope you log on tomorrow and read what I have to say.

Of course, life is filled with lots of surprises and for me most of them have been pleasant.

I am surprised that over these last dozen years I have had the opportunity to participate in some small way in so many of the major public policy issues in our country. I thank my public education in Brunswick and at the University of Maine and at our Law School for preparing me for these adventures, but it is a surprise nonetheless.

Some of the surprises are not so pleasant.

Last Thursday evening after my class at Columbia I went out to dinner with several law students who were visiting New York from Serbia. I am a bit of a night owl when I am away from home, so after dinner I went to the movie theater across from Lincoln Center and asked for a ticket.

That is where I got my surprise.

The woman behind the counter asked me if I wanted a senior citizen ticket.

Oh, it hurt. How did it slip up on me? I know that I have five grandchildren, but a Sr. Citizen ticket to the movies?

It was the unkindest cut.

I have subsequently taken some solace from the fact that someone great - probably Mark Twain or Winston Churchill or someone like that - once said that the biggest surprise in anyone's life is that they are getting old.

If this is true for me, then it might just be true for all of you.

I don't go to political events anymore, but my old friend and former colleague Joe Lieberman was in Portland for a day in August, so I drove down to spend the day with him and his wife - friends now for 20 years. I dragged my oldest daughter - who is now a teacher and the mother of twins - with me for the evening political event. When it was over, I asked her what she thought.

"Dad, it's the same people...."

"Yeah," I said, "the same kind of people."

"Dad, you aren't listening. I didn't say the same kind of people. I said the same people."

Now, seeing the "same people" - as we are doing tonight - is a great thing about Maine. It is the hallmark of our state that we are a collection of tightly knit communities..

But if it the same people, we cannot escape the fact that our state has aged.

I will argue a position tonight that is clear and straightforward.

The aging of our state is by far our greatest problem and our only hope in stemming the economic decline that aging inevitably brings is for us to find our own way toward embracing diversity.

And then I will lay out some ways that it can be done.

## **MAINE IS AGING**

Let's start by discussing the aging.

And let's look at what our state will look like without some kind of demographic change.

2000 Census statistics state that Maine was 46<sup>th</sup> in population growth between 1990 and 2000. We grew less between 1990 and 2000 than any state other than North Dakota, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Maine's total population growth rate for the decade was 3.8% or 0.38% a year.

But within those figures is a far more important factor than raw growth.

We have aged.

When I became the Attorney General of Maine in 1980, Maine was the 12<sup>th</sup> oldest state.

In 1990, we were the 8<sup>th</sup> oldest.

By 2000, we are the 4<sup>th</sup> oldest state in the country.

From 1990 to 2000, our median age jumped nearly 5 years - to 38.6.

Now let me really scare you.

It is going to get worse.

By 2025, it is predicted that Maine will see an increase of 28% of Mainers between 45 and 64 ... 97% between 65 and 74 ... 28% between 75 and 84 (my category) and 14% over 85.

Today, 14% are today over the age of 65.

Unless we act now, by 2025, that percentage will be 21%.

That means one person in 5 will be over 65.

In some parts of Maine that figure will be much greater.

Now let's look at the other end of the age spectrum and examine some raw numbers.

In October, 1975, there were 250,000 public school students in Maine. In October, 2001, that figure had fallen to 210,000.

If you assume that there are an average of 25 students per class, then the drop of 40,000 students means 1,600 fewer classrooms filled with Maine kids.

Aroostook County, however, fell from 24,000 to 12,000. Penobscot fell from 33,000 to 25,000. Androscoggin fell from 21,000 to 16,000. Kennebec fell from 23,000 to 18,000.

From 1990 to 2000, the census says that our youngest age bracket dropped from 85,000 to 70,000 people.

Today, our birthrate is at the lowest level since the state first began keeping statistics in 1892.

Between now and 2025, there will be a decrease in every category under the age of 45.

1995 to 2025, the per cent of Maine people under 20 will drop from 27% to 22%.

