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# Maine Legislature Speaker's Office

## House Speaker Sara Gideon

My husband Ben and our three children Julian, Alek, and Josie fill me with love, and pride, and hope for the future. They also keep me absolutely committed to doing everything I possibly can to ensure every Maine family and every Maine child has the opportunity to reach their God given potential.

We all have similar stories, values, and hopes- from Fort Kent to Kittery, from Lincoln to Lubec.

And we can achieve them together.

Good morning, my name is Sara Gideon and three days ago, I was honored to be sworn in as Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives.

I have been thinking a lot about how we – the Governor, the State Senate and the House of Representatives – should measure our work together.

Often, in politics and in the media, there is so much attention devoted to

a crisis one day and an insult or outburst the next.

But what really matters? What is the big picture?

Here's what I think: Two years from now at the end of the 128<sup>th</sup> Legislature, we should ask two questions:

First, did we help the economy grow more good jobs across every part of Maine? Good jobs, with opportunity for growth and learning and good wages that support at least a decent middle class life?

Second, did we help reduce the number of children, seniors and Mainers across this state who are living in poverty?

More good jobs. Fewer Maine kids, seniors and people in poverty. I believe those are fundamental goals every Mainer shares – and fundamental facts citizens can use to measure whether we are serving them well.

Today we start out with a Maine economy that lags behind New England and the rest of the country in terms of economic growth, recovery of jobs lost during the recession and wage growth.

We lead New England when it comes to the number of our children and seniors living in poverty.

Those are the facts. And here is another fact: we have to do better.

My belief that we can do better comes from my experience with the promise of this country and the values I have learned from my family.

My mother was a first generation American, one of five girls born to parents who barely escaped the Armenian Genocide as children. My father, a pediatrician, immigrated here after falling in love with both my mom and America. Their love of each other and this country, the

way they live their lives, gave me the deepest understanding of the idea and spirit of America.

That spirit, that love of country should guide each one of us- Democrats, Republicans and Independents need to work together and rise above entrenched positions and politics as usual.

I wish you and your family a safe, wonderful and happy holiday season. In the New Year and as long as I serve you as Speaker, you can be sure I will be keeping my eye on whether we are creating more good jobs and lifting more Mainers out of poverty. I hope you will do the same.

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