

“Immigration and Diversity in Maine: From Opportunity to Necessity”

Bates College

October 20, 2014 (As Amended October 27, 2014)

The Hon. James E. Tierney

Former Attorney General of Maine

Director of the National State Attorney General Program,
Lecturer in Law, Columbia Law School

Director of the State Attorney General Clinic, Lecturer in Law,
Harvard Law School

Introduction:

The Hon. Margaret Rotundo

Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations, Maine
House of Representatives

Director of Strategic and Policy Initiatives at the Harwood
Center for Community Partnerships

Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

Our Speaker this evening, James Tierney, is no stranger to Bates College, Androscoggin County and the people of Maine.

While Jim’s work now too often takes him away from Maine – he is the Director of the National State Attorney General Program at Columbia Law School and a Lecturer-in-Law at Harvard Law School – he remains a Lisbon resident and his roots, his thoughts and his family clearly remain here with us.

For ten years, Jim served as our Attorney General. Prior to that time, he served 8 years in the legislature representing Lisbon and Durham with 4 as House Majority Leader.

A graduate of Brunswick High School, the University of Maine and the University of Maine, School of Law, Jim is joined this evening by his wife and Bates alum, author Elizabeth Strout.

We have asked Jim to speak tonight on “Immigration in Maine,” for a specific reason.

12 years ago, Jim gave the 2002 Distinguished Honors Graduate Lecture at his alma mater, the University of Maine, entitled “Diversity in Maine: An Opportunity.”

That speech, that will be linked to his remarks this evening on the Bates College website, was the first time anyone clearly and forcefully argued that the demographics of Maine – the aging of Maine – posed a looming challenge for Maine citizens and, further, that the aging is inextricably connected to Maine’s lack of racial and cultural diversity.

That 2002 speech was read by virtually all of Maine’s leaders.

Governor King read it and made his Cabinet read it.

The Chief Justice read it and assigned it to all of his Judges.

The Congressional Delegation read it and assigned it to their staffs.

The Legislative leadership and many members read it and shared it.

Editorial Boards, university leaders, academics from many disciplines read it, and Jim repeated the speech several times including here in Lewiston at the Great Falls Forum. The substance of his remarks had a significant impact on how Maine sees itself and formulates its policies.

We have invited Jim back to revisit the subject of that speech and, to explore the implications.

It is my great honor to introduce to you Jim Tierney.

Remarks:

Thank you, Peggy, for inviting me back to Bates to speak on “Immigration and Diversity in Maine: An Opportunity and a Necessity.”

And thank you for your service to the City of Lewiston and the State of Maine where as a member of the Legislature, you Chair our Appropriations Committee that is tasked with creating a budget that memorializes both our realities and our hopes.

It is fitting we are here at Bates College – a great Maine citizen and a courageous institution committed since its founding to equality and justice.

And it is fitting that we are in the Muskie Center – named for extraordinary Bates alum and one of our country’s great leaders, Edmund S Muskie.

Senator Muskie, born 100 years ago at 231 Knox Street in Rumford, went on to become our Governor, a leading United States Senator and our Secretary of State.

Ed’s father – Stephen – never again saw his family after his father, Ed’s grandfather, spirited him out of Russia at age 17 in order to avoid military service for the czar.

Although Stephen had learned some English before he landed in Rumford, Polish was still the family language. His name, “Muskie,” was created by Stephen probably while standing in front of the Rumford Town Clerk because, according to a recent biographer, it only had six letters and would fit on the window of his Congress Street tailor shop.

Ed Muskie was the son of immigrants and spoke only Polish until he was five years old.

And, yes, I am delighted to be here to revisit the remarks that I made on immigration and diversity 12 years ago.

Let me start with my conclusion.

I believe that it is essential for Maine to do everything we can to attract and support bringing families to our state and that includes immigrant families.

The basis for that conclusion is not found in my political or moral and economic philosophy.

It is found in the cold, hard numbers that I will present this evening.

I had assistance for my research for tonight's presentation from Bates College Junior Nicole Bermudez' 15 and I want to thank her for her help.

The bottom line is self evident.

Maine is old – very old - and therefore needs more people. Everyone agrees on that point.

On September 24, 2014, Maine Governor LePage said “We have more people in Maine dying than being born....If we’re going to sustain the Maine society, we need more people. We need younger people.”

Because we are last in the country as a percentage of young people, Maine lacks enough people of child bearing age to be able to birth our way out of our aging demographics.

Portland Press Herald: October, 2013

University of Southern Maine economist, Charles Colgan, gave a keynote address to a conference on aging in Maine where he said, “People assume that if we could just keep our young people here, it would solve the (aging) problem....there are not half enough of them (young people) because not enough young people are born here. We have to get people from other places to move here. We’ve got to get more people in.”

Maine is also the whitest state – 96% white as compared to 64% for the rest of the country, and because 93% of the population growth in the United States now comes from the non white populations, Maine is being left out.

Maine is therefore one of two states that is actually losing population.

Taken together, this means that the people we need to attract will have to come from someplace else and Maine must get used to the fact that our new arrivals will not look like us.

As I said in 2002, none of this is about anything anyone has done. It isn't about any specific office holder or political party or tax rate or social service program or even the weather. This isn't about being liberal or conservative.

Maine demographics are the result of immigration from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and from birthrates that occurred because of a war that ended 70 years ago.

I am going to make my case for this proposition tonight. In addition to my delivered remarks, there will also be posted on the Bates College website a much longer paper that is replete with statistical data.

I thank Bates for making that website available to those who might wish to delve into this issue further, and I hope you do.

The truth of what I am saying is only a few clicks away for anyone who wants to look at the numbers.

I urge you to do your own research, and if you do, you will see the truth of the story I am about to tell.

Maine is not at all different from the rest of white America and this is why we are only marginally different from New Hampshire and Vermont.

When I gave those remarks in 2002, I deliberately did not want to sound alarmist.

Wherever I could, I avoided the darkest predictions, and I laced my speech with personal stories of friends and neighbors and family members who had left Maine not because of the economy, but because of our lack of diversity.

I thought being alarmist would put off my audience, but in looking back perhaps I was wrong.