That means that in 2025, Maine will have more people over 65 than under 20.

In 1995, Maine was ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> among states in its proportion of people under 20.

In 2025, we are predicted to be 49<sup>th</sup>.

But maybe things are even worse. A kindergarten teacher in Bangor stopped me this summer and told me that the little ones were not showing up for school in expected numbers, so I checked it out.

In the last 4 years, we have seen a 12% drop in the number of students entering Kindergarten... a reduction in each of our 16 counties.

A reduction of 3% per year.

This is worse than the predictions that state from 1997 to 2009, we are will see a 9% drop in elementary students and 11% in high schools.

Whereas the northeast will see a 20% increase in high school graduates between 1997 and 2009, we will see a decrease of 3%.

And for those of you who know this state, let me tell you about small we are already!

I love high school basketball.

This year's *Eastern* Maine Basketball Class A Championship game - held as always in the Bangor Auditorium - was between Brunswick and Cony High School of Augusta.

And next year *Eastern* Maine has been expanded to add Lewiston and Edward Little.

Let me turn to culture.

One of the prime determiners of our culture today is the movies (or "film" as the kids say).

Movies have long been highly attractive to young people and are becoming more so. It is also big business as The Wall St. Journal's business pages every Monday announce the weekend attendance totals.

And Maine kids - like all kids - want to be a part of that culture.

Right now - before the baby boomers retire - there are only two multi-plex cinemas north of Augusta.

Think about that. You leave the Augusta Mall and drive north for 70 miles to Bangor/Old Town to find the next multi-plex.

Then you leave Bangor and drive 120 miles north to Presque Isle to find the next one.

And then you drive 40 miles to the Canadian border, and you find, well, you find Canada.

For many, many Maine young people, that is a long way to go to see Adam Sandler..

Right now - even before the baby boomers retire - there are only 1600 high school students in Washington County *in eight separate high schools!*

High school after high school all over Maine are dropping below 200 students. "Consolidation" - which is another way of saying we are going to shut down schools - is upon us now at all grade levels.

And what is a town without a school?

And last Sunday the Portland Press Herald reported that the price for a three bedroom house in downtown Millinocket - the wealthiest town in Maine when I was in high school - can now be under \$30,000 - the price of an SUV.

There is nothing new about these figures. They have been reported upon and discussed since the census was reported in 2001.

But the official response - to be charitable - has been underwhelming.

The most common response has been to pretend it isn't happening - like me and the request for a senior citizen ticket. Denial is a powerful human instinct.

And for most of us personally who are doing well in the status quo, it works pretty well. Inertia isn't all that bad.

But denial for an entire state is deeply dysfunctional.

Do we really think that employers both in and out of Maine won't notice our aging workforce and that there are no young people to fill the ranks?

For others, there has been the same old and tired solutions - which really is just another form of denial.

They churn out the reports citing 50 state surveys on our business environment that never include actual research.

But let's be honest here. Regardless of the "business climate" - the tax rate, the Workers Comp fees and all the rest - the aging of our state is a much bigger problem than any of the others.

Aging sends a clear message to anyone interested in long term investment strategies.

Employers see those numbers and realize that Maine's governmental structure will have to meet the needs of an aging population at the expense of other expenditures.

Of course Maine has a high tax rate! An aging state must spend money on Medicaid, prescription drug programs, assisted living and a host of other age related matters. It really has no choice.

This means we will have less money to spend in other areas.

Everyone says that education is essential for economic development and that is obviously true. Mainers now pay 13% of our earnings in taxes compared to 10% nationally for education, but we still rank 49<sup>th</sup> as to the per cent of our budgets that are spent on higher education.

In other words, we tax ourselves more but have less to spend,. The result is that we keep losing ground to other younger and more prosperous areas of the United States and the world.

Help me envision the employer who will say "that is where I want to invest for the long haul." Or who will say "Maine is where I want to be!"

And don't pretend because southern Maine is doing better than northern Maine that it isn't the problem of those of us in this room.

