

## 2019 Legislative Round-Up

### Committee Highlights from the First Regular Session of the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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*This document compiles themes, highlights and areas for continued work within each committee of Maine's 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature. The topics included here are not comprehensive of all the Legislature's work this session, but are rather a sampling of some of the major issues considered in 2019.*

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## AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

### *Session Overview*

The Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee focused this session on efforts to end hunger in Maine, expand and protect markets for farmers, promote responsible environmental stewardship and ensure the humane treatment of animals.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1691](#), "Resolve, Directing the Board of Pesticides Control To Work with the Forest Products Industry To Monitor Aerial Herbicide Applications" – Monitors the use of aerial herbicides in the forestry industry.
- [LD 351](#), "An Act to Ensure Accuracy in the Labeling of Maine Meat and Poultry" – Requires accurate labeling of Maine-raised meat and poultry.
- [LD 1159](#), "Resolve, To End Hunger in Maine by 2030" – Directs state agencies to work together to end hunger in Maine by 2030.
- [LD 971](#), "An Act to Encourage the Purchase and Sale of Locally Grown and Raised Crops and Products" – Subsidizes USDA certification of fruit and vegetable farmers.
- [LD 199](#), "An Act to Create the Water Resources Planning Committee" – Creates a water resources planning committee.
- [LD 1246](#), "An Act To Protect the Health and Safety of Maine State Park Visitors and Staff" – Requires a more thorough review and designation of how our state parks and historic sites should be staffed to ensure the best care of the locations and visitors.
- [LD 1843](#), "An Act To Provide Funding for Two Positions in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry" – Establishes two positions for land management and planning.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 495](#), "Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry To Conduct a Feasibility Study on Locating a Grain Processing Facility in Aroostook County"
- [LD 920](#), "An Act To Establish the Fund To Support Local Fruits and Vegetables Purchasing" – Seeks to provide incentives to federal food and nutrition assistance program participants for the purchase of locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- [LD 795](#), "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to Food" – Would declare that all individuals have an inalienable right to food and nourishment.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

### *Session Overview*

This session, the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee worked hard to reduce the disproportionate incarceration of women, people of color, children and those suffering from substance use disorder. On the public safety side, the committee prioritized reducing carbon emissions by updating building codes in line with national environmental standards.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 628](#), "An Act To Ensure Comprehensive Access to Menstrual Products in All Maine's Jails, County Correctional Facilities and State Correctional and Detention Facilities" – Provides unrestricted menstrual products to women in Maine's jails.
- [LD 329](#), "An Act To Exempt from Criminal Liability Persons Reporting a Drug-related Medical Emergency" – Exempts persons who call E-9-1-1 about drug-related emergencies from arrest and prosecution.
- [LD 548](#), "An Act To Prohibit a Person under 18 Years of Age from Being Charged with the Crime of Engaging in Prostitution" – Decriminalizes prostitution for children, understanding it is likely they have been coerced into such actions.
- Bills on race, gender and poverty in the criminal justice system:
  - [LD 777](#), "An Act To Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Populations"
  - [LD 829](#), "Resolve, To Reestablish the Commission To Improve the Sentencing, Supervision, Management and Incarceration of Prisoners"
- Bills strengthening sexual assault laws:
  - [LD 18](#), "An Act To Ensure Proper Prosecution of Crimes Involving Domestic Violence and Enhance Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence"
  - [LD 396](#), "An Act To Support Justice for Victims of Sexual Assault by Increasing the Time Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kits Must Be Stored"
  - [LD 1140](#), "An Act To Improve the Investigation and Prosecution of Sexual Assault Cases"

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- Resubmitting and passing a bill to put the criminal onus on those who are prostituting persons.

## EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

### *Session Overview*

This session, the committee focused on ensuring educators and school districts have the resources they need to be successful in providing a quality education for Maine students.