Perhaps I should have rung a bell of alarmism as loud as I could, because right now we are 12 years deeper into a demographic hole – and there are voices now in Maine – perhaps a majority – who do not understand that we have to stop digging that hole even deeper.

I am fully aware that my first point – Maine is aging – has been generally accepted. I will therefore make that point mostly in my written remarks.

I am also aware that my second point – that the aging is connected to race – has not been accepted or even generally discussed.

And that is why I am here tonight.

Maine elected leaders do not want to talk about race.

I used to be an elected official. I understand why it makes no sense for someone running for office to talk about bringing more black and brown and Asian people coming to Maine.

I also really understand why we do not talk about race.

I have lived here all of my life and the truth is that we like things the way they are.

A poll in the *Bangor Daily News* last week reports that an 88% of us like living here.

Despite the problems, we believe Maine is a great place to live.

The poll show what those of us who choose to live here already know: Sure, quality jobs are scarce, taxes are high, winter is cold and three paper mills have announced this year that they'll close, but most of us still love Maine.

Q4. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<i>Base: All adults</i>	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>Somewhat agree</u>	<u>Somewhat disagree</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>TOTAL AGREE</u>	<u>TOTAL DISAGREE</u>
I enjoy living in Maine	62%	27%	7%	2%	3%	88%	9%
I feel safe in my community	49%	37%	7%	3%	3%	87%	10%
I plan on living in Maine for at least the next five years	67%	18%	5%	4%	6%	85%	9%
Residents of other states have a positive view of Maine	21%	40%	19%	7%	13%	61%	26%
I am optimistic about where my community is heading	21%	39%	25%	8%	7%	60%	33%

64% of us were born here and have lived in Maine all of our lives.

While we may like Maine this way, we are on an unsustainable path, and being a leader means talking about unavoidable and perhaps to some unpleasant realities.

I didn't want to give that speech in 2002. I researched for months trying to find another speaker who would deliver the message that was so obvious to me. In the absence of a speaker, I looked in vain for a report or an agency or an advocacy group that described the demographic problems that were so clear.

The only person I could find was Richard Sherwood who held a position, long since abolished, as State Demographer, and he told me that no one ever said what I was planning to present – and he wished me well.

Let's look at some of the numbers and see what they say.

“A few aspects of Maine's demographic picture stand out: an older population with a large number of baby boomers, relatively few children, and low numbers of racial and ethnic minorities,” the report states.”

<http://www.maine.gov/economist/econdemo/article.shtml?id=501734>

Another report, [Population Outlook to 2030](#), notes a report produced by the Governor's Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

Maine in 1980 was the 12th oldest state. In 1990, we were the 8th oldest. In 2000, we were the 4th oldest.

Today we are the oldest.

In 2002, I pointed out that from 1990 to 2000, Maine median age grew from 34 to 38.6

Today, Maine's median age is 43.9 - the highest in the country ***and an extraordinary acceleration in just 12***

years and the highest in the United States, but almost identical to the national white median age of 42.3.

According to the U. S. census, in some counties in Maine those over 65 exceed 25%.

The AARP reports that Maine has the nation's highest proportion of baby boomers of any state– **29 percent of our 1.3 million residents were born between 1946 and 1964** – and we are turning 65 at a rate of 18,250 a year

And the percent of our population that is young people is dropping fast.

In 2000, the US Census predicted that by 2025, the percent of Maine people under 20 would drop from 27% to 22%

But we are fading much faster than the 2000 predictions.

We hit 20% three years ago.

Today only 18% of Maine residents are under 20

Percentages can be confusing, so let's look at actual numbers of kids in schools.

There are 22,000 fewer students in Maine schools (K-12) today than when I gave that speech in 2002.

At 22 kids a class, that is 1000 fewer classrooms.

I want everyone to think about that.

It means fewer high school graduates

And of course, fewer kids to fill our college campuses as evidenced by the dramatic drop in the actual number of Maine kids in Maine colleges – not the percent, but the number.

The University of Maine system – in figures issued on September 11th – had a 4.9% drop in students from Maine in just one year.

We just don't have the kids, and we won't be having kids because there are simply too few people living in Maine of child bearing age.

12,800 babies were born in Maine in 2013, and there are 13,400 kids entered kindergarten last month.

If none of these young mothers move out of state, unless we import some young families, the drop in those in kindergarten will be 700 in just four years – a drop of 5%.

The numbers are so clear and they are obvious if you walk around any town or city or shopping mall in Maine.

You can see the aging wherever you go.

But you cannot see what is not there.

You cannot see our lack of diversity because non white people aren't there to see.

I have been struggling as to how to communicate something that is invisible to us in our daily lives, and then last Friday I ran into a student of mine and we got talking.

Nina is an Asian American and a graduate of Wellesley College who is about to graduate from Columbia Law School.

I told her I was finalizing a speech on Diversity and Immigration in Maine.

“Good luck with that,” she said. “I went to Portland for a wedding once, and then drove to someplace called Monmouth. I got out of the car and said, ‘Where am I?’” Well, we both laughed. Nina has a great sense of humor, and it was funny.

But what was funny Friday afternoon in New York City is not so funny here tonight.

It was a great question.

Where, in Maine, is Nina? And where are her parents? And where is anyone who looks like Nina? And why would she want to live in a place where no one looks like her?

So this brings me to my second point, e.g. Maine is old precisely because we lack diversity.

Maine exactly mirrors the demographics of the rest of the country, and as I have noted consistently, because Maine remains 96% white, we exactly mirror the demographics of the rest of white America that means we are seeing minimal population growth.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, minorities – non whites - accounted for 93.3% of the nation’s population growth from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011.

Translated into actual numbers, this means that the United States grew by 2.8 million people during the last

three years, but that the total increase for non-Hispanic whites was only 192,000.

But of course here in Maine, we miss all of that growth,

And because we are white, Maine is one of two states that actually lost population.

This rate is obviously accelerating.

From 2000 to 2010, the rate was 91.7%. Non-Hispanic whites, though still a majority of the nation's population, accounted for only 8.3% of its growth over the decade.

And now it is 93%

In America today, significantly more whites are dying than are being born even as the country grows as an accelerated rate.

