

# MAINE BEHIND THE NUMBERS

The facts on the economic track record of Maine governors Paul LePage and Janet Mills



## OLDER MAINERS

### LePage

- Forfeited an estimated \$240 million in federal funding for older Mainers by refusing to expand Medicaid
- Blocked \$37 million in funding for affordable senior housing
- Forfeited \$4 million for Alzheimer's, dementia, & preventative cancer care
- Cut Drugs for the Elderly program and tried to eliminate Meals on Wheels

### Mills

- Expanded Medicaid, resulting in affordable health care for 22,000 older Mainers
- Authorized senior housing bonds and new housing tax credits
- Restored safety net access and expanded food and fuel assistance programs
- Increased funding for nursing homes and direct care to address workforce shortages
- Established a new Cabinet on Aging

***LePage policies forfeited \$255.7 million in federal funds meant for older Mainers***

Forfeited Federal Funds for Older Mainers	
Medicaid expansion, age 50-64	\$239.7 million
SNAP benefits, age 60+	\$12.2 million
Colon cancer screenings	\$2.5 million
Alzheimer's and dementia support	\$1.3 million

Learn more: [bit.ly/oldermainersMBTN](http://bit.ly/oldermainersMBTN)

Source: MECEP Action analysis of USDA SNAP state characteristics and participation summary; and CMS Health Expenditures by State of Residence and KFF Medicaid Spending per Enrollee • Created with Datawrapper

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Paul LePage photo by Gage Skidmore



## Limiting health care access

Throughout his time in office, LePage's actions severely limited health care access for older Mainers with low income. By refusing to expand Medicaid — defying the will of the voters — LePage blocked more than [16,000 people](#) aged 50 to 64 who lost their jobs or lacked employer-based health benefits from health insurance. This translates to an estimated \$240 million in forgone federal funding that would have helped older, low-income Mainers access critical health care. LePage also [forfeited millions in federal funding](#) for programs designed to help older Mainers, including \$300,000 to help the 28,000 Mainers with Alzheimer's and their unpaid family caregivers, \$1 million for dementia programming, and \$2.5 million for cancer screening. LePage reduced or fully revoked the access of [8,000](#) older and disabled Mainers to the Medicare Savings Plan, a program that lowers the cost of Medicare premiums and prescription drugs. LePage repeatedly attempted to [fully eliminate](#) that plan as well as the Drugs for the Elderly program.



## Holding back housing

While [studies warned](#) that a shortage of nearly 9,000 affordable homes for people with low income age 55 and older could rise to 15,000 by 2022, LePage single-handedly blocked a \$15 million senior housing bond that had been approved by almost 70 percent of Maine voters. The bond, which would fund 200 energy-efficient homes for older Mainers with low income and pay for weatherizing another 100 homes, would have been matched by more than \$22 million in federal and other funds. Of the nearly 40,000 Mainers who are considered extremely low-income renters, [one-third](#) of them are over age 62.



## Cutting food support

In 2018, [34 percent](#) of Maine households receiving food stamps included people age 60 or older, more than 30 percent above the national average. That means efforts to curtail access to the program have a disproportionate impact on older Mainers. Even as the number of adults over age 60 who said they didn't have enough food [increased](#) from 12.2 percent to 15.6 percent from 2013 to 2018, LePage prioritized [cutting Mainers off](#) from safety net programs. He even threatened to [eliminate the state's food stamp program](#). In 2015, he instituted an asset test for adults without children at home, causing an estimated 8,600 Mainers to [lose food assistance](#) simply for having saved a small amount of money for unexpected emergencies. This cut alone resulted in an estimated \$12 million in forgone food assistance that could have helped older Mainers pay for high food costs through the end of LePage's term. LePage even vetoed funding specifically designated for a [Meals on Wheels](#) program that would feed more than 200 hungry, homebound older adults.

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## **Boosting economic security**

On her first day as Governor, Mills directed her administration to [expand Medicaid](#), which now provides critical health care for nearly [22,000 Mainers age 50 to 64](#). Mills also moved swiftly to reverse damage caused by LePage's policies, including authorizing the \$15 million [senior housing bond](#); restoring the [Drugs for the Elderly](#) program; expanding winter [food](#) and [fuel](#) assistance, [food stamp](#) access, and [Meals on Wheels](#); and targeting increased funding to support [nursing homes](#) and [home and community-based care](#). More recently, she also worked with the legislature to enact the [single largest housing investment](#) in Maine's history, which will increase housing production through a targeted tax credit program, launched a lifeline loan program to cover [property tax bills](#) for eligible people with low income over age 65, and increased the property tax fairness credit three times. In June, Mills established a [Cabinet on Aging](#) to prioritize efforts toward ensuring Mainers can grow older with dignity.

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