Additionally, the committee worked to create the conditions that allow students to learn and be successful.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 798](#), "An Act To Protect Maine Children and Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements" – Removes exemptions for religious or philosophical beliefs in regard to vaccinations required for school enrollment starting in 2021.
- [LD 167](#), "An Act To Prevent Food Shaming in Maine's Public Schools" – Prohibits a public school from openly identifying or stigmatizing a student who cannot pay for a meal or who has payments due and requires that a public school's communication about a student's meal must be made to the parent or guardian.
- [LD 944](#), "An Act To Ban Native American Mascots in All Public Schools" – Prohibits a public school from having or adopting a name, symbol or image that depicts or refers to a Native American tribe, individual, custom or tradition and that is used as a mascot, nickname, logo, letterhead or team name of the school.
- [LD 307](#), "An Act To Limit the Number of Charter Schools in Maine" – Caps the total number of public charter schools in the state to 10 public charter schools, regardless of whether the public charter school is authorized by the commission or by local school boards.
- [LD 513](#), "An Act To Limit the Number of Students and Prevent the Addition of Grade Levels at Virtual Public Charter Schools" – Limits the total enrollment at all virtual public charter schools authorized by the Maine Charter School Commission to 1,000 students.
- Work from the committee influenced a variety of items in the [State Budget](#), including:
  - Increasing teacher minimum salary to \$40,000 by 2023.
  - Raising state share of education funding to nearly 51%, which includes \$115 million in new state support for local education.
  - Funding initiatives to feed more hungry school children. The program eliminates the reduced-price lunch category and includes those school children in the free-lunch category.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1606](#), "An Act To Increase Funding for Career and Technical Education Programs" – Would provide more funding for the programs and equipment needed to support career and technical education.
- [LD 860](#), "An Act To Establish the Maine Community College System No-cost Tuition Program" – Would create a program where eligible Maine residents enrolled in certain courses of study within the Maine Community College System received a grant to cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees.

## ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

### *Session Overview*

This session, the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee took steps on climate change, energy independence and security that will make Maine a leader in clean energy jobs and set us on a path to 100% clean energy by 2050. The committee also provided new consumer protections to improve power outage restoration, cable television options and accurate energy billing.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1711](#), "An Act To Promote Solar Energy Projects and Distributed Generation Resources in Maine" – Sets solar prices in a way that incentivizes increased distributed generation in Maine.
- [LD 1494](#), "An Act To Reform Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard" – Increases Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard to achieve 80% renewable energy by 2030, up from 40% today, and a goal of 100% by 2050.
- [LD 946](#), "An Act To Protect the Privacy of Online Customer Information" – Prevents internet service providers operating in Maine from selling or sharing a customer's personal data without the customer's permission.
- [LD 1192](#), "An Act To Establish Municipal Access to Utility Poles Located in Municipal Rights-of-way" – Amends utilities laws to provide access by municipalities to facilities located in the municipal right-of-way in the interest of public health, safety and welfare.
- [LD 91](#), "An Act To Eliminate Gross Metering" – Resets the state's metering policy for solar and ensure that consumers who produce electricity from solar panels will be fairly compensated for supplying excess energy back to the electric grid.
- [LD 1282](#), "An Act To Establish a Green New Deal for Maine" – Boosts workforce training efforts in the renewable energy sector by creating apprenticeship opportunities and supports energy conservation and solar energy generation at Maine schools.
- [LD 1364](#), "An Act Regarding Net Neutrality and Internet Policy" – Restricts internet service providers from blocking, slowing down or speeding up the delivery of online content at their discretion and follows the Federal Communication Commission's repeal of net neutrality rules put in place by the Obama Administration.
- [LD 1800](#), "An Act To Modernize the E-9-1-1 Laws To Include Text Messaging and Other Methods of Contacting E-9-1-1" – Makes changes to the emergency services communication laws to reflect that text messaging and other methods can be used to contact E-9-1-1.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- Ensuring oversight and accountability of the potential transmission corridor project.
- Passing a bond that will help fund broadband and bring affordable, equitable access to high-speed internet to more Mainers.

- [LD 1646](#), "An Act To Restore Local Ownership and Control of Maine's Power Delivery Systems" – Would replace CMP and Emera with a consumer-owned utility in order to refinance and control the electrical grid

## ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### *Session Overview*

Overarching themes of the session for the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee included developing a closer working relationship with Maine's Department of Environmental Protection, making progress on various product stewardship programs and setting ambitious goals for redoubled efforts to combat climate change.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1743](#), "An Act To Reclassify Certain Waters of the State" – Recognizes improved water quality by reclassifying 400 miles of Maine rivers, including a reclassification of the Penobscot River from Medway to Old Town from Class C to Class B.
- [LD 1775](#), "An Act To Protect Sustenance Fishing" – Establishes water quality standards designed to protect sustenance fishing in certain waters for Maine communities, including tribes.
- [LD 1679](#), "An Act To Establish the Maine Climate Change Council To Assist Maine To Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change" – Brings together experts and leaders to plan concrete ways to meet ambitious new statutory goals for reducing air pollution and adapting to climate change.
- Set of bills to limit pollution:
  - [LD 1532](#), "An Act To Eliminate Single-use Plastic Carry-out Bags"
  - [LD 289](#), "An Act To Prohibit the Use of Certain Disposable Food Service Containers"
  - [LD 1433](#), "An Act To Protect the Environment and Public Health by Further Reducing Toxic Chemicals in Packaging"
- [LD 955](#), "An Act To Prohibit Offshore Oil and Natural Gas Drilling and Exploration" – Bars oil drilling off the Maine coast.
- [LD 216](#), "An Act To Protect Water Quality by Standardizing the Law Concerning Septic Inspection in the Shoreland Zone" – Extends septic inspections to land transfers throughout Maine's shoreland zones, now including freshwater rather than just coastal.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 401](#), "An Act To Preserve State Landfill Capacity and Promote Recycling" – Plan to address Maine's landfill crisis by shifting to better recycling measures.
- Review proposals for adjusting redemption laws for containers.

- [LD 1750](#), "An Act To Establish Appliance Energy and Water Standards" – Would prohibit the sale of certain appliances and products unless they meet or exceed applicable energy and water standards.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### *Session Overview*

This session, the Health and Human Services Committee worked closely with new leadership of the department to ensure we made progress initiating priorities that had long been stalled. This included issues like updating family planning services provided by MaineCare, providing comprehensive substance use disorder treatment, addressing the spread of e-cigarette use and vaping and looking at how the social determinants of health impact Mainer's wellbeing.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1816](#), "An Act To Ensure the Safety and Well-being of Infants Affected by Substance Exposure" – Modifies reporting requirements and DHHS's responsibility for establishment of a plan of safe care to include infants affected by substance use regardless of whether the mother's substance use was legal or illegal.
- [LD 1774](#), "An Act To Reduce Child Poverty by Leveraging Investments so Families Can Thrive" – Aims to tackle the so-called MaineCare "benefits cliff" and gives more families access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits by eliminating the gross income test.
- [LD 821](#), "An Act To Set Case Load Standards for the Office of Child and Family Services" – Requires DHHS to review case load standards for child welfare caseworkers and develop standard caseload recommendations with input from child welfare caseworkers and the Public Consulting Group.
- [LD 1116](#), "An Act To Strengthen the Lead Poisoning Control Act" – Expands lead testing of Maine's children.
- [LD 1190](#), "An Act To Prohibit the Furnishing of Tobacco Products to Minors" – Makes it a Class D crime to procure, furnish, give, sell or deliver a tobacco product to a minor.
- [LD 1313](#), "An Act To Enact the Maine Death with Dignity Act" – Allows terminally ill patients meeting a variety of requirements to choose to end their life when they wish.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1453](#), "An Act To Improve Dental Health for Maine Children and Adults with Low Incomes" – Would add access to comprehensive medically necessary preventive, diagnostic and restorative dental services to the limited dental services currently available to MaineCare members 21 years of age and older.
- Creating solutions to address workforce shortage problems in the health care industry.

- Review MaineCare reimbursement rates.

## HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

### *Session Overview*

The Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee was primarily focused this session on consumer protections in health care insurance, creating equity in health care coverage and reducing the cost of pharmaceuticals. The committee also worked to improve data collection on health care and pharmaceutical costs.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1](#), "An Act To Protect Health Care Coverage for Maine Families" – Puts federal Affordable Care Act protections into state law.
- [LD 820](#), "An Act To Prevent Discrimination in Public and Private Insurance Coverage for Pregnant Women in Maine" – Requires public and private insurers that cover prenatal care to also cover the complete range of pregnancy care, including abortion.
- [LD 38](#), "An Act To Require Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids for Adults" – Ensures health policies provide coverage for the purchase of hearing aids.
- [LD 1025](#), "An Act To Prohibit the Provision of Conversion Therapy to Minors by Certain Licensed Professionals" – Prohibits licensed professionals from advertising and administering so-called conversion therapy methodology to minors.
- Pharmaceutical bill package
  - [LD 1272](#), "An Act To Increase Access to Low-cost Prescription Drugs" – Sets up a wholesale prescription drug importation program with approval from the US Department of Health and Human Services.
  - [LD 1499](#), "An Act To Establish the Maine Prescription Drug Affordability Board" – Creates a Prescription Drug Affordability Board.
  - [LD 1162](#), "An Act To Further Expand Drug Price Transparency" – Gathers information related to the pricing of drugs all along the supply chain from manufacturers to wholesalers, pharmacy benefit managers and insurance companies.
  - [LD 1504](#), "An Act To Protect Consumers from Unfair Practices Related to Pharmacy Benefits Management" – Prohibits pharmacy benefit managers from retaining rebates paid by manufacturers and requires those rebates be passed along to the consumer or the health plan.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1661](#), "An Act To Create the Drug Donation and Redispensing Program" – Would collect donations of unused prescription and dispense the drugs through participating pharmacies to qualified low-income persons.