The fertility rate for the United States – all races combined – is at a record low (63 births per 1000 women ages 15 to 44) and half the rate of 120 that existed the year I was born in 1947. Hispanics have the highest birth rates followed by Afro-Americans, but all categories are down.

50.3% of American children under the age of 5 are non white.

The United States has twice as many people today as we did in 1930 when Social Security was enacted.

States such as California are booming - 38 million people (an increase of 5 million since my 2002 speech) – and almost more than half non white.

Maine obviously has to figure out what to do.

It is my primary contention that Maine cannot develop any real economic development strategy without talking about race.

Editorial from the Christian Science Monitor from June, 2013
when it said:

One demographic fact is clear: As white America ages, it will be relying more and more heavily on hardworking, tax-paying nonwhites to build a prosperous economy and fund programs, such as Social Security and Medicare that seniors rely on. The “we’re all in this boat together” American experiment will have a different shade of hands rowing the oars.

No one has done what I am doing tonight by talking about race and connecting it to our economic future.

There are many, many examples of silence from Maine leaders, so let me take a few from the last few months.

Earlier this month, an eager young GOP activist lawyer wrote in the Bangor Daily News that Maine’s aging problem is not a race issue, but an “opportunity” issue. He wrote that all his young friends will come racing back to Maine if we had “opportunity”. Race has nothing to do with it, he said.

Now, statistics show that even if all of his young friends do come back – which, of course, they won't – Maine still would not have enough people. If he were one of my students or I had him on the witness stand, I'd ask him to supply some kind of evidence for his position or not make it.

And let me tell you, there isn't any. I've looked.

<http://hesaidshesaid.bangordailynews.com/2014/10/03/home/a-debate-on-maines-status-as-oldest-whitest/>

In the Fall of 2014, the Maine Legislature concluded a two year analysis of how Maine government must respond to Maine's aging.

The report wisely assumes the fact of Maine aging, outlines the challenges and suggests some ways to ease the pain. The report is a laudable effort and contains many good ideas. I commend it to you for your review.

But nowhere in this two year effort of research and talk and conferences, and nowhere in the reports and speeches given is there a single mention of race.

I don't understand how two years of work cannot include a single speaker of color or a section in the report on race.

I do not understand that there is no way for non English speakers to even access the report.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZqFLBQrNrc>

Here is another example.

In 2013 and 2014, The *Portland Press Herald* did an wonderful multi part series on the *Aging of Maine* and nailed issue after issue, but the series only talked about race once and then in order to note the obvious fact that, yes, Hispanics have higher birthrates than whites.

<http://specialprojects.pressherald.com/aging/>

Here is another example.

The Maine Center for Entrepreneurial Development (MCED) is an extraordinary non profit that conducts a wide array of events to assist to Maine start ups. Its leadership includes some of the most successful business leaders in Maine.

Their website contains a list of 200 experts available to help Maine business. And because they included pictures of these 200, several of whom are friends of mine, I could see that only one Asian and one Afro American person.

<http://www.mced.biz/community/>

Here is another example.

In September 2014, hundreds of business people packed an all day economic development event in Freeport that was keynoted by our Independent U.S. Senator – who has been a friend of mine for over 40 years and who I admire and support.

There were a series of excellent presentations from Maine entrepreneurs who talked about businesses such as

breweries, car repair, coffee exporting, high tech of all sorts, and, of course, local farming.

But there was nothing on the agenda about any businesses run by people of color – or, in the absence of such businesses – what to do about it.

And there was no one on of color on any of the panels.

I have been told that the theme of immigration did run through several of the presentations.

But if you are looking at this from the outside, you still cannot find anyone who specifically talked about the racial composition of the state.

<http://www.pressherald.com/2014/09/27/maine-envisioned-as-a-magnet-for-growth-talent/>

<http://www.envisionmaine.org/summit/>

The truth that we are often so sure that Maine is such a great place to live that we have convinced ourselves in our economic development efforts that if we just make a concerted effort, everyone else would want to live here, too.

Let me go out on a limb tonight and say that if that were true, we would not be one of two states losing population.

I am fully aware of the pluses and the minuses of doing business in Maine. They are outlined and debated everyday in any number of Maine forums.

While informative and interesting, these discussions rarely include the first issue that faces any employer before expanding or moving to Maine.

Who is going to do the work? And who is going to provide the governmental and social infrastructure for the businesses' employees?

A leading voice in Maine demographics said last year that we had to find 60,000 people to move into Maine over the next 20 years just to maintain our basic services.

http://www.maine4a.org/image_upload/SummitonAgingReport_FINAL.PDF

<http://bangordailynews.com/2013/09/10/politics/economist-without-huge-changes-maines-aging-population-could-lead-to-financial-ruin/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQcOtJYqp44>

Although he did not talk about race, even accepting his numbers, that I think are low, who are these people going to be? Where will they come from? And, of course, what will they look like?

Maine's economic future will not be decided by a tweak to the tax base or the cost of electricity unless and until we are able to communicate in a language that resonates with the rest of the country.

Fully one third (**36%**) of the people of the United States – one in three - are not white. That translates into 110 million people.

Maine is not talking to those 110 million Americans or about them or, just as important, to those national and international businesses run by them or who employ them as they create the jobs we need to survive.

Instead we call ourselves Vacationland.

Maybe it is time to retire that selfie.

What is a vacation, anyway? It is a place to go to escape and get away from the rest of the world.

Perhaps we have succeeded in that more than we want to admit.

We have come to believe our own publicity.

Portland Press Herald, September 25, 2014; U.S. Senator Angus King (I-Maine)

“This is the nicest place to live I’ve ever found,” he said. “That’s our sort of ace in the hole. We’re going to have tough times with energy and climate, but I think we have a really amazing future and that future is going to be powered by people like you.”

We keep thinking like ourselves.

I say to you tonight that Vacationland is becoming fantasy land.

Maine, the way we believe life should be.

And as a lifelong resident, I know how many of my neighbors will respond to my remarks.

“Well, if you don’t like it so much, don’t let the door hit you on the way out....”

I understand that response, and I must admit I have said the same thing when people try and tell me what to do.

