

## **Maine: Recent Politics in a “Place Apart”**

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Mainers have long claimed a status in national politics that distinguishes their state from even its New England neighbors and still more so from other sections of the country. Their outdated and not always helpful view of Maine helps us to understand the 2002 elections and Mainers’ concern with term limits, citizen initiated referenda, public financing of elections, independent and Green politics, casino gambling, and the growing gap between “two Maines” (roughly the First and Second Congressional Districts) in economic development and much else. Mainers’ self-image retains its currency in the face of deepening divisions on many matters in an outpost perceived as at the “end of the line” that nonetheless exemplifies “the way life should be.” Most of the material for this essay derives from interviews with the four members of Maine’s Congressional delegation in their Washington’s offices in March 2001, as well as newspaper coverage of the 2002 election and subsequent events, the 2002 Maine Voter Survey exit polls supervised by Professor Christian Potholm of Bowdoin College, and the literature’s treatment of Maine and its political culture in American politics.

In the 2002 election, first term Republican Senator Susan Collins and third term Democrat First District Congressman Tom Allen won reelection easily, as expected. However, the open governorship taken by four-term Democratic Second District Congressman John Baldacci and Baldacci’s vacated Congressional seat won by state Senate President Democrat Mike Michaud commanded an exceptional level of national attention and campaign spending. Democrats also captured both chambers of Maine’s legislature, albeit with a one-

seat Senate margin that they claimed by nine votes in a contested recount featuring forty-four disputed ballots.

### **Maine's Political Culture**

Daniel Elazar's influential classification of state political cultures places Maine squarely in his "moralistic" category. Moralistic cultures perceive society as a commonwealth that admires political life for seeking and serving the common good. Such societies value and pursue consensus. Because politics is considered an honorable and constructive activity, officeholders and their political judgment are respected (Elazar 1994, 232-235). For Elazar the alternative political culture, called "individualistic," sees government as, essentially, a utilitarian device to regulate a pluralistic marketplace of competing parties, interests, and policies.<sup>1</sup> Political activity is instrumental, aimed to empower one's favored party or policies. To be sure, Maine, as a part of Massachusetts until 1820, has a moralistic history that originated in Massachusetts Puritanism and was best exemplified in Maine's vanguard role in the temperance movement. Maine retained its moralistic solidarity long after waves of Irish, Italian, and other immigrants had swamped Anglo-Saxon Protestants in Massachusetts. In this sense, Maine retained the Massachusetts political culture longer than Massachusetts itself. The myth took hold of a homogeneous, isolated, consensus-oriented covenant society in which everyone cares for everyone else. At the same time, there is little room for diversity and none at all for multiculturalism. Such a society assimilates or otherwise neutralizes all "outsiders" threatening its cultural uniformity, be they Franco-Americans, political minorities, gays, or our own era's ambivalently welcomed newcomers "from away."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elazar 1994, 230-232. Elazar's third "traditionalistic" political culture does not occur in New England.

<sup>2</sup> Sports columnist John Holyoke typifies the defensiveness-betraying bravado found in "real" Mainers' advice to their presumably better-educated and wealthier

A homogeneous culture neither needs nor desires divisive political competition that might legitimize diverse views and hinder consensus seeking. Maine suffered no such divisiveness while Republicans dominated Maine's politics for a full century after the 1850s. The state's nineteenth-century immigrants, predominantly Roman Catholic Irish and (later) French-speaking Quebecers, posed no threat to the prevailing Yankee Protestant consensus. They gravitated harmlessly to the outnumbered Democrats. Maine's status as a Republican bastion reached its apex when an obscure Kansas governor handily carried the state against President Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 while Roosevelt easily captured every other state except Vermont. Republican control of all aspects of Maine political life loosened in the 1950s, but only after Maine had assimilated its newcomers.<sup>3</sup>

Maine never operated as a pure moralistic society. After all, Mainers have long displayed a "hands off my guns and property" frontier-style possessive individualism that scarcely reflects the moralistic model and may betray Maine's remote location at the nation's eastern periphery. Maine and all of the United States long harbored an individualistic strain with a penchant for pluralism advanced by what Tocqueville had called "voluntary associations" in the 1830s. In Maine a provision for citizen initiated referenda revealed an individualistic political culture as early as 1911. While the moralistic culture encourages all