- Continuing health care reform – Will use the summer and fall to review a set of proposals focused on health care reform measures like incremental universal coverage and single-payer options. These proposals could then be considered in 2020.

## INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

### *Session Overview*

The Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee focused this session on expanding recreational opportunities. In particular, the committee expanded hunting opportunities through new and lengthened seasons and allowed additional hunting methods. The committee also sought to protect and promote the state's ATV and snowmobile industries by providing them added support.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 27](#), "An Act To Allow the Use of Crossbows during the Archery Season on Deer" – Allows a person, in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, to hunt with a crossbow during the open archery season on deer and the fall open season on hunting wild turkey.
- [LD 33](#), "An Act To Establish a Thanksgiving Youth Turkey Hunting Season" – Directs the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to consider establishing a special youth turkey hunting day during the fall season.
- [LD 265](#), "An Act To Increase Opportunities for Hunters, Anglers and Sporting Camps by Extending the Seasons on Upland Game" – Establishes that the open season on upland game must begin on the last Saturday in September (the season has traditionally opened October 1) and authorizes the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish the length of the season.
- [LD 212](#), "An Act To Provide a Source of Funding for the ATV Recreational Management Fund" – Creates the ATV Enforcement Fund, which is a non-lapsing fund that is funded with \$10 from each non-resident ATV registration fee collected. Money from the fund is required to be used for the enforcement of ATV laws, ATV education and the purchase of necessary machinery or equipment related to ATV safety and enforcement activities. It also requires \$12 of all registration fees to be deposited in the ATV Recreational Management Fund to fund to help construct, design and acquire ATV trails.
- [LD 1307](#), "An Act To Promote Snowmobiling in Maine" – Makes the process for a non-resident to operate their snowmobile in the state for limited periods through an online process and directs the Department of Tourism to provide information on snowmobiling opportunities to non-residents.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1804](#), "An Act Regarding the Baiting of Deer" – Would establish new rules regarding the baiting of deer.

- [LD 1525](#), "An Act To Require Insurance on Motorized Watercraft" – Would prohibit the owner of a motorboat of more than 75 horsepower from operating without insurance.

## **INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS**

### *Session Overview*

This session, the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee worked to create a 10-year strategic plan for economic growth in Maine and instituted ways to address the state's workforce shortage. The committee also strengthened consumer protections, expanded consumer choice and reformed licensing laws for professionals including heavy equipment operators, property inspectors, engineers, geologists and more.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 37](#), "An Act to Allow for the Sale of Nonprescription Drugs through Vending Machines" – Expands consumer choice, especially for rural Mainers and students, by allowing select over-the-counter medications to be safely sold in regulated vending machines.
- [LD 1685](#), "An Act to Facilitate Entry of Immigrants into the Workforce" – Assists foreign-educated immigrants in their transition into Maine's workforce.
- [LD 1746](#), "An Act to Amend the Licensing Laws of Certain Professions and Occupations" – Improves licensing laws to allow for more opportunities and mobility in Maine's workforce.
- [LD 771](#), "An Act Regarding the Cancellation of Subscription Services" – Requires a business that makes an automatic renewal subscription offer to present a consumer with an easily accessible option to cancel.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1342](#), "An Act to Establish the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute" – Would create a steering committee to advise on workforce training, research and development, student debt and economic advancement in the state.
- Carried over bills aimed at addressing student loans:
  - [LD 149](#), "An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Provide Student Debt Forgiveness To Support Workforce Attraction and Retention"
  - [LD 394](#), "An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Provide for Student Loan Debt Relief"
- [SP 435](#), "Joint Order, To Require the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business To Report Out a Bill Regarding Professional Licensing" – Calls on the committee to improve efficiencies and remove barriers in professional licensing and certification.
- Efforts to expand economic opportunities, especially in Maine's rural areas.