I shouldn’t have, but I did.

No one likes to be told what to do, and especially the 88% of who like it here.

But telling people to go away when they present unpleasant truths - even as our population is dropping in real numbers - isn’t exactly going to solve our problem, is it?

We are currently unable to fill many of the jobs we have, so how can walking away make this better?

Call Centers in Old Town, Sept 9, 2014

<http://bangordailynews.com/2014/09/03/politics/lepage-says-cost-of-energy-keeps-wages-low-drives-business-from-maine/>

Lobster Industry Statewide, October 26, 2014

<http://www.pressherald.com/2014/10/26/despite-good-wages-lobster-processing-is-a-hard-sell/>

**CENTRALMAINE MAINETODAY Public Notices
MONDAY OCTOBER 27, 2014**

***Despite good wages, lobster processing is a hard sell
The ability to find and retain qualified workers hampers
the industry's rapid expansion.***

BY JENNIFER VAN ALLEN STAFF WRITER

***Since Kyle Murdock opened Sea Hag Seafood in 2012,
he's battled the same issue many Maine businesses face:
He needs to attract and hold on to good, reliable workers.***

***"It's tough finding people in the labor market, getting
them into work, and getting them trained and
maintaining them," said Murdock, whose plant in
Tenants Harbor employs about 75 people. "It's a huge
concern for us."***

***Workers process cooked lobster claws at Cape Seafood,
one of several companies that have opened plants or
expanded since 2010 to try to add value to Maine's
annual \$365 million lobster harvest.***

***Workers process cooked lobster claws at Cape Seafood,
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***Lobster processing plants like Maine Fair Trade Lobster,
which opened in Prospect Harbor last year, have sprung***

up around the state over the past few years. More than 700 people work in lobster plants at the peak of the harvest. Photo courtesy of Maine Fair Trade Lobster

Murdock is one of many lobster processors who have built plants or made plans to expand in recent years but who say it's a challenge to find people to run the cookers, inspect meat for shells and cartilage, oversee shipping and receiving, and do a variety of other tasks.

“Dealing with access to a good, reliable, skilled workforce is an issue,” said Annie Tselikis, executive director of the Maine Lobster Dealers Association. “It’s one thing to get your natural resource product and it’s another thing to get it to market. It’s just the reality of the industry. A lot of people are required to make this work.”

The processors aren’t the only ones who have to work hard to find and retain workers, Tselikis said. Lobster-related businesses are struggling to find workers to fill jobs at the wharves, the tank rooms, storage trucking, shipping and packaging.

“Having good workers is a big deal,” she said. “When you have something that goes awry and someone doesn’t show up for work, everything is connected.”

I have said that I am going to talk about race and diversity, so let me do so.

Statewide there are some positive signs.

First, the last Session of the Maine Legislature, cooperating on a bipartisan basis, overrode a veto and created a “Welcome Center” in Portland – a suggestion that I made in 2002 – the is designed to assist immigrants who come to Maine with professional degrees from other countries so that they can achieve the necessary licensing and work here.

This is a very positive development, and Lewiston needs a “Welcome Center,” too.

Second, although Maine is 95% white, only 90% of kids under 12 are white – perhaps because of our immigrant populations or perhaps adoptions – and that is progress.

And let’s look at numbers here and talk about our growing African community here in Lewiston and Auburn.

Let me look first to the numbers.

Since I gave my 2002, the number of kids in the Lewiston school population has defied the statewide trends and increased 10% - obviously because of immigration – while the school population for the rest of the Androscoggin County has dropped 15%

Let me repeat that figure.

The number of kids in school outside Lewiston has dropped 15% while the number of students in Lewiston has increased 10%.

This has taken a huge amount of work. Androscoggin County residents and businesses – teachers and social workers and volunteers - have responded in overwhelming numbers in supporting our new neighbors and tutoring and mentoring. Success stories are not hard to find.

In other words, this is exactly what has to happen.

Shortly after my speech in 2002, the wheels started coming off the then recent immigration to Lewiston of a number of Somali families. There is no need to recount “the letter,” the overwhelmingly positive response from Maine citizens to the Somali community and then the back and forth since then.

Rather, let's talk about what happened within the Somali community.

Ten years ago, a large percent of the Somali refugees had come from war and camps in Africa that left deep and painful scars. The first years were therefore triage.

The few refugees who did speak English were able to teach those who arrived the basics that are the hallmark of our country. Free Education. The right to talk to a child's teachers. The fact social services and health care were available to those who were here legally and eligible. They were taught that an honest legal system existed and that even as refugees and not citizens, they had certain core rights.

As I speak to you tonight, huge progress has been made. Still facing challenges, many in the Somali community have achieved citizen and green card status, and work and shop and are a part of the Maine community.

We have between 7,000 and 8,000 Somali and West African residents in Lewiston and Auburn which is the exact reason why these two cities are not following Maine and losing population.

Somalis are an entrepreneurial community set on achieving the American dream here in Maine. Like all of us, they feel the frustrations of our economy, but the goal is long term success and each year brings that success to additional Somali families.

Every contact that I have made within the Somali community makes it clear that they are anxious for two things – education and work.

Hundreds of job applications are filled out at computer terminals in the Lewiston Library or in other locations, and many are working – as have immigrants before them – at jobs

that those of us who have lived here a long time do not want to do.

The first job is obviously the hardest. Without a work history, it often takes people months and months of applications to even get an interview, but they don't give up. Jobs that require written tests remain a challenge.

Somalis have begun as every immigrant group has begun by collecting the carts in the Walmart parking lot and make the beds in local hotels and hospital – just as my mother did when I was in high school and she worked as a chambermaid and a nurses aide.

It isn't easy for long time Maine residents to learn how to work with people who are not fluent in English, but previous Maine generations did it, and so can we.

And it isn't any easier for an unemployed Somali than it is for an unemployed white Maine resident to deal with the shame and the depression and sense of helplessness that comes from repeated job rejections.

But the key is obviously education.

There are a lot of temptations in front of our school children and refugee children must navigate often with minimal assistance from parents who do not understand what it is like to grow up in Maine.