As we all know, the problems of northern, eastern and central Maine are also the problems of southern Maine. Portland may be the economic and cultural hub of Maine as citizens from all over our state come here for services and entertainment, but if they are gone then Portland, too, will not be the city that it wants to be.

In summary, we are reducing the number of young people at the exact time that the elderly population is exploding.

We have a ten year window of opportunity. Low birth rates during the depression and WWII mean that we will not see any short term change and most of will be fine. Baby boomers will keep working and unemployment will remain low. This will push up salaries.

But then, in 2011, that world will change.

We have expanded for these last years as women have entered the workforce, but there are simply not enough Maine people born after 1965 to make up for the exit of the baby boomers.

But beginning in ten years, our workforce will dramatically contract.

We are already seeing it in the tourist as immigrants work here in the summer and we may be seeing it in heavy construction as Cianbro advertises in Mississippi for employees to do hard physical work.

We are already seeing it in forestry and in agriculture.

If we do not change, in 20 years our State of Maine will not be a viable economic entity.

## **DIVERSITY IN MAINE**

Shocking as that might sound, the truth is that Maine's figures on the age of our population are not all that different from the statistics of the white population of the rest of the country and indeed the world.

Let me repeat that.

The demographics of white Maine citizens do not differ dramatically from the demographics of most white Americans.

Northeastern University recently issued a remarkable report last Spring that stated that in the 1990's, the Northeast states of the United States would have had a negative population growth had immigrants not moved into the region.

2.7 million residents - 75% of whom were between the ages of 18 and 34 and many of them young and educated - left the Northeast while 3.1 million residents moved in from

other countries - the largest surge in 90 years. Only Me, NH and Vermont gained population at all once the in migration is factored. New York state would have lost 10% of its population.

So, Maine shouldn't feel that bad. We are a part of the national out migration from the northeast.

Our problem is that we are not a part of the in migration from other countries.

The evidence is therefore clear that we are an aging state precisely because we are not a multicultural state.

So, my friends, if you have ever listened to me listen to me now.

Maine needs to reach into itself and change colors.

Although I easily could, I am not going to mix talking about diversity with politics and views of government and religion and history....

I am not going to talk about current or past injustices.

I am not going to talk about law suits.

And I am not going to talk about diversity in the context of "doing the right thing..."

.... or "affirmative action" ... or "quotas" ... or "recruitment..."

.... or "doing our part to help refugees..."

All of these discussions may be important in other places, but in my opinion largely miss the point in Maine.

And although I could, I am not going to lash out at any institution or person "for not doing enough." or for doing something that in retrospect was just plain stupid.

The truth is that none of us have done enough. The truth is that all of us have done something that was just plain stupid.

Our current situation isn't anyone's "fault," and affixing blame doesn't move the agenda along.

What I will do is to avail myself of the luxury of no longer being in public life.

I am going to be blunt..

Maine needs to attract young people, and that isn't going to happen unless we embrace a multicultural environment.

Now, we certainly need to keep our young people here and lure some of them back, but I believe that diversity is essential to that effort.

But no matter how many we keep, we need people to move here - from other places in the United States and from other countries in the world.

Let's look at the numbers.

While diversity comes in all colors, we cannot ignore the fact that Maine is the whitest state in the country.

Let me share with you the scope of that statistic.

30.9% of U.S. residents in 2000 identify themselves as non-white. In Maine, only 3.5% so identify. That means 1 in 3 in the United States compared with 1 in 30 in Maine.

Statistics at USM - our "urban campus" - show that of 11,000 students, 330 are "minority" - whatever that means.

An estimated 11.1% of U.S. residents in the year 2000 were foreign born. In Maine, only 3.1% are foreign born - most of whom are Canadian.

For all the debate and national publicity, only 1000 Somalis have come to Lewiston.

For the rest of the country, the camera isn't on them.

It is on the rest of us.

What to do?