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neighbors "from away." Holyoke criticizes newcomers' proposal for a North Woods National Park as breaking the "unwritten Maine Law of Being From Away." Namely, "you're not allowed to try to turn our state into the one you're so desperate to escape from. Nor are you allowed to do things to our state you wouldn't or couldn't do to your own. Nor are you allowed to treat us like a bunch of backward-looking, flannel-wearing, tobacco-chewing hicks who can't recognize a good thing, even when it's being driven (albeit politely) down our throats" (Holyoke 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Elazar observes that Edmund Muskie, the Polish-American Democrat who ended the Republican domination of Maine politics in 1954, had to become a "galvanized Yankee" before Mainers would consider voting for him (Elazar 1994, 251). On the differing assimilation experiences of Maine's Irish and Franco-American immigrants, see Palmer (1992).

kinds of citizen participation, referenda subvert consensus and community by making political activity a confrontational winner-take-all struggle to secure majority support for an often-controversial cause. Moreover, citizen-initiated referenda bypass and downgrade elected politicians, whose judgment must yield to the sovereign popular majority.<sup>4</sup> The moralistic and individualistic cultures have much in common, in that both are coercive, conformity imposing, majoritarian, and unfriendly to minorities. Still, their underlying assumptions differ, substantially. In Maine they coexist uneasily without meshing into a single ideology.

We may describe Maine's current political culture as basically individualistic, but with many solidarity-imparting moralistic remnants that have influenced opinion and policies on such diverse issues as local option taxes, ethnic politics, clean elections, casino gambling, resistance to the implications of the "two Maines", the relative popularity of Green and independent candidates, an aversion to strident partisanship, a rejection of official intraparty factionalism, and the persisting view that Maine is a unique "place apart."

### **Maine's Current Political Climate**

Maine's 2002 political scene featured much that can supply context for analysis of the elections, themselves. Maine now has a closely contested two-party system that features 20,000 more Democrats than Republicans. However, "un-enrolled" voters (independents) outnumber both, hold the balance of power and decide the outcome of all but the least competitive elections. Contrary to popular myth about a volatile and independent-minded electorate, most Maine

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<sup>4</sup> More than any other state, Maine combines moralistic Minnesota and Utah's high voter turnout with moralistic Oregon and California's multitude of citizen initiatives. For a critique of Mainers' weakness for citizen initiatives, see Unsigned editorial (2002b).

Democrats and Republicans remain loyal to their party.<sup>5</sup> For example, exit polls suggest that Congressman Allen's conservative 2002 opponent, Stephen Joyce, captured 70% of Republican votes, while Chellie Pingree took 71% of Democrats in her unsuccessful effort to unseat Senator Collins. Even so, with 74% of independents and 81% of Democrats, Allen won easily, as did Collins with 55% of independents and 88% of Republicans.

Mainers' party loyalty is especially notable when we consider that each party has two formally unacknowledged factions that take different positions on certain issues. Republicans are split between traditional secular pro-choice fiscal conservatives but social moderates in the Margaret Chase Smith-Bill Cohen mold, and mostly born-again evangelical pro-life social conservatives represented by the Maine Christian Civic League. Some further divide the moderates between those associated with Cohen like Collins, and those connected with former governor John McKernan like Snowe (his wife) but these personal factions lack policy implications. Although Maine's evangelicals and religious right claim larger numbers per capita than in other New England states and contribute a substantial share of the population and the Republican vote in many towns across the state's interior, they form a clear minority (possibly a third) of the Republican party statewide (Moen 2000, 271-277). Citizen initiatives have helped Republicans by diverting some of the religious right's energies from a party that they could marginalize across much of Maine. Generally, right-wing evangelicals can secure a Republican nomination only in hopeless contests like Jasper Wyman's candidacy against Senator George Mitchell in 1988. Even secular candidates on the Republican right like Joyce have difficulty gaining the GOP nomination in winnable contests.

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<sup>5</sup> Maine has some claim to political quirkiness. It is the only state carried by the losing candidate in all five of the close Presidential elections since the Second World War in 1948, 1960, 1968, 1976, and 2000. So much for "as Maine goes..."