Kids learn English so much quicker than their parents so they have such an advantage over them. Parents want their kids speaking English but then they don't totally understand what they're saying to each other or fighting about.

Teachers report that it is often the children who are the most loyal to their culture and religion that get in trouble the least.

Although progress does not run in a straight line, it continues.

There is a great group in Lewiston called the Somali Bantu Youth Association, which runs US Citizenship test prep classes and literacy classes for adults, mental health case management for all ages, and a huge summer soccer league for kids.

Now we're seeing the African kids who entered the school system in elementary school graduating high school and working in factories, stores, offices, and hospitals. They remember when their parents went hungry in the camps and now they are able to repay all those years of sacrifice by bringing home a paycheck and being role models for their younger siblings.

Some are attending community college to pursue nursing or business degrees. They are viewing their college education as a way to help their community, not a way to escape it.

The past two years we've seen an influx of non Somali asylum-seekers from other parts of Africa. They arrive with vastly different life experiences, as many are well-educated, westernized, and worked in accounting, education, law, etc. before coming to the US. ***Often they had to flee after standing up to the wrong person or not complying with an order to facilitate government corruption.***

Many asylum seekers have the potential of finding good jobs, but they and their families are left stranded in our dysfunctional immigration system that Congress and the President have been unable to resolve.

Maine leaders should assist them families in becoming reunited so that they can fully take their place as your neighbors.

One of the great successes is found in the Lewiston Adult Learning Center. Many parents are starting from square one, learning how to write their names, but they are so

grateful to have this resource and they are diligent and determined students. It is hard to learn a language as an adult, especially when you are not literate in your own language, but they are working hard to learn English and many have earned their GEDs.

Welfare:

But in the face of all of these factors, we continue to have those who do not get it.

Because of recent media stories, I want to talk a little about the issue of race, immigration and welfare.

I am not sure what the word “welfare” means.

In the broadest sense we all receive assistance from the government for a whole variety of protections and benefits and programs.

I am a graduate of public schools as were my siblings, my children and now my eight grandchildren, and no one calls public education welfare even though those without children pay the taxes to pay for the schools.

And Maine is a poor state. Thousands face food insecurity, and if you travel with me to food pantries and public kitchens, you will see that the faces of Maine poverty, like the face of Maine generally, is elderly and it is white.

But for most people the word “welfare,” means general assistance, – core sustenance –that Maine towns and cities administer by means of a combined state and local funding mechanism.

A very few General Assistance applicants are immigrants who are in the United States illegally, and others are those who entered the United States legally but have expired visas and now, having applied and are waiting

for asylum. Still others are here legally with green cards and some are United States citizens.

Whether the state can stop its share of the funding to some of these applicants who are refugees is a matter of constitutional law and I am not going to address it.

What I can do is contextualize it.

I have already laid out the case that Maine desperately needs more people that will have to come from somewhere else and, no matter where they come from, will increasingly be not white.

I understand that if you look at this issue from the immediate perspective of the local welfare budgets of Portland and Lewiston, the number of asylum welfare applicants may seem large.

But if you are looking at the long term needs of Maine, it is not.

In Portland, in 2014, we are talking less than 1000 people, and in Lewiston according to an article written by the Mayor last week, we are talking far fewer. Since July, only 23 asylum seekers have shown up in Lewiston looking for General Assistance. This is an extraordinarily low number.

In any event, I believe that the costs of new arrival immigrants – and that includes not only general assistance but also school costs, language education and the rest - should not fall so heavily on the shoulders of the taxpayers of Portland and Lewiston.

Immigration is a positive for the entire state, so the initial costs of their arrival needs to be spread into the tax base of the entire state.

And, while we are at it, Maine government needs to actively help immigrants resolve their status and where appropriate, get full, green card status so they can begin working, and help reverse the population declines.

As reported in the Portland Press Herald, for the first 11 months of fiscal year 2014, Portland provided roughly \$3 million in General Assistance to 522 households – representing 937 individuals – whose asylum applications were still pending.

That figure is up from 312 households and \$1.8 million in General Assistance expenditures in fiscal year 2013 – and nearly triple the figures from fiscal year 2011.

<http://www.pressherald.com/2014/09/14/asylum-seekers-living%E2%80%A8-limbo-maine/>

We don't always want to believe good news.

In September, Governor LePage announced Maine crime statistics are down statewide by an astounding 9% in one year – and the increases that do exist are not in Maine cities such as Lewiston and Portland that do have new immigrants – but still there are Mainers who fear that immigrants have created a crime wave.

Maine people do not see this looming demographic crisis for a number of reasons.

First, the sword has not yet fallen. As I said earlier, most baby boomers are still working and are healthy and over 70% of Maine boomers say we want to keep working after retirement age.

I am 67 and am working hard and at some emotional level think I will be able to do so forever.

But check with me again in five years when I am 72. Or in ten when I am 77. You will get a different answer from me, and from all of my boomer cohorts.

Second, Mainers are stubborn.

We like things the way we are and aren't about to change.

Third, Mainers repeat and repeat rumors as fact.

A friend and Lisbon neighbor said to me unprompted last summer – right in the middle of the Moxie Day parade which, for those of us from Lisbon, is sort of like interrupting a religious service - that his ancestors came to Maine from Slovakia to work, not like “these people who come here now” who, according to him, do not work.

I asked him how he knew that, and he shrugged and we went back to the parade.

Fourth, if you have never lived anywhere else, the “other” creates fear.

The Pew Research Religious and Public Life Project, entitled, “How Americans Feel About Religious Groups” recently released a report.

Here are the complete

findings: <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/07/16/how-americans-feel-about-religious-groups/>

It concluded what we already intuit, e.g. that knowing someone from a religious group is linked with having relatively more positive views of that group.

This includes all religious groups including, of course, Muslims.

And in case you don't know it, there are 2.6 million Muslims in the United States.

And *fifth*, some leaders – liberal and conservative - simply believe that if we do nothing, everything will be fine.

In other words, they are in denial.

We have to get past these five factors that are blocking our vision as to Maine's future.

The sword hasn't fallen, we are stubborn, we repeat rumors as fact, we don't know anyone who doesn't look like us and we are in denial.