- Work to reduce the state's health care and nursing shortages.

## JUDICIARY

### *Session Overview*

Judiciary worked on many consequential bills this session primarily focused on protecting the vulnerable and balancing those rights with the need to enforce our laws in a fair and just manner. The committee worked extensively on juvenile justice reform and criminal justice procedure to further explore ways to protect the innocent in our criminal justice system.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1304](#), "An Act To Ease Financial Burdens for Juveniles Involved in the Justice System" – Amends the Maine Juvenile Code concerning the payment of restitution and fines to limit long-term effects on youth.
- Bills focused on criminal justice reform, like:
  - [LD 1219](#), "An Act To Establish an Independent Board To Review Law Enforcement Officer-involved Deaths" – Creates a board to review investigations by law enforcement agencies concerning deaths involving law enforcement officers.
  - [LD 1475](#), "An Act To Eliminate Profiling in Maine" – Expressly prohibits racial and other profiling.
- Bills including LDs [1701](#) and [1702](#) that worked cohesively to improve the Maine Human Rights Act and Commission to ensure fair treatment of Mainers.
- [LD 666](#), "An Act To Protect Pregnant Workers" – Provides that it is unlawful employment discrimination for an employer to fail to provide a reasonable accommodation for an employee's pregnancy-related condition.
- [LD 748](#), "An Act To Provide Relief to Survivors of Economic Abuse" – Ensures that victims of economic abuse are not held accountable for financial mistakes caused by their partner.
- [LD 1811](#), "An Act To Enhance Personal and Public Safety by Requiring Evaluations of and Judicial Hearings for Persons in Protective Custody Regarding Risk of Harm and Restricting Access to Dangerous Weapons" – Allows police to order individuals to temporarily surrender their guns if a doctor or other medical professional determines they pose a significant threat to themselves or others.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- A set of bills that have been carried over to address tribal relations and judicial concerns in Maine.
- [LD 1670](#), "An Act To Limit the Dissemination of Juvenile Records" – Calls for juvenile records to be sealed as soon as a juvenile crime is discharged.

- [LD 766](#), "An Act Regarding the Penobscot Nation's and Passamaquoddy Tribe's Authority To Exercise Jurisdiction under the Federal Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Federal Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013"
- Gun safety laws will likely be reconsidered in the following session and subsequent legislatures.

## LABOR AND HOUSING

### *Session Overview*

Labor and Housing took strides this session to ensure fair and equitable working conditions and contracts for all Mainers. The committee also worked to support Maine veterans, law enforcement, state workers and others by improving retirement plans and services.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 369](#), "An Act To Support Healthy Workplaces and Healthy Families by Providing Earned Paid Sick Leave to Certain Employees" – Creates an earned paid time off program to be administered by all employers with 10 or more workers.
- [LD 1459](#), "An Act to Expand Application of the Maine Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Act of 1973 to Harvesters and Haulers of Forest Products" – Allows loggers to collectively bargain for fair wages.
- [LD 278](#) – "An Act Regarding Pay Equality" – Pushes to shrink the gender pay gap through increased transparency regarding wages.
- [LD 756](#), "An Act To Improve the Maine Workers' Compensation Act of 1992" – Enacts common-sense reforms to the Workers' Compensation program.
- [LD 733](#), "An Act To Promote Keeping Workers in Maine" – Prohibits "non-compete" agreements for low- and middle-income workers.
- [LD 1524](#), "An Act To Prevent Wage Theft and Promote Employer Accountability" – Creates additional remedies to stop employers from engaging in wage theft, or failing to fully pay wages or benefits after employment has ended.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1410](#), "An Act To Create Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits" – Would establish a paid family and medical leave program administered by the Department of Labor.
- [LD 1177](#), "An Act To Improve Public Sector Labor Relations" – Sought to amend labor relation laws to allow for binding arbitration.
- [LD 900](#), "An Act To Expand the Rights of Public Employees under the Maine Labor Laws" – Would allow public employees, including teachers, the right to strike.
- [LD 240](#), "An Act To Allow Public Employers of Teachers to Negotiate Regarding Educational Policies" – Would allow teachers to negotiate the amount of preparatory time they are given.