I am an optimist. I think that the world is not immutable. I know that Maine people have great resilience. I know that we have a terrific and tolerant state with values and traditions that can make us attractive to new residents.

I know that we can grab on to our own destinies.

But we have to face facts.

First, rather than going on and on about our tax rate, we have to admit the extent of our demographic problems.

Second, we have to admit that our obvious need for more young people inevitably requires diversity. There is no other answer to our problems.

Third, we need a statewide strategy.

It isn't that we haven't tried to develop economic development strategies, but they have not succeeded because we have not had the courage or the insight to confront our lack of diversity.

Let me begin with how diversity impacts our usual strategies to keep young people here and to bring our kids back home.

The various reports are accurate as to the role of the economy in keeping our young people here, but they inevitably miss something else that is very fundamental.

Keeping our kids and bringing them home isn't just about "good paying jobs" and "economic growth."

It is my position that the most promising of these two efforts - keeping our kids and bringing them home - are damaged by our lack of diversity.

1. Keep our young people ....

We know that the statistics are terrible.

We know the kids are going.

According to an excellent study on the subject by the Muskie School, the young person most likely to leave is one who is the child of college educated parents who moved here in the 1970s or 1980's.

Too many of our Maine kids move away - perhaps for education or perhaps for work. 40% of Aroostook County kids between the ages of 15 and 30 moved away in the 1990's.

So it is about jobs.

But focusing on job creation in order "to keep our kids here" misses a part of the story. This isn't just about jobs.

If we listen to young people who have gone, they will tell you it is not just about jobs.

Maine is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest exporter of college freshman in the country. Once they go, the chances that they come back are dramatically reduced.

Our kids leave and find a level of energy and excitement elsewhere - in places where diversity is the rule and not the exception.

The places they go - where the jobs exist and that are our county's engines of economic growth - are also the states that are culturally diverse and becoming more so.

California, New York, Florida, Arizona, Texas, Washington are enticing our kids...just as they entice people from all over the world.

.The sad fact is that they move away and they like it.

Let me tell you about the party we had at our house just before I was to give my speech in Orono.

It was to celebrate the graduation from Tufts Medical School of a young man who grew up with my kids and is the child of two friends from my days here at the University of Maine. He is a part of my family.

He is from Lisbon and Auburn and sailed through medical school picking up a Master's in Public Health along the way so that he could carry out his lifelong dream of practicing community based medicine here in Maine. Just 3 months before graduating, he did a rotation visiting our islands - in the middle of winter.

But life isn't always that clear. For the last two years, he has been in a serious relationship with a classmate. And his classmate is now starting her residency in Emergency Medicine - and she decided to do it in Los Angeles. Why? Well, she is an Asian-American and she wants to be around men and women who share her heritage.

Do any of you blame her? I certainly don't. So they packed their bags and now live in Los Angeles.

Our lack of diversity may have not caused us to lose one doctor, but two doctors. And as we know, the health care that they will provide throughout their careers not only saves lives, but is an essential element to any plan for rural economic development.

## 2. Bringing our own families back.

Again, we need jobs to attract our kids back to all the wonders of our state, but again this is not entirely about jobs.

I have two brothers. Both were raised in Maine. One lives in New York and the other in Texas. Neither of them need a job, and both sometimes talk about coming back home.

My brother John is a youthful 60 and lives on Long Island, New York. He speaks 8 languages and is about to retire from INS to go into teaching. He actually has a house in Brunswick, but he isn't going to come because his wife is from Costa Rica and she and her kids aren't about to become the only folks in town who are Hispanic.

And then there is my younger brother, David, who has done "very well" - as they say - in the computer industry in Austin. He isn't coming, either, in part because his wife is from the Philippines and, well, you get the picture.

### 3. Diversity

So now let's talk about diversity issue in Maine..

The truth is that Maine has become homogenized.

We are significantly less diverse state than we were 100 years ago. The Maine I grew up in had more diversity than the Maine that exists today. When I was a kid, there were stores in Brunswick where French was spoken as the primary language. That certainly isn't true today.