We have to get past our own short term self interest.

As a young state legislator 40 years ago, I watched this phenomenon when on the first Saturday in March, on the floor of the Durham Town Meeting, I saw how parents supported the school budget tooth and nail until the day their youngest child graduated, at which time they joined protests against wasteful school spending.

I know a retired state and federal employee in Lisbon who draws two government pensions and complains bitterly about, well, everything. The truth is that he actually complains about the free coffee he gets at McDonalds.

I guess that is just the way it is for some people, and I know that I am not going to be persuading them with these remarks, ***although you will be able to get their perspective tomorrow in the posts on any newspaper article that might run because of what I am saying tonight.***

But Maine has always overcome that sort of nativist negativism, and will again.

The majority of Maine people are practical and honest and solve problems when faced with them, so that is what I am doing tonight.

But I say tonight that Maine cannot continue to do nothing.

An aging population changes so many things.

In a democracy, public resources follow the immediate needs of those who live here, and as the various reports on aging outline, we are running out of time for solutions.

Aging is requiring us to reexamine of our professions.

And now there is a chorus of concern as the leadership of every profession looks around the room and sees either a lot of white hair or the results of a lot of color from a bottle.

I am a lawyer and we have an aging of bar and serious shortages of lawyers in an increasing part of our state.

We are seeing shortages in all sorts of jobs because of a lack of people.

The low unemployment rate is not always a good thing if it means that the work force lacks flexibility.

We cannot do nothing.

And we cannot remain isolated without shortchanging ourselves and, more important, our kids.

Mainers are the losers when we live in this all white world.

Professor Robert Glover is a Professor at the University of Maine and he is in the process of finalizing a remarkable piece of research.

First, some background.

Numbers at the University of Maine from 2012 indicate that out of 9,100 students, 300 – or 3% - non white students enrolled as undergraduates – half Afro American and half Hispanic.

This means that it is highly likely that our students at the University of Maine have never met and socialized with a person who is not white.

This is about the same as the University of Vermont (5%) and the University of New Hampshire (4%), but falls seriously behind other states where leaders have been aggressive in courting minority students.

The University of Idaho has 1000, the University of Wyoming 1200 and the University of Minnesota is at 10% as is the Universities of Nebraska and Iowa – all states that have affirmatively courted immigrants.

Professor Glover and a number of honors students conducted a survey of University of Maine students.

The gave students – randomly selected – identical hypotheticals about an illegal immigrant – one who was without education and a job, and the other who has a college education and is successfully – albeit illegally.

The descriptions were identical with one difference.

One was named Alex Stevenson who was an illegal from Sweden, and the other was named Alex Garcia who was an illegal from Mexico.

I will leave it to Prof. Glover to release his findings, but I think you can intuit the response from University of Maine students who have never met a Hispanic.

Alex Garcia? Whether unemployed or educated, is a person to be feared (“he is taking my job...he will want welfare...”)

Alex Stevenson, well, we love that guy whether he is illegal or has an education. He is from Sweden, so he is not a threat to me.

Professor Glover’s draft conclusion is very logical and consistent.

We manipulated a) ethnicity, and b) the type of economic threat that the migrant represented. Preexisting attitudes about immigrants shaped not only the policy attitudes the respondent would hold, but whether they correctly interpreted the basic facts of these narratives. Many individuals who came into a study with attitudes predisposed to fear migrants would misinterpret basic facts of a narrative that didn’t correspond to their preexisting view. So—takeaway insight. Pre-existing attitudes (often with subtle racial or ethnic bias) shapes not only your policy preference, but your likelihood of understanding nuance, complexity, ambiguity.

The truth is that if you live with and interact with only those of your own ethnic and racial composition, you are more likely to absorb stereotypes and fears because you have no personal reference.

Because Maine lacks diversity even in our universities, we make it very hard for our kids to understand the world they are entering.

If you give kids the chance, you can see the difference.

Come with me to a Lewiston High School athletic event – I was at a soccer game just last week - and you can see with your own eyes how young people play together and cheer together and laugh together for a common end, and it is so clear how those skills will carry with them as they enter the work world.

In this October 25 article in the Lewiston Sun Journal, we see proof positive of this point.

In a similar message, sitting Lewiston Mayor Robert Macdonald, well known for his stance on curbing welfare fraud and forcing able-bodied people back into the workforce, ruffled feathers again in 2012, saying the large number of immigrants in Lewiston was costing the city too much money. In a documentary aired on the BBC, Macdonald said, “You (immigrants) come here, you come and you accept our culture and you leave your culture at the door.”

On the soccer team, that kind of divisiveness didn’t — and doesn’t — exist. The players came together as a group, shared a common interest and moved forward.

“We were united,” Saban said. “We were friends. We became close, people that would help each other out. Our team was really strong and tried to diminish and eliminate that hatred. We were a brotherhood as teammates. We were people who were together. We live in one city, one town, we shared everything, our school, teachers, we became united and we didn’t care what other people thought. We were brothers. We were taking care of each other. This happened through soccer.”

....

They talked. They communicated. They tried to learn about each other and built understanding.

“At that age, that’s the time you’re trying to discover things as a person,” Saban said. “Playing soccer with the white kids, I remember being asked a lot of questions. They were curious about my life. It was having a dialogue. I was asking them questions too.

“That’s how we learned about each other’s culture. Kids are willing to learn more about the world around them. Being curious and being inquisitive about life and asking questions was a way to get to know each other. We had a lot of conversations and that’s how we got to know each other.”

McDonough and Saban are still close friends. McDonough is studying at Boston College, where he’s taken the lessons he learned to a city that oozes diversity.

“What I learned is that you have to talk about it and not hide away from the fact that there are things you don’t understand about somebody else’s culture,” McDonough said. “If you ask them, they’ll be more than willing to tell and share their culture with you.

“That’s one thing I’ll always love about Lewiston and appreciated that I was brought up in a diverse community. So when I got here, I’m like other people that are here and we’re working together — it was just like a really easy transition.”

Passing the torch

<http://www.sunjournal.com/news/local-sports/2014/10/25/high-school-soccer-changing-face-lewiston-high-school-soccer/1601321>

Come with me to Portland High School and see a school play or concert.