For their part, Democrats are divided between post-materialist middle class liberals who resemble former President Clinton on trade and social issues but track to Clinton's left on spending and economic matters, and blue collar ethnic socially conservative New Deal or Reagan Democrats who resist social and economic change and want protection for traditional values and industries such as textiles, footwear, lumber, paper, potatoes, fish and seafood. Maine's Democrats in Congress must work for Maine industries, but they generally exemplify the first group. However, Michaud, a paper mill worker from East Millinocket, identifies firmly with the second. For the first time Maine's two Congressmen epitomize the two Democratic divisions and call attention to some differences between the two districts. Maine's homogeneity-assuming solidarity and the media's ignoring the subject helped obscure Michaud's historic effort to become the state's first Franco-American member of Congress—and, still more remarkably, a non-college educated blue collar worker in Congress.

Although the Allen-Michaud relationship bears watching, the Congressional delegation has long believed it has to stand together and build coalitions through cross-party caucuses in both chambers. The state's small presence in Washington and the shift of power to Sun Belt conservatives with little interest in the Northeast or in supporting federal spending on the Bath Iron Works and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard defense contracts that are so important to Maine necessitate maintaining a common front and recruiting allies on major concerns. Senator Snowe credits the Maine delegation's policy successes in Congress, particularly in the relatively consensual Senate, on Maine's political culture and their own moderation that permit them to exploit consensus-building talents that transcend party and ideological lines regardless of party control in either chamber. Snowe might have added that Mainers also reelect their members of Congress indefinitely and permit them to exploit their growing seniority.

Although two Senators and a Congressman were denied reelection in the 1970s, since 1980, no incumbent Maine governor or member of Congress has lost a reelection bid. Maine's voters appreciate that repeatedly reelecting members of Congress permits them to accumulate the seniority, expertise, and professionalism a small state needs to influence policymaking. At the same time they enforce a double standard at the state level. A recent citizen initiative referendum imposed a four-term or eight consecutive year maximum on state legislative careers in each house to match the two consecutive term limit on governors. Palmer *et al.* note that, by the 1980s, Maine had begun to develop a cadre of competent professional legislators in Augusta to supplement the "mostly farmers, barbers, and homemakers" who historically had dominated the citizen legislature (Palmer 1992, 194). That was then. Champions of a citizen legislature and those persons who simply had had enough of the imperious and long serving House Speaker John Martin have, subsequently, denied Maine's legislature the institutional memory, experience, and expertise that legislators need to hold their own with the governor and civil servants. Every two years, each party may have to choose an all-new and relatively anonymous leadership team, including a likely one-term Speaker, to prevent "careerism" from distancing legislators from constituents.<sup>6</sup> Further, Maine's political culture absolves elected officials from responsibility for many of their policy positions by relocating policymaking to the electorate, as in the recent referenda to legalize Sunday shopping, forbid assisted suicide, endorse clean elections, impose term limits on state legislators, regulate clear cutting, oppose and, later, support widening the Maine Turnpike (two separate votes), support and, later, retract gays' non-discrimination rights (also two votes), permit "partial birth" abortions, legalize medicinal marijuana—and, possibly soon, impose a cap on property

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<sup>6</sup> For profiles of Maine's new legislative leaders, see Higgins (2002b); Quinn (2002a); Adams (2002); and Quinn (2002b).

taxes and build a \$650 million Foxwoods-style but Las Vegas-designed casino run by Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Indians (Murphy, Edward 2002; Cohen 2002).<sup>7</sup>

Maine deserves special mention for the continuing popularity of independent and Green candidates and for its Clean Election Law. The 1974 election of independent James Longley as governor, followed by Ross Perot's best-in-the-nation 30% showing in the 1992 presidential election (Perot outpolled President Bush, especially in rural and upstate Maine) and Angus King's election and reelection as governor in 1994 and 1998, betray Mainer's relative weakness for candidates who shun party labels. A tendency to support independents does not reflect Mainer's judgment of traditional parties or politicians. Consistent with a moralistic political culture, Maine's Republicans and Democrats compare favorably with other New Englanders on their competence and probity, financial and otherwise. The relative popularity of Maine's Greens (officially designated as Green Independents) also derives in part from an independent voting streak. Many Greens aspire to transform Maine into a pristine postindustrial arcadia.<sup>8</sup> Their romantic vision appeals to financially secure newcomers "from away" like Green gubernatorial candidate Jonathan Carter. Even if, or because, some post-materialist Mainer's, particularly in the First District and near the coast, also endorse the growth-restraining Green platform, most "real" Mainer's will not support what they consider an exotic and elitist boutique party.

