



Maine Equal Justice

People Policy Solutions

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: Alison Weiss
(207) 232-0859
aweiss@mejp.org

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Maine Equal Justice supports Economic Recovery Commission recommendations that help Mainers at highest risk

AUGUSTA – Robyn Merrill, Maine Equal Justice’s executive director, shared the following statement as the Governor’s Economic Recovery Committee (ERC) delivered its first round of recommendations for stabilizing Maine’s economy and building prosperity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic:

“We applaud the ERC’s recommendations to support people in Maine who are immigrants (page 15) and people struggling to pay their rent (page 14) during the pandemic. These are recommendations that Maine Equal Justice advocated for because they focus support where it will make a real difference for Mainers with low income. Everyone, regardless of immigration status, needs access to health care, food, and housing if we are to keep people and communities safe from the spread of the virus. The recession has a disproportionate impact on Mainers of color, which makes direct aid for those struggling to pay their rent an important opportunity to help mitigate some of that harm.

If implemented by the governor, these recommendations would bring us two steps closer to an equitable recovery, but across the state, we are walking a long road. We need to heed the recommendations of leaders from Black and indigenous African American Mainers, Latinx Mainers, and other Mainers of color who are experiencing the most harm from the virus. They have spoken clearly about the need to invest funds from the CARES Act to meet the urgent needs of their communities.

We all want an economy where everyone has a fair chance to take part and succeed, but many people in Maine are struggling. Making ends meet was hard before the pandemic and now, families are at sea without steady work or income. They're living [on the edge of losing their homes](#) or their [health care](#), and having [difficulty putting food on the table](#).

To rebuild a stronger and more resilient Maine, we need to focus attention on the needs of Maine people, not just Maine businesses. We urge the governor, the legislature, and the courts to keep the lives and livelihoods of Maine people, especially those who are least able to stay afloat in a faltering economy, at the center of the response to this crisis.

Maine Equal Justice will continue to advocate for solutions that make sure everyone in Maine has enough to live on and the opportunity to thrive. Recovery is something we do together, not apart. We can't afford to leave anyone behind."

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