Come with me and talk to our Reservists and National Guard, who when activated were thrust into a multi ethnic world.

Maine young people are losers if they wallow in unknowing prejudice because they who have had no exposure to diversity. We are leaving our kids at a serious competitive disadvantage in a world of brown and black skinned people. What are we to do?

Immigration

As you can see, I am an unabashed supporter of getting people to move to Maine and helping them when they arrive.

I want people to move to Maine from other states.

My staff at Columbia is a case in point.

You should come see it. It is a shrine to Maine. It contains my desk from when I was attorney general, photos of machines I used to operate when I worked nights at Pejepscot Paper Company, watercolors of the Maine coast and a faded group shot of the Maine Legislature in 1976.

My staff is regularly sent articles ripped from Maine newspapers and regaled with stories about my many Maine friends and colleagues.

Because I am the boss, they have to listen to me.

But when I asked them if they would consider moving to Maine – one is the is a lawyer and the son of two Pakistan born physicians and the other was born and raised in Grenada – well, like Nina, they just laughed at me.

The truth is that for many reasons, people are not going to move from other states to Maine, and this is why I am such a supporter of immigration.

I understand that that is going to cost money – taxpayer money – and I believe that it should come from us all and not just those that live in the cities where immigrants first arrive.

Maine at every level needs to be open to those from somewhere else regardless of whether their faces are black, brown or yellow, and regardless of whether they arrive speaking English or practice a religion that is not ours.

I believe that Maine should follow the lead of states like Iowa and Wyoming and Nebraska and encourage immigration of new citizens from all over the world.

Let me take a look at Minnesota that saw its demographics looking like Maine's – old, white and cold – and took steps to do something about it.

And in 2002, I spoke of the Hmong population.

Hmong are a tribe of Laotian peoples who, after we lost the Vietnam War, were in danger of violence from the communists because they had supported our efforts.

Minnesota put out a helping hand, and 8000 Hmong tribesmen came to the Twin Cities from the jungles of Laos in the 1970's.

In 2002, I noted that – after some terrible years of poverty and gang violence – things were looking up. Government had supported the community with welfare, education and social service support, and in 2002, there were then 40,000 Hmong, 800 Hmong owned businesses, a Hmong Bar Association and Chamber of Commerce and a Hmong State Senator.

I checked for tonight and found that all of this is remains true, except now there are now 66,000 Hmong – an increase of 46% in ten years – unemployment is low and second and third generation Hmong families are moving to the suburbs.

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2011/07/14/census-minnesota-hmong-population-up-46-percent/>

Or take a look at Nebraska – a state of 1.8 million not that much larger than Maine – whose University boasts of its constant monitoring and support for immigration in that state.

Nebraska has continued to increase population – 2.5% over the last three years and 10% over the last 15 – due to immigration and support for Hispanic agricultural workers. Nebraska has gone from 93% white in 1990 to 86% in 2010.

https://sdn.unl.edu/sdn_immigration

Maine has to get in on this and compete with the other states facing the same demographic crisis. Maine must take affirmative steps now even though they might not bear short term success. This sort of work takes time, but we have to begin right now.

If Maine wants to survive – not grow, but survive – we have to go get more people.

The irony is that as the economy improves, there will be less reason to move anywhere, but certainly less to move to Maine.

The salaries are going to be bid up as people become a scare commodity.

We must do what we can to promote economic development and that debate appropriately rages on regulation levels, minimum wage, tax structure, and all the rest, but that is not all that we can do.

Let me tell you are hard truth.

Immigration is always disruptive

Almost no one moves simply because they want to be in a new place.

Immigrants love their home as much as we love ours.

The call of home to them is deep and powerful, so only powerful disruption causes anyone to leave.

Immigrants always arrive traumatized and they always have.

Wouldn't you be traumatized? Any of you?

Ripped from your home? Poor. Afraid. Confused. Doors behind them closed.

Immigrants are often unable to speak the language. Their loved ones missing and gone. They are in unspeakable pain, but cannot communicate it to anyone.

Wouldn't you be traumatized?

There are no memorials at the docks of Ireland or Italy or Greece or in Quebec at the docks and railway stations where immigrants left.

But in the face of this, Maine has a long and proud history of immigration.

Just as World War One gave Maine Ed Muskie, the world crisis of today can give Maine the Ed Muskies of the future if we are open to it.

Too many of us have forgotten Maine's immigrant heritage.

Ed Muskie was born into a Rumford – twice the size it is today - where local businesses were owned and operated by Greeks and Italians and Poles and Francos and Scot Irish from the Maritimes.

Rumford and so many other Maine towns were far more diverse 80 years ago than they are today.

And Ed Muskie's graduating class – at a time of very high school drop out rates - had 106 members.

Last June, at Mountain Valley High School in Rumford that is Rumford and Mexico combined, they graduated 74.

Let me step back a bit.

In March of 2014, my alma mater, Brunswick High School, put on a student performance of West Side Story. Over 100 kids tried out, and it was a great success.

But West Side Story isn't just a play with amazing songs for high school kids.

It is a story about immigration.

Puerto Ricans v. Italians.

And violence.

And racial hatred

And it ends with a knife fight and murder and with young people dead in the street.

Today, 50 years after that musical was written, the contemporary West Side Story is very different.

While waiting for my coffee last Wednesday, and thinking about tonight, I decided to do something I had never done, e.g. count those in the shop and assess their race. I counted 16 people in the shop. 6 of us were white, and the rest were a mixture of Hispanic, Afro American, Afghan, Asian and mixed.

And I was by far the oldest person in the room.

The West Side is where I now teach. It is where Lincoln Center hosts ballet and opera and symphonies. It is where students of all races walk and laugh and flirt on streets that when I was in college they were too dangerous to be on.

Immigration is hard, very hard – and I do not want to romanticize the experience for either the arrivals or those already here - but it works and gets better when our hearts and our minds and, yes, our wallets are open to it.

And when they arrive, immigrants first seek those of the same language and religion to get a foothold – to be safe.

Ed Muskie's father headed to Buffalo before he took on Rumford.

