

Sun Journal

The 'little guys' have spoken. Now get going.

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The prize fight Nov. 2 , was a come-from-behind victory beating both the Democrat machine and the political elite.

Who would have predicted that a homeless boy from the streets of Lewiston would become the governor of Maine?

Certainly, not in his wildest dreams, Paul LePage.

The little guy won. Vive la difference!

So who is Paul LePage? If you have watched the TV adds, you know some things, but not the man.

I have sat next to him on several occasions. I have watched him talk. I have seen him with his family and close friends.

He is determined to do the right thing, to be faithful to friends and family, to live life and live up to the standards he expects of himself, and of those he loves: his family, the State of Maine, and its people.

I saw his heartfelt gratitude the day of election victory. He admitted his errors of passion, adding that he has learned from them. He was grateful to the people who have given him this daunting, complex and troublesome responsibility: The governorship of Maine.

But, do not think that he is ruled by emotions, he is just passionate. And why shouldn't he be? He sees Mainers are angry at the lack of jobs, high taxes and spending and heavy-handed bureaucracy. Maine is first in food stamp recipients, but last in business climate. Forbes named Maine 50th in business climate and careers, 51st including Puerto Rico.

I believe Paul LePage, and the near-win by Elliot Cutler, both reflect the frustration and anger

the electorate feels over the economic disaster that has become Maine. Both candidates campaigned on business experience.

LePage is not shackled by the insider network and entangling alliances. He is not politically connected to law firms, environmentalists or government unions, so he is free to consider fresh alternatives and ideas, approaches and information. He has said he is looking to the best minds to help him.

The political establishment in Augusta and the Democrats should be afraid of further angering the voters, not the Republicans.

"We need a better balance. One that weighs what we value: the beautiful environment, with the need for good private- sector jobs," said a mill worker in western Maine, a LePage supporter.

That phrase, "We need a better balance" was echoed by a Cutler supporter in Portland: "We value what we have done to protect the environment, but there is no reason to think that will be lost under the Lepage administration."

A medical professional serving rural Maine said, "It is about time we had business people running Maine." He is frustrated. Mainecare can't reimburse him for services, even after the "umpteenth computer upgrade," said this long-time Democrat.

There are many immediate and effective things that can be done that do not cost the government money, and that would bring jobs to Maine, while preserving the environment.

Here are just a few: Straighten out the billing system and arrears problem with medical professionals and hospitals in the state. Encourage the expansion of intermodal shipping into Portland and other ports in Maine. Stop penalizing new businesses and visitors to the state with frivolous 'use-tax' bills.

Get the private prison concept in Milo going. Permit National Semiconductor and other companies to reduce electricity costs using natural gas facilities. Review the cost to the rate-payer of the laws passed under the last administration. Encourage regional buying groups and competitive bidding for government electricity and supply contracts.

This election was historic. It has been almost 50 years since the Republicans have been in charge of all branches of state government. Credit for this victory must be with Charlie Webster, the ultimate ground-game tactician for the Republicans, also a "little guy." a heating contractor from western Maine.

This means that all of the committee chairs, commissioners and deputy commissioners, and Constitutional officers could be replaced by competent managers and people with private

sector experience.

Paul LePage is not the rich, the intellectual, the politically connected candidate. That was Elliot Cutler, the press favorite this time.

The foremost perennial favorite of the press was the biggest loser: the Democrats, and the Democrat party.

As much as the people love the underdog, the rags-to-riches story, it seems the mainstream press cannot believe one is standing right in front of them.

The close loss by Cutler, and the votes given to the other candidates indicates something substantial: A repudiation of the Democrat party and their policies in the state of Maine. Over 80 percent voted against them in the election for governor.

The Republicans have been given a turnaround, a rare chance to be the party of the little guy to effect sustained long-term growth, instead of just another party of bureaucrats, insiders and elite. The party can't blow this opportunity, it would behoove it to cleave to the average Mainer, understand its mandate, and get to work.

It was truly the people of Maine—the little guys—who won this victory. Vive la difference!

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