



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 22, 2011

Maine Gov. Paul LePage: Taking a Page from Gov. Christies Book

During his campaign for Governor, LePage was taking questions from some fishermen at a Republican gathering, and some of them complained that their businesses were suffering under excessive regulation by the federal government. As shown in a [video](#) of that meeting, LePage responded,



We came from behind because we have a message. We have a message that says: One, we've had enough of the federal government. We've had enough. Two, we've had enough of the state government. And number three, government should be working for the people, not the people working for the government. And as your Governor, you're gonna be seeing a lot of me on the front page saying "Gov. LePage tells Obama to go to hell."

Once elected, LePage was quick to throw down the gauntlet to the media. During his inaugural speech, he pointed to the media box and exclaimed: "You're on notice. I've inherited a financially-troubled state to run. Observe ... cover ... but don't whine if I don't waste time responding to your every whim for your amusement."

LePage has little patience with people or groups with an axe to grind. For example, when the NAACP invited LePage to help them celebrate Martin Luther King Day by visiting black inmates at the Maine State Prison, LePage declined unless ALL inmates were included in his visit. The NAACP demurred, and LePage [responded](#) by saying that he wouldn't be "held hostage" by any special interest group, even the NAACP, and that "They [the NAACP] can kiss my butt. "

There's only so many hours in the day, so many hours in the week and [only] so much you can do. They invited me to go to the state prison to meet black prisoners, and I told them I would go, but that I would meet all prisoners, and that wasn't acceptable to them. So tough luck.

They are a special interest group. End of story.... If they want, they can look at my family pictures. My son happens to be black, so they can do whatever they'd like about it.

Naturally this [outraged](#) the official spokesmen for the black community, calling his remarks "astonishing and troubling. " When the NAACP issued a press release suggesting that LePage wouldn't be celebrating MLK day at all, LePage read it in the paper the next morning, and exploded, and then reminded them that his adopted son, born in Jamaica, Devon Raymond, was black and that the NAACP could "come to dinner and my son will talk with them."

LePage seems to be made of asbestos. During a recent winter blizzard, he waited until 3 p.m. before



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announcing the closing of state offices and facilities and sending non-emergency personnel home. The previous Governor would often close offices at the forecast of a coming snowstorm, costing the state \$1 million a day. LePage said that, under the previous administration, workers sent home early would then be free to go shopping before heading home. As the former general manager for Marden's chain of discount family bargain retail grocery stores, LePage announced his new policy: "If Marden's is open, Maine is open!" And if that annoyed any of the state employees, LePage added: "We live in Maine in the winter, for heaven's sake.... [If you don't like it], apply for a state job in Florida!"

His political positions are equally clear. He recognizes that the permitting process to start a small business in Maine is too cumbersome and expensive, and he is already pushing to reduce auto registration fees by 20 percent. He favors a school voucher system, and a pay program that rewards teachers for performance, not endurance. He is not persuaded that greenhouse gases from human activities are a significant contributor to climate change, and he has plans to reduce significantly the number of state government workers. He has called for the repeal of ObamaCare, encouraging Maine's Attorney General to join the federal lawsuit challenging it. And within the week, a bill to nullify ObamaCare [has been offered](#) for consideration by the state legislature. LePage hasn't seen the legislation, but is expected to support it as well.

As with Gov. Christie, Maine's Governor Paul LePage is finding that blunt talk combined with direct action is resonating positively with citizens of his state.

Photo of Paul LePage: AP Images



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