Maine's strongest-in-the nation Clean Elections law dating from 1996 and first applied in 2000 survived a stiff test in 2002's costly state elections. The law seeks to encourage Mainer's who, otherwise, could not run for state office to afford campaigns without becoming obligated to private benefactors. Candidates may choose a Clean Election designation, in which they receive

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<sup>7</sup> For economic arguments supporting casinos, see Higgins (2002a). For the Portland newspapers' anti-casino views, see Terkel (2003) and Murphy, Grace (2003).

<sup>8</sup> For the history and policies of Maine's Greens, see Tuttle 2002a.



taxpayers' contributions (set in 2002 at \$4,255 for the state House, \$17,528 for the Senate, and \$286,910 for governor) that can grow if their non-“clean” opponents spend more, provided they limit their private contributions (called “seed money”) to \$500, \$1500, and \$75,000, respectively. There are other requirements, but 60% of the winning 2002 candidates ran “clean”, most of them Democrats. Carter, the only “clean” gubernatorial candidate, received \$900,000 that helped him to win 9.3% of the total vote, the highest vote ever for a Green candidate in a statewide election in the nation’s history—but only around 2% better than his vote for governor, in 1994, before Clean Elections. Many Republicans and some Democrats wish to repeal the law, but Clean Elections seems reasonably secure—even with its nearly \$2 million 2002 expense—not least for its respecting the myth of a citizen legislature and the public spirited aspects of the moralistic political culture.<sup>9</sup>

### **The “Two Maines” and Maine’s Economy**

The conception of “two Maines” (a prosperous and growing south and coastal areas—especially “north Massachusetts” York and Cumberland counties—juxtaposed with a poor, stagnant “other Maine” in the rest of the state) is gaining credibility. Objective measures of living standards, unemployment rates, property tax burdens, and perspectives on social and economic issues betray a widening gap between Mainers in the southern and coastal First District and those in the central and northern Second District. Perhaps reflecting the moralistic political culture’s still-potent myth of state solidarity, Maine’s officials try to downplay the trend (Palmer 1992, 4). The 2002 exit polls revealed clear differences between the two districts on family income, views on abortion rights, and general political orientations that show the First District as more post-material and liberal on lifestyle issues. For example, while only 16% of those

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<sup>9</sup> For the operation of Maine’s Clean Election Law in 2002, see Murphy, Grace (2003) and Tuttle (2002b). On clean elections laws nationwide, that is, in Maine, Arizona, Vermont, and Massachusetts, see Tanner (2002).

polled in the First District reported family income under \$25,000, 27% did so in the Second; at the other end, 21% of the First District indicated a family income above \$75,000 but only 11% in the Second—about 20% in each district declined to reveal family income.

The implications of this difference for positions on economic issues are predictable. Recent polls on the desirability of a casino find Mainers evenly divided. A clear First District majority opposes casinos in order to save Maine's claim to "the way life should be" in a "place apart" from debased Connecticut and New Jersey. However, an equal majority eager for jobs and economic development in the less fastidious or more desperate Second District support casinos.<sup>10</sup> Indian casinos and a cap on property taxes that appeals most strongly to residents of the First District, especially in coastal areas will appear on a referendum ballot in 2003. Earlier referenda already made clear the differences between the "two Maines" on social issues like abortion and gay rights with the First District more libertarian on lifestyle matters—but only personal ones; not on casinos that could threaten Maine's image and quality of life. Still, 59% of First District exit poll respondents favored unrestricted abortion access, compared to 45% in the Second District. A question on gay rights would have revealed a similar divide.