And there is rarely a red carpet for immigrants, because poor people end up in poor places, and those already there – also poor – almost always push back in fear.

That is why the Irish and the French fought in the streets of Bangor in the late 19th century – because the Irish hated the French who had come to the woods and undercut their wages.

Let me tell you about the 12 year old boy who arrived alone in New York City in the 1920's and had his money stolen in the first 20 minutes he arrived.

And how he then had to walk four miles through a hostile city to the address of a cousin in Brooklyn whom he had never met.

Let me tell you how doors were slammed in his face, how he dropped out of high school to work in a factory that made brushes.

Let me tell you how he met his wife in a factory, and that later there were times, after he had come to Maine, when he and his wife and his four children needed a monthly welfare check to keep afloat.

And let me tell you how for weeks – beset with deep depression for which then there was no help – he would lie in a darkened room and tell his children about his childhood in a far off land to which he would never return.

That boy was my dad.

And all four of his kids – my sister, my brothers and myself - have advanced degrees and have paid taxes and have paid back that welfare a thousand times over.

But my family was not unique.

That story could have been Ed Muskie's.

Or it could have been the story of former US Senator George Mitchell's mother who always spoke with the heavy accent of her Lebanese homeland.

Or it could have been the story of former U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe.

And it could be any number of those of you in this room or within the sound of my voice.

It is a list as long as America.

It is the American story.

Let me talk about the Franco immigration to Maine for a minute, because it is a story that is being forgotten.

Agriculture disaster in Quebec and huge families drove thousands of Quebecers into poverty at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

Younger sons packed up and came to New England, and then went back with money.

Soon they were followed by thousands – first on foot, then on horse, and then by train.

Thousands came off trains here in Lewiston at the Grand Trunk Railway station at the corner of Beech and Lincoln Streets.

There were no passports. There was no “legal” – they just came.

Mill owners paid wages low even by the standards of the day, so whole families had to work to survive. The owners of the mills were among the richest people in the world, and they did it on the backs of men and women and children Franco immigrants.

And when they died, the Brunswick Record in the town where I was raised didn't print their names.

It just said "two Canadians died last week..."

And in the 1920's, as the anti Franco fervor rose, Maine became a center for the Ku Klux Klan and a majority of the Maine legislature wanted to send the Francos back where they came from.

The Klan had a convention in Penobscot County that drew 15,000 people. The Grand KKK Knight drew 800 listeners to the Brunswick Town Hall at a time when there were only 7,000 residents. Torch light Klan parades clogged the streets of Maine town after Maine town.

And here in Lewiston, Klan set bombs went off in Catholic neighborhoods and the Rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church preached Klan venom from the pulpit.

To some in Maine, these strange new arrivals from Quebec, who practiced a foreign religion and did not speak English, were a threat, and they wanted them gone.

They made it as rough as they could, and many did go back.

But after two or three years, the Klan in Maine disappeared. Maine leaders – Republicans all – stood up to the hate. Percival Baxter, Clyde and Margaret Chase Smith, Robert and Eugene Hale, and others – spoke out against the poison even if it meant, in the case of Governor Baxter, that he lost an election.

Maine people were too smart and too caring and too God fearing and too practical to be under the trance of hate for long.

And thank God for the future of Maine, most Francos toughed it out and stayed.

Can you imagine our state without our Franco citizens and heritage?

The legislature passed a law that said no French could be spoken in public school.

Rural legislators liked it because it kept the Francos in less expensive religious schools and away from the non Franco kids.

And it was common for me to see kids graduate from St Johns School in Brunswick and head straight to the mill.

That system was the rule in Brunswick where I was raised and here in Lewiston where our Governor was raised.

When I was in the legislature, we abolished the “no French” rule. It was a fight but we did it and that stain was removed.

And now what lessons have we learned?

We have learned that we want our immigrant children learning English and in our public schools.

We do not want them isolated.

We want them playing for the undefeated Lewiston High School soccer team.

We have made that choice, and it is the right one – but as I said, it costs money.

So we wisely pay for it....

So, let me say again clearly, if we want immigrants, we are going to have to pay for it.

Immigrants are a statewide asset, but are almost always initially a local burden.

It is up to the entire state to pick up the initial costs, or trust me, they immigrants will not come and our future will not be bright.

What are we to do?

Actually, my recommendation is very simple.

Maine does not need a conference on immigration or people of color.

Immigration and race cannot be separate from the aging of Maine, and aging cannot be separate from everything else we talk about.

It has to be on the table everyday.

And when I say “on the table,” I mean the way it is in other states.

But right now we don’t talk about race when talking about the aging of Maine.

Race isn’t talked about when we discuss economic development

Race isn’t talked about when we talk about the future of our education system

Race isn’t talked about when we talk about housing.

Race isn’t talked about when we talk about removing lead abatement.

It just isn't talked about!

We have to change that fact.

That is my only recommendation...pure and simple....

Don't leave the discussion for one political party and don't leave it for special conferences on diversity or in the hands of civil rights organizations or so-called experts who come to speak.

That is exactly the wrong approach

We Mainers can figure this out our demographics and embrace diversity if it becomes a part of our natural and everyday conversation.

I don't want Nina and my staff to laugh at me when I ask them why they aren't moving to Maine.

I want them so say, "tell me more! That is really interesting! That might really work for me and my family."

There is still plenty about which to argue.

I am not saying anyone should agree with anyone else on any of the issues of the day. Like everywhere else we can and should argue about this or that tax or this or that program.

What I am saying is that while we argue about these things we must form a broad Maine consensus so that Maine must reverse our demographic spiral and work together to attract people from other states and other countries to come and share out life with us.

Let me close where I began.

Let me take you back to Rumford on June 16, 1932, where on a hot night in the high school auditorium an 18 year old, six

foot, five inch Ed Muskie stood to give the Valedictorian speech.

Ed closed his remarks as follows:

The road to eventual world peace does not lie in a treaty between governments. Treaties will not remove the inherent distrust of each other that exists between nations.

If we are to treat our fellow man with kindness and respect, recognize the rights of our neighbors, in short, apply the golden rule, we will be on the road to world peace.”

Thank you for inviting me to be with you here this evening.