We have to do better.

But aren't we really afraid? Aren't we a little afraid of people who aren't like us?...

This isn't new. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the "No Nothing" movement didn't like the Irish so they burned St. John's Catholic in Bangor and St. Mary's in Bath..

A few years later, it was the Bangor Irish who fought the coming of the Canadian's to work in the woods.

We all know of Maine's sad KKK heritage in the 1920's and the 1930's.

September 11 wasn't the first time in our history when we became afraid of foreign threats on our soil....

So, good and bad, the human spirit doesn't change all that much...

And just maybe some of us have forgotten that Ed Muskie, Geo. Mitchell, Joe Brennan and even Jim Tierney are the sons of immigrants. ... and that the parents of Ed and Gorge struggled all their lives to be understood in English.

And that Bill Cohen and Olympia Snowe and Peter Cianchette and John Baldacci are the grandchildren of immigrants.

Some legal. Some illegal. But immigrants.

Maybe we don't want to remember our rich immigrant heritage, but we should.

It has made us the wonderful of state we are today.

#### 4. Excuses:

Our excuses for lack of diversity don't cut it. There are many and I hear them all the time.

The one I love is the weather. "No one will live here because of the weather. They wouldn't be happy. It is too cold."

Then let me tell you about the Hmong peoples who live in Minnesota.

Originally from the Laotian mtns, they had supported us in the Vietnam war at the CIA's urging and were left desperate as a result of our loss, they were resettled all over the United States, but eventually the largest groupings ended up eventually in Mn. - hardly an environment that reminded them of home.

After years of some very, very hard times with unemployment at times over 50%, these large families have found a home after overcoming huge cultural differences as the Hmong lack a written tradition.

Today there are 60,000 Hmong in Minneapolis/St. Paul. There are 800 businesses. There is Hmong Chamber of Commerce. There is a Hmong Bar Assoc. There are doctors. There are dentists.

And there is a new St. Senator. - Mee Moua - who with her Brown and U. of Mn.. Law degree is a rising political leader in her state.

She told me that Hmong home ownership percentages now exceed that of the rest of Minnesota. She should know. Her husband left the practice of law to sell real estate and he is doing just fine..

For Minnesota to have succeeded, they needed basic programs - Accessible adult education; strong bi-lingual traditions and respect for multiculturalism - and a small business tradition that is respected.

Maine has all of these things.

And the Hmong call Mn. home. And it is just as cold in Minnesota as it is in Maine.

Minnesota understands that its economic future is tied to promoting diversity.

So, what do we do here in Maine?

## **LOCAL STRATEGIES**

Well, fortunately, there are some success stories.

Maine people are figuring out how to do this.

#1. Maine has a number of private schools that serve as public high schools. Indeed, most people believe them to be public schools. Thorton Academy in Saco or Traip Academy in Kittery are the closest to where we sit.

But they are actually private schools who are free from many of the rules that bind other Maine schools. There are many in rural Maine such as Foxcroft Academy in Dover-Foxcroft and Lee Academy in tiny Lee, Maine in northern Penobscot County. Not surprisingly, they are suffering a downturn in enrollment. Unlike public high schools, they have the ability - and the burden - of having to work to stay alive.

These tiny Maine schools are now scouring the world for students. If you go to East Machias and you will find Washington Academy (1992: 400, 2001: 290). It is 100 miles from Bangor, but it hired a Bangor marketing firm; hooked up with other schools, and now charge \$15,000 tuition to European students. The Academy gives each host family \$3,500 and has hired ESL teachers. The whole community knows what is at stake. They want to keep their schools. They are learning about the world. And they may just do it.

#2. Lewiston - remarkable success. I am so proud of that community. The Lewiston Sun has done a remarkable job at getting the true story out to the community. Teacher after teacher has gone into his or her own pocket to come up with materials that talk about cultural differences. The Lewiston High School soccer coach is ecstatic to have two Somalis on his team. It means that Lewiston might just beat Edward Little.