The conception of Maine as a "place apart" at the "end of the line" is more damaging when we consider the need to develop the economy of the region's poorest state by marketing Maine outside New England, in Canada, and abroad. The economic development-promoting Maine International Trade Center tries to

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<sup>10</sup> Cohen (2002) has noted that towns suffering from economic decline and a shortage of jobs want a casino. Most are upstate, often in Washington County, the remote eastern edge of the state and the Passamaquoddy tribe's home that has not developed a tourist industry like other coastal counties. However, the Passamaquoddies and Penobscots wish to locate their casino at Sanford in southern Maine. Sanford is close to large Massachusetts population centers—but, also, to anti-casino strongholds on the coast.

persuade Mainers to exploit a globalizing high-technology economy and replace their “end of the line” north-south perspective with a recognition that Maine lies in the middle of a region between Quebec and Atlantic Canada and closer to Europe than nearly all of North America. The Center’s success has been mixed. Former Governor King called himself a transitional leader who tried to transform a resource-reliant rural economy into one valuing knowledge-based jobs that connect Maine with the rest of the world. Governor Baldacci endorses the east-west highway that could help Mainers to reconsider their north-south mindset.<sup>11</sup> Still, the state’s population is increasingly concentrated in the Boston-oriented south, while a protection-minded Michaud beholden to Maine’s traditional economy reflects prevailing Second District opinion. Maine’s outlook for trade, jobs, and investment in the economy of the future remains clouded.

On the other hand, Maine’s economic straits should concentrate wonderfully the minds of those attempting to improve the state economy. When lame duck Governor King and the legislature “closed” a \$240 million shortfall in November with patched-up fiscal legerdemain, some spending cuts, no tax increases, and dubious assumptions about future federal transfers, the shortfall for the 2003-2005 biennium was projected at \$1 billion or more (Carrier 2002a).<sup>12</sup> State Economist Laurie Lachance places Maine’s taxes, at 33% above the national average, as the nation’s eleventh highest. Some others put them at the very top relative to income. Since 1982, Maine’s rising tax rates have opened and widened a gap with “Taxachusetts”—always a benchmark comparison for Mainers and their businesses. This trend discourages investment and leaves little room for future tax increases (Lachance 2002).<sup>13</sup> Should taxed-out southern

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<sup>11</sup> On King, see Carrier (2002b). On Baldacci, see Turcotte (2002). For the argument that a four-lane east-west highway corridor to link the Maritimes to the Midwest would develop the “other” Maine’s economy, see Unsigned editorial (2003).

<sup>12</sup> For a comparison of the budget crises in Maine and other states, see Kim (2002).

<sup>13</sup> For a comparison of tax burdens in Maine and Massachusetts, see Bell (2002).

and coastal residents with rapidly appreciating properties force a limit to the property tax that presently generates 32% of Maine's tax revenues, about the same proportion as the state income tax, Maine's political leaders will have to undertake a thorough overhaul of state finances. This may happen, preemptively. Conceding that Maine's tax system is "fundamentally broken," former House Speaker Michael Saxl proposes tax cuts on high incomes and an expanded sales tax. Governor Baldacci—another Democrat!--may accept reforms of this nature (Bell 2003).

### **The 2002 Campaign, Election, and Aftermath**

The steadily deepening budget crisis, along with taxes, health care, and the perennial need for jobs and economic development, dominated Maine's contests for state office in 2002. South Portland businessman and two-term state Representative Peter Cianchette, the Republican candidate for governor, predictably charged that Maine's allegedly highest-in-the-nation tax burdens hinder economic development and job creation. He promised to freeze spending at 2003 levels, cap state spending at 75% of Maine's statewide personal income growth, and cut income taxes 20% over five years, beginning in 2004. This tax and spending restraint platform supplied his prime appeal.

Exit polls suggest that voters who considered taxes and spending the most important issue supported Cianchette by two-to-one over Baldacci. Unfortunately for Cianchette, only 26% of the voters took this view. The 29% who agreed with Baldacci that jobs and the economy were most important and the 21% who cited health care and drug costs preferred Baldacci by a wide margin. The exit poll over-reported Baldacci voters, but the trend was clear. Besides, Baldacci, whose previous management of his family's restaurant had given him credentials as a businessman, partly neutralized the tax and spend issue by declaring that Mainers cannot afford any new taxes and pledging to limit growth in state spending to the (then 2.6%) rate of inflation. Ahead in the

polls, Baldacci avoided specifics. Baldacci's advertising claimed that he would overhaul the tax code, streamline government, and resolve the budget crisis.

