

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

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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