And the captain of the team - a young man named Ethyn Brodeur - was quoted in Sunday's Sun as saying, "they (the Somalis) are my teammates; they are my brothers." And the other co-captain, Brian Vye, in the same article said, "Give them a chance to get back on their feet. We all come here from somewhere."

Or how about Jacqueline Bate, an OB/GYN nurse at CMMC, who is going nights to learn Somali so that she can communicate with the women patients whom she treats?

Or the many volunteers who have for a year been patiently teaching English at Lewiston Adult Education to anyone who will come and want to learn?

Since last year, Lewiston's new Franco-American Heritage Center and St. Mary's Hospital have been throwing open their doors to the Somali population for monthly meetings with long time residents. The Board of the Franco-Heritage Center understands just how lonely and difficult it can be to arrive in Maine without the financial and language skills necessary to immediately adapt to a new home

These kind of efforts are growing and hopefully many of you can share similar stories, but they aren't enough.

We need a statewide strategy.

And we all have to be a part of it.

And we shouldn't wait to be asked.

Our own community, business, foundation, school, county and home.

We have to do this ourselves.

## **STATEWIDE STRATEGY**

Maine must admit the importance of diversity to our future and make it a priority. If you think through those aging numbers, you will see that we have no choice.

We must look at the in-migration that is occurring in a few places in Maine and see it as a positive - no, essential - step to improving our state's future.

We must see immigration as an opportunity instead of a burden for one or two municipalities.

"Not in my backyard" syndrome is killing us. This isn't any more about Portland and Lewiston than it is about So. Portland and Auburn and Lisbon and Falmouth and Kennebunk.

We should all roll up our sleeves and start making changes.

What to we do?

### ***First, we must prepare ourselves.***

You are all leaders in this state. The Institute has officially certified you as such. So you had better know what you are talking about. That means you have to do some reading.

Frankly, most of what I've talked about tonight is from the newspapers. So we all have to read them intensely and interactively. It is all there if you look - every single day.

Those of you inclined to economic analysis could read "[The Rise of the Creative Class](#)," by Richard Florida.

For most of us, however, "[The Middle of Everywhere](#)," by Mary Pipher would be a good place to start in that it talks about how Lincoln, Nebraska has turned itself into a multicultural city.

Why can't we all read it at once? You know, like Oprah? Or the way the City of Chicago all read "To Kill A Mockingbird?"

Maine foundations could make this happen if they wanted to do it.

***Second, on a state level we have to understand that we will all have to give up some tax money to make this happen.***

We have to make do with less now to make things better in the future.

Like the Trustees of little Washington Academy, we have to take some risks.

That means that we cut other programs - maybe very worthy programs - and we put resources into the effort.

I know that this is not politically popular.

If you wonder about why the candidates aren't saying any of what I am saying, just listen to how it would sound!

“People of Maine. If elected Governor, I will reduce existing programs - including local aid for education - in order to use that money to attract people from around the world to come here and live in Maine. I know that your kids are gone. I know that good jobs are very scarce. I know that your taxes are high. But it has to be done. So elect me and I'll do it.”

Well, that wouldn't probably work very well, would it?

Still, some things have to be done.

Our governmental structure currently places the initial burdens of settlement on the cities where newcomers arrive. Our laws make those towns responsible. We must change that. It won't cost much and it has to be done.

I believe that the cities of Portland and Lewiston are doing a great job with the resources that they have, but that other towns are doing nothing. Too many cling to their zoning laws and their budget print outs. They say there are no jobs and no room in the schools and no housing.

And not-too-deep, they really hope that no one comes there way.

This makes no sense.

It is classic game theory where each town is following its own self interest to the detriment of the whole state.

This has to change.

Once we all see migration and immigration as a benefit to all of us, it is *state* government must take action.

That is why the next Governor and Legislature must make changes in the way we pay for education, housing, law enforcement and social services to spread the short term costs inherent with new arrivals.