In general, Mainers did not perceive major differences between Cianchette and Baldacci on taxes and spending (both favored restraint while neither threatened to cut any existing programs) or on a Maine casino—both professed unqualified opposition, neither very convincingly. Baldacci's endorsement and Cianchette's rejection of an incrementally introduced single payer health care system reflected an important difference. But the issue was overwhelmed by concerns about drug costs, especially for seniors.<sup>14</sup> Besides, health care assumed more prominence in the Senate contest.

Senator Collins' reelection was never seriously in doubt, as she had respected the traditional moderate and independent-minded winning formula for the Maine GOP like Senator Snowe and Collins' mentor Bill Cohen, for whom Collins had worked in Washington. Also, Collins had gained media attention for her efforts to protect consumers, particularly the elderly, from unscrupulous sweepstakes and telemarketers.

Polls put the Senator well ahead from start to finish. State Senator Pingree ran more of a one-issue campaign than Cianchette. She continued her state legislative crusade to reduce health care costs, particularly on prescription drugs for the elderly. Exit polls for Pingree, recalling those for Cianchette, showed a 63% level of support from the 21% of voters who shared her issue priority. Unsurprisingly, most other voters, especially the 26% more concerned about taxes and spending who may have feared that Pingree's agenda would prove unaffordable or raise taxes, supported Collins heavily.

The race for the Second District Congressional seat, opened when Baldacci ran for governor, was Maine's most interesting contest. State Senate President Michaud and Kevin Raye, a longtime aide to Snowe, overcame crowded fields in

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<sup>14</sup> For the candidates' positions on 2002's major issues, see Unsigned article (2002).

competitive June primaries to win their nominations. The Democratic primary was especially notable, in that Michaud and one other blue-collar candidate opposed four socially liberal middle class aspirants who split 56% of the primary votes to permit Michaud, with strong support from his fellow Franco-Americans and mill workers--often the same people—to prevail with 31%. Raye took the same percentage in the four-man Republican field.

Michaud's ambivalence on abortion rights—he deplores abortions but promises not to support a constitutional amendment to ban them—and, one suspects, his conspicuous working class identity, caused some unease among Mainers long acclimated to pro-choice middle class members of Congress from both parties. As the Second District ranked among the few competitive Congressional contests in the nation, out-of-state money and national political stars materialized in support of both candidates. With polls showing Michaud holding a slight lead through the fall, negative advertising, most of it directed at Michaud, appeared at levels hitherto unknown in Maine. As the election approached, with both candidates embracing the center of the ideological and issue spectrum, attack ads themselves became a media concern.<sup>15</sup> In a breathtaking display of *chutzpah*, just before the election the National Republican Congressional Committee mailed the district's registered Democrats a flyer rather misleadingly calling Michaud anti-women's rights for "opposing the right to choose." Because most saw Michaud as the chief victim of attack ads, even if Raye was not directly identified with the perpetrators, media attention to this issue in the final days may have helped Michaud to maintain his lead.

On election night 2002 it took some time for the Second District and state Senate outcomes to become known. Exit polls suggest that Michaud took most pro-choice voters but the gender gap that helped Allen, Baldacci, and Pingree

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<sup>15</sup> Maine commentaries on attack ads include Grape 2002 and Unsigned editorial 2002a. For a national view, see Broder (2002).

with women failed to materialize for Michaud, who compensated by, once again, marshalling his support base. In an off-year election with a turnout just over 50%, ranking Maine behind only South Dakota and Minnesota but well below the 70% experienced in presidential years, the strong Michaud showing in mill towns contributed substantially to his 52% vote share. Cianchette, whose tax-cutting message resonated well in his own First District, edged out Baldacci in all five southern coastal counties there. Still, Baldacci's quasi-incumbency from his four terms as a popular Congressman and the Michaud-assisted blue collar turnout largely explain a strong Second District vote that gave him an overall 47%-41.5% margin over Cianchette. Senator Collins' 59% was no surprise: she had compiled a moderate voting record, had devoted herself to issues important to Mainers, had worked collegially with like-minded Senators across party lines, and had joined with Snowe to acquit President Clinton. All this gave Democrats little ammunition in a state whose voters need compelling reasons to remove incumbents. In these circumstances Pingree's nearly one-note campaign may have increased her vote. Congressman Allen, who took 63% for his fourth term in the House of Representatives, had resisted the temptation to take on Collins. Had Allen yielded, he might have fared little better than Pingree.

