

Sun Journal

L. Sigel: Governor's arbitrary decisions

Louis Sigel

[Letters](#) |

Sunday, February 3, 2013

When it was taught how legislation is passed and becomes law in the state of Maine, I must have missed the class where it was taught that the sitting governor could arbitrarily decide which laws he would acknowledge and enforce and which laws he would whimsically refuse to recognize and veto without recourse.

Gov. Paul LePage and Commissioner Sawin Millett apparently are the only ones who got that lesson on government in Maine.

Take the Maine Clean Election Act, which was placed on the ballot by the citizens of Maine by petition and subsequently passed by the voters in a referendum. Usually, a law passed by referendum, intentionally to bypass the state Legislature and the governor, wouldn't be altered. Gov. Paul LePage, however, has never liked the voice of the people, and noted through his spokeswoman that the Clean Election Fund is just "welfare for politicians" — the losing argument made against the Clean Election Act during the referendum campaign.

But now, Gov. LePage has decided he can veto the law in practice by simply defunding it in his monstrosity of a state budget, just as he has decided to ignore the law on revenue sharing and educational funding.

Fortunately, the people of Maine can still resort to a citizens' initiative to challenge any hideous budget Gov. LePage may force through the state Legislature.

Louis T. Sigel

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