Small formula shifts in existing state programs spread across statewide expenditures will make major changes for those communities who see a rising population base.

Because we will all share the long term gains, we should all pay the short term costs.

***Third, Maine has no one-stop place for new citizens when they arrive in our communities.***

Whether they come from Pakistan or Croatia or from Miami or Des Moines, new arrivals are on their own.

In Portland, Catholic Charities of Maine does the best it can by operating a center focused primarily on refugees. In the wake of the post Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> immigration restrictions, however, even it may be forced to close for lack of governmental funding. To my knowledge, no other Maine community offers a single place to go for new arrivals.

I therefore call on our state government - along with foundations - to support the Catholic Charities and Franco-Heritage Center initiatives and to support the establishment of "Welcome Centers" - the kind that exist all across America - to alleviate the fears of those first weeks and months of anyone's arrival to our State.

Right now, it wouldn't be hard for a new arrivals in Maine to think that they are not welcome and that they "should go back where they came from..."

***Fourth, The economic traditions of most of these peoples are that of small business and natural resource based products.***

Small business and natural resources have always been the core of the Maine economy. It is also the core of the culture of most of the world's immigrant populations.

This should be a fit if we work at it.

We should obviously work with new arrivals to help them start new businesses and, while we are at it, go out of our way to occasionally purchase goods and services from them.

I cannot come here tonight to speak without mentioning the tragic deaths of 14 migrant Latino workers who were killed in an accident in Aroostook County.

They were working in the Maine woods - thousands of miles from their families - in jobs that employers cannot fill with Maine workers.

Their deaths struck at the souls of the people of the County and Maine. Maine people donated thousands of dollars to their families.

Those men who do this work - like those who were killed - are in this country legally. Can each of us just imagine how much they miss their families? Isn't there a way that we as a

state can work to have their families join them? Have their kids come and fill up those empty schools? Have those families provide the labor so needed to make our agricultural economy strong?

A risk? You bet. A risk we should explore? Definitely.

***Fifth, we need to build some housing.***

Maine needs housing construction for our own kids and for any who want to come to our state.

I say this fully aware that for most of us of my generation - which is the generation the dominates Maine and country right now - more people does not mean a better life. It means more cars and more houses dotting our pristine landscapes and more people we don't know with strange ways that can be unsettling.

Our state government must take the lead and help the private sector make it happen.

***Sixth, many of our immigrants and refugees held professional positions in their native countries. Our professional boards and agencies must learn to work with those professionals who come here who might have been educated in different ways.***

State boards and agencies should be flexible and understand that there are many ways to practice what they do. It doesn't have to be "the American way" to get the job done. These agencies must be flexible and respect the experience that is brought here from other cultures.

We are making some progress in the area of education. 50% of Maine teachers are over 45 and 10% are over 55. As the Newcomer Extended Teacher Education Program (ETEP) at USM has shown, immigrants who taught in their home countries can quickly qualify to do so here.

The entire University system could take the lead in that effort. I see that the Dean of my law school is here. Last week while at that dinner before the movie, I talked to a Serbian woman who practiced law for ten years in Belgrade before the war forced her to leave and join family in Los Angeles. Today she is a law student at Rutgers because that school gave her a full year's credit for her experience.

Maine should do that and more. Our law school and our public policy school and our business school and our nursing school - all should be out there scouring our existing immigrant community and those of other state's looking for applicants.

Why? Don't we have enough lawyers? Of course we do, but not that speak Serbo-Croatian! If we are to attract individuals from other places, what better way than to encourage professionals from their culture to come here to smooth the transition of those who will follow.

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***Seven, No one can understand the value of the American banking and legal system until we travel to another country.***

New arrivals are therefore often fearful of fully participating in our economy because they do not know where to go for legal and financial assistance. It is therefore important for the leaders of the Maine banking and legal community get to work on this problem. They should compile a list of institutions and lawyers who have the technical expertise and the language skills in order to welcome new arrivals as full customers and clients so that they will be able to participate in the American experience.

