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and corporations: "What will it take to bring a steady supply of high quality, private-sector jobs to Maine?" This question is important because it is the inverted reality on which the tax-cap proponents argument is based on.

In many towns, local government (including education) provides a critical base of employment for educated professionals. Absent the possibility of public-sector jobs like teachers, firefighters, police officers and librarians, many might leave the community. Simply put, there aren't enough private-sector jobs with decent wages and good benefits to fill the demand for them.

Why does Maine have a short-

age of good paying, private-sector jobs? Many cite our historical reliance on natural resource extraction jobs, trade liberalization policies, our transportation system, the educational levels of our citizens and our geography. Others will mention high taxes.

We can't do anything about our geography. There is little state government can do about free trade, because it is a national political issue.

However, the state is making it easier for citizens to further their education by the recent creation of a community college system. The state is trying to provide incentives to modernize our mills and make them as competitive as possible. There is also a bi-partisan push toward building a East-West Northern New England Interstate highway.

This leaves taxes. We can cut them but that, in and of itself, won't bring in the jobs we need. The fundamental problem is the inability of the market system to provide enough private jobs that pay a living wage and essential benefits for our citizens.

The anger that many feel toward high taxes is understandable and healthy for a democracy. It might be worthwhile, however, to think more broadly and realize the deeper reasons why we need the taxes that we raise. Without them, we would put a lot of people out of work and our state would move backward. The real problem with taxes is over who pays them and who does not.

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