In the state legislature Republicans gained six House seats, but the Democrats' 80-67 House majority is more comfortable than their 18-17 edge in the Senate. The House now features the nation's only Green state legislator, a Portlander whose sole opponent was a gay activist campaigning from his left. Meanwhile, the new leaders of our citizen legislature, House Speaker Patrick Colwell, a Gardiner tile contractor, and Senate President Beverly Daggett, an Augusta housewife, will serve their entire two-year leadership careers as term-limited lame ducks. Responding to this situation, the *Bangor Daily News* editorialized that term limits make legislative leaders move in and out of the

leadership too fast to develop the skills they need for effective leadership of Maine's unruly and headstrong legislators (Unsigned editorial 2002c).

Yet Mainers still support term limits. Although Daggett is the first woman Senate President, she continues a long Maine tradition of female officeholders. Between 1998 and 2000 Maine's Senate was the only state legislative house in the nation's history where most members of the majority party (Democrats) were women. Women now make up half of Senate Democrats and 33% of House Democrats, but only 18% of the legislature's Republicans.

John Baldacci's status as Maine's first Democratic governor in sixteen years, abetted by his political moderation and his continuing honeymoon in his third month in office, facilitated the relatively painless passage of a \$5.3 billion biennial budget in March 2003. Baldacci's pledge not to raise taxes helped Republicans accept a spending plan that filled a \$1.2 billion deficit with an array of spending cuts. Some disgruntled liberals called it a pro-business "Republican" budget, but Maine's high taxes leave little room for increases. The 115-31 House and 28-3 Senate votes testified to Baldacci's Angus King-like bipartisanship in his first major consensus-building exercise.<sup>16</sup>

### **Conclusion**

What is the outlook for a state that moralistically leads the nation in household recycling—and individualistically in vanity license plates? The 2002 election results augured well for Maine in some respects. Republican Senate control gives Snowe and Collins the chairs of the Small Business and Government Operations Committees. Collins claims that Maine will benefit from these positions, which in her case includes oversight of the new Department of Homeland Security and from both Senators' participation in agenda-setting leadership meetings (Jansen 2002; Phinney 2002).

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<sup>16</sup> On the passage of the 2003-2005 budget, see Carrier (2003) and Higgins (2003). On Baldacci's popularity and "notable achievements" during his first one hundred days in office, see Quinn (2003).



Snowe believes that their status as Republican moderates, their association with Senator John Breaux's bipartisan centrist coalition, and their work with other less ideological Senators to temper excesses like President Bush's tax cut, afford them a leverage that works to Maine's advantage. Michaud's situation is very different. His identification with Maine's traditional industries and his dissatisfaction with the North American Free Trade Agreement incline him against free trade deals, especially with countries like Canada whose exports compete with Maine products in our consumer market. Maine's promoters of trade and investment did not welcome Michaud's election. They fear that Michaud will impede their efforts to persuade upstate Mainers to look past their reliance on resources and integrate their state into the high-technology global economy.

In any event, Maine's economic future and the growing gap between the "two Maines" need to be addressed. Continuation of the current economic predicament may make Democrats come to regret that their "victory" gives them full responsibility for administering the coming biennium's short-term pain. It also may precipitate a showdown between the moralistic and individualistic political cultures that could seriously erode what survives of the moralistic model. If Maine's voters respond to the lure of \$100-\$150 million in new state revenues by authorizing a casino in a November 2003 citizen-initiated referendum over the objections of their political and civic leaders, they will accelerate the state's full incorporation into the individualistic culture. As Elazar puts it, the moralistic culture "acts as a restraint against the tendencies of the individualistic political culture to tolerate *anything* as long as it is in the marketplace" (Elazar 1994, 252, emphasis added). For Maine, casinos represent Elazar's "anything." If a moralistic "restraint" and Maine's self-image as a "place apart" exemplifying "the way life should be" cannot keep out casinos, Maine's individualistic culture will be decisively affirmed.

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