***Eight, we must stop doing bad things from happening.***

Maine isn't any different from other places in that there are those are intolerant of differences.

While I am risking disbarment for saying so, I don't think that law suits are the way to multiculturalism in Maine. I think instead that when we see people or institutions or candidates "not getting it," we should say so.

We should be sure that programs such as those at USM that are led by Steve Wessler - who for years worked with me at the Office of Attorney General - are fully funded. Indeed, the Lewiston/Auburn Chamber of Commerce came up with the funds to put civil rights mediators into the Lewiston schools to help deal with recent tensions.

No one ever thinks that they are being discriminatory or prejudiced. They just tell jokes or say "if everyone were like me everything would be all right."

There is no place in Maine for inappropriate behavior. There is no place for the perpetuation of racial or ethnic stereotypes.

We should all collectively just not let that happen.

***Nine, Maine foundations should commission research projects on everything I have said tonight.***

You know, I might just be wrong about this. After all, I'm no expert.

But whether I am right or wrong, we need finely honed data upon which to make decisions and that data does not exist.

Some places in our state - notably several state agencies, individuals such as State Economist Laurie Lachance and State Demographer Dick Sherwood - have done extraordinary work. The Muskie School and the Margaret Chase Smith Institute fine work are adding to our knowledge base everyday.

But all are limited by funds from doing much extensive research and, as I have noted, the economic development reports are done on the cheap and do no original research.

Our state's leaders cannot do the right thing if they don't have the correct information.

We have to really reach out to our kids - those who are here and those who have left - to find out why they left and why they are not coming home.

We have to study communities that have aged and see what they have done right and what they have done wrong.

Maine foundations have to give our decision makers - and that means all of us - the hard data we need to decide these issues.

And the time to do that is now.

***Ten, we must take risks.***

Risk taking is hardly an easy thing to do.

Thing of what I have suggested this evening.

... Invest public money that is needed in the short term for long term goals that may never be reached.

... Cut worth programs....

... Take in students from other countries to our public graduate schools even as we turn down deserving Maine kids....

.... Consider bringing impoverished Latino families into our poorest counties ...

.... Spend money on research when we don't have enough to meet our human needs...

.... encourage public schools to act like Washington Academy ....

The list goes on and on.

And as I said, none of it may work.

Or more likely, some of it will work but it won't be enough to change the basic outlines of our state's future.

But before we take the safe route and ignore my message, think of the stark alternatives.

And then start taking the risks.

*Eleven, our new Governor must lead on this issue.*

First, symbols are important.

When Governor King came to Lewiston and told the Somali community that they were welcome, it was very, very important - at least as important as any program or task force.

Along with our great Attorney General Steve Rowe, Governor King said “we want you here in Maine,” and for that simple statement he deserves great credit.

Second, policy is important and that is being shown in other states.

We must do it here.

There are many states who have taken action - Pennsylvania, Minnesota and West Virginia - but one stands out.

Four years ago, the State of Iowa - faced with many of the same demographics that we face - elected a new Governor - Tom Vilsack.

He didn't take the easy route and ignore problems that might not appear until after he left office.

He went out and put together a strategy.

He engaged the entire state in a dialogue on the aging and diversity issue.

Leading citizens, several of whom I have talked to in getting ready for these remarks, set goals and began to put together strategies.

The strategy was attacked and the debate is continuing, but they are engaged in a real life discussion.

But the issue is before the people of their state. They talk about it. They debate it. They reach out. They are not in denial. And numbers are slowly changing.

Indeed, when you now go the Official Web Site of the State of Iowa, the State of Iowa now proudly identify their most visited link as “Moving to Iowa!”

Finally, No matter what we do, there will be no miracles. But hard work is a hallmark of our state. We are a great and tolerant state.

I have no doubt that we can move in the right direction if we but try.

We can't be a state that says it wants progress, but doesn't want change.

We are better than that.

And I believe that we will make that clear to the whole country before we are through.

