Organizing in Maine
Anatomy of a Campaign to Challenge the Military Industrial Complex
Lawmakers to weigh bill extending BIW tax breaks

November 16, 2017
BY NATHAN STROUT
Times Record Staff

SHIPS UNDER CONSTRUCTION at Bath Iron Works.
The proposed bill would:

- **extend tax breaks for Bath Iron Works (BIW)** set to expire in 2018

- Since the late-1990s, BIW received up to **$3.5 million annually** in tax breaks, totaling ~ **$197 million**

- **General Dynamics** owns BIW. GD had **$3 Billion in profits** in 2016

- Their argument: GD/ BIW needs the tax break to **stay competitive**
The Competitor

Ingalls Shipyard

Pascagoula, Mississippi
## Poverty Statistics 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mississippi</th>
<th>Maine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>2,892,894</td>
<td>1,295,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># in Poverty</strong></td>
<td>602,768</td>
<td>161,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall:</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked</td>
<td>51&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked</td>
<td>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunger &amp; Food Insecurity</strong></td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranked:</td>
<td>51&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>45&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: talkpoverty.org*
The Bill’s Sponsors

State Rep. Jennifer DeChant, Democrat – Bath

State Sen. Eloise Vitelli, Democrat, District 23
Rhode Island’s *Providence Journal* Article  By Alex Nunes
The buyback #will rise to $14.4 Billion as more info becomes available
November 27  First Peace Report Video by Will Griffin
Tell Your Maine Legislators to Reject General Dynamics' Request for $60 Million
December 3
Organizing Meeting

Decided to organize a campaign

Commitment:
Letters to the Editor & Op Eds
Corporate Tax Cuts: From DC to Augusta
Maine State Legislature assigns the Bill a number

It is clear the bill is written by BIW lawyers/lobbyists
December 7  The Historian

- Orlando Delogu, professor emeritus school of law, University of Southern Maine

- Orlando sued in 1997 after legislators approved GD’s $197 million tax break
Orlando’s first Opinion Piece appears in The Forecaster (a popular free weekly newspaper)

Bruce “boosts” this article on Facebook

In the end, Orlando will lose his column at The Forecaster
Six weeks after the organizing meeting
30 letters and op-eds are published in a dozen newspapers
Majority of speakers oppose LD 1781

Prior bill discussed needed funds for the DOT to fix roads, bridges, rails and ports.

33% of bridges in Maine are in deficient condition.
February 4  Independent Journalism
February 9  First Taxation Committee Work Session

John Fitzgerald, Vice President at Bath Iron Works

- **Legislator:** “Can we audit BIW’s books?”

- **Fitzgerald:** “It would be a challenge to answer that question. What would you ask the auditor to find?”

- **Legislator:** “I need a commitment to disclose the profits of the company.”

- **Fitzgerald:** “The answer is no… For us to be punished because our owner has capital seems unjust!”
February 10 Where is the Solidarity?

Bruce announces his hunger strike in solidarity with Maine’s children living in poverty
Visit to the Machinists Union Hall to share leaflets

Bruce shares that the campaign is not aimed at BIW workers

Workers show him *The Bollard* article. They understand
February 14  Ash Wednesday

- Annual Catholic Worker Lenten vigil begins (Smilin’ Trees Disarmament Farm)

- BIW vice president John Fitzgerald stops by to chat
March 1 Mainstream News wakes up

The Portland Press Herald covers the campaign
March 6  Shut out of 4th Taxation Committee Working Session
March 6  The Bill Moves Forward

- Taxation Committee votes 9-2 in favor of sending bill to the House and Senate.

- Taxation Committee cuts request by 25% from $60 million to $45 million over 15 years.
March 11  BIW Union Responds

The Local S6 (Machinists) union at BIW votes not to endorse LD 1781.
March 27  House Votes to PASS 117 to 31
March 28    Senate Votes To Pass   25-9
The Campaign is Over
Did we lose?
The campaign saved the state $15 million
The final bill requires BIW to report on a number of accountability measures.
The debate challenged BIW’s largest union, inspiring the courage to withhold support.
Citizens continue to publicly challenge legislators who supported the bill
A candidate for governor recently got a standing ovation for opposing the bill, calling it “corporate extortion”.
The vision of disarmament and conversion to a peace economy got increased exposure.
A small group of thoughtful, committed people came together to challenge the Military Industrial Complex, pissed off the establishment, educated the public, and won concessions.
We strengthened our community... and we had some fun!
Our vision lives on

BUILD
PEACE
NOT
DESTROYERS
Did we Lose? You decide!