## MARINE RESOURCES

### *Session Overview*

The Marine Resources Committee's work this session was largely focused on bills related to research in and management of Maine's shellfish fishery, a fishery in deep decline, as well as bills related to access to and sustainability of the lobster fishery, Maine's most valuable fishery and one with increasing challenges. In general, bills were aimed at protecting the fisheries and the livelihoods of those who fish or who make their living in related industries.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 676](#), "An Act To Allow a Class III Lobster and Crab Fishing License Holder To Engage More Crew Members" – Increases the number of crew members allowed within a Class III license.
- [LD 1514](#), "An Act To Improve Enforcement in the Elver Fishery" – Clarifies the laws governing the use of the elver transaction card system and the seizure of illegal elvers.
- [LD 1745](#), "An Act Regarding the Tagging and Sale of Shellfish" – Makes changes to the laws governing shellfish sales and handling to ensure compliance to protect public health and create additional flexibility in shellfish sales.
- [LD 1725](#), "An Act To Create a Minimum Age To Hold a Limited-purpose Aquaculture License" – Sets the minimum age to hold a limited-purpose aquaculture license at 12 years of age.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 28](#), "An Act Regarding Access to Lobster Licenses" – Would address the wait list for access to licenses for the limited entry lobster fishery.
- [LD 936](#), "Resolve, Establishing a Commission To Study the Existing and Potential Effects of Freshwater and Marine Debris on Maine's Freshwater and Coastal Habitats and Species" – Would study the effects of marine debris on our freshwater and coastal areas and species.

## STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *Session Overview*

The State and Local Government Committee focused its work this session on supporting Maine's towns and cities as they adapt to 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges like sea level rise and housing shortages. The committee also worked to make the government function better for Maine people by improving harassment training, studying the costs and benefits of telework for executive branch employees and more.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 179](#), "An Act to Change the Name of Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day" – Recognizes the contributions of tribal communities to Maine by establishing Indigenous People's Day as a state holiday.
- [LD 301](#), "An Act to Help Older Adults Age in Place through Comprehensive Planning" – Helps create elderly-friendly policies and communities so Mainers can age in place.
- [LD 563](#), "An Act to Help Municipalities Prepare for Sea Level Rise" – Sets planning and regulatory goals to help communities adapt to and address sea level rise.
- [LD 1830](#), "An Act Establishing the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future" – Creates a new office charged with determining policies that will help Maine advance and grow.
- [LD 285](#), "An Act To Provide for Legislative Review of Federally Mandated Major Substantive Rules under the Maine Administrative Procedure Act" – Requires legislative review of major substantive rules that must be adopted to comply with federal law or to qualify for federal funds.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1065](#), "Health Insurance for Session-Only and Seasonal State Employees" – Would ensure state workers receive health care even if they are seasonal workers.
- [LD 1415](#), "An Act To Improve the Laws Regarding Discontinued and Abandoned Roads" – Seeks to help municipalities manage abandoned roads.
- [LD 1054](#), "An Act To Clarify the Use of Burying Grounds and Family Burying Grounds" – Would require burial grounds to be recorded by the registry of deeds and allow property surrounding the grounds to be conveyed more easily.

## **TAXATION**

### *Session Overview*

This year the Taxation Committee focused on property tax relief and restoring fairness to our tax code. Taxation additionally worked to spur economic development through targeted and effective use of tax credits that attract both businesses and workers.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1671](#), "An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Capital Investment Credit To Ensure Fairness for Maine Businesses" – Closes a corporate tax loophole to allow funding for an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit, a credit that puts money in the pockets of low-income workers.
- [LD 1430](#), "An Act To Create Tax Equity among Renewable Energy Investments" – Supports people and businesses that invest in solar by reducing uncertainty and providing property tax breaks.

- [LD 1713](#), "An Act To Return Funds to Maine Property Tax Payers" – Returns money that has been languishing in the tax relief fund directly to property taxpayers.
- Budget – Rep. Austin's [homestead exemption bill](#), Rep. Harnett's [revenue sharing bill](#), and a pared-down version of Rep. Talbot Ross' [Property Tax Fairness Credit bill](#) all made it into the property tax relief package in the budget amendment.

#### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 286](#), "An Act To Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Feminine Hygiene Products" – A bill to qualify feminine hygiene products as an essential and thus tax-exempt item.
- [LD 682](#), "An Act To Provide Seniors and Certain Persons with Disabilities Assistance with Property Taxes through the Deferral of Those Taxes" – A property tax deferral revolving loan program.
- [LD 1698](#), "An Act To Create Jobs and Slow Climate Change by Promoting the Production of Natural Resources Bioproducts" – A plan to fight climate change and create jobs by supporting bio-based businesses.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### *Session Overview*

This year, the Transportation Committee focused largely on ensuring public safety and funding improvements of our roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1269](#), "An Act To Update the Laws Governing Child Safety Seats and Seat Belts" – Revises some of the laws around car seats and seatbelts for children, bringing them up to modern standards.
- [LD 165](#), "An Act To Prohibit the Use of Handheld Phones and Devices While Driving" – Bans the use of handheld devices while operating a motor vehicle.
- [LD 166](#), "An Act To Protect Schoolchildren by Increasing the Penalty for Unlawful Passing of a School Bus" – Amends the law to address the enforcement of illegal passing of school buses.
- [LD 19](#), "An Act To Require Public School Buses To Be Equipped with School Bus Crossing Arms" – Mandates that crossing arms be installed on new school buses purchased in 2021 and after.
- [LD 945](#), "An Act To Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission To Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation Systems" – Creates a commission to look at modernizing the way Maine funds transportation infrastructure in the state.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- Funding solutions for state infrastructure projects. Proposals will largely come from the Blue Ribbon Commission established by LD 945.

## **VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

### *Session Overview*

While Veterans and Legal Affairs dealt with a wide-range of topics this session, a few themes included bills focused on expanding access and ease of voting, improving beverage laws and permitting sports betting in Maine.

### *Key Legislative Successes*

- [LD 1463](#), "An Act To Create an Automatic Voter Registration System" – Establishes a method beginning in 2022 of automatically registering eligible individuals to vote.
- [LD 1626](#), "An Act To Implement a Presidential Primary System in Maine" – Replaces the presidential choice caucus with a presidential choice primary.
- [LD 1761](#), "An Act To Assist Small Beer Manufacturers" – Expands the definition for breweries that can be considered “small,” allowing smaller brewers to grow without facing additional regulatory burdens.
- [LD 1015](#), "An Act To Support Maine Craft Distillers" – Allows small local distillers to sell their product on-site without additional fees.
- [LD 719](#), "An Act To Amend the Adult Use Marijuana Law" – Institutes rules and procedures to guide the adult use recreational marijuana market in Maine.

### *Items to Pick Up Next Session*

- [LD 1083](#), "An Act To Implement Ranked-choice Voting for Presidential Primary and General Elections in Maine"
- [LD 54](#), "An Act To Limit the Influence of Lobbyists by Expanding the Prohibition on Accepting Political Contributions"

## **BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

### *Topline Message*

- When I knocked on doors and when I took the oath of office to serve as your representative this session, I promised to push for a budget that would expand health care coverage, lift up working Maine families, support our schools, improve broadband access and provide meaningful property tax relief. No budget funds everything, but I am confident this budget addresses these concerns and our most pressing needs.



### *FY 2020-2021 Total Spending*

- The [budget](#) distributes \$7.98 billion from the General Fund over the next two years and adds \$18 million to the Budget Stabilization, or “Rainy Day,” fund.

### *Property Tax Relief*

- The budget allocates \$130 million in property tax relief for Mainers, including seniors, families and small businesses. We are:
  - Increasing revenue sharing to 3% in 2020 and 3.75% in 2021
  - Increasing the Homestead Exemption by \$5,000 up to \$25,000
  - Expanding the Property Tax Fairness Credit to include an additional 13,000 Mainers

### *Health Care*

- In order to make health care more affordable and more accessible, we are:
  - Allocating \$125 million to be matched with \$700 million in federal funds for MaineCare expansion
  - Restoring the low-cost Drugs for Maine’s Elderly program to cover an additional 800 seniors
  - Adding 62 new child protective workers
  - Combatting the opioid crisis with \$5.5 million towards prevention and treatment efforts

### *Investing in Maine Workers, Young Adults and Children*

- To advance workforce training and higher education, we are:
  - Including \$600,000 for adult education, \$2 million for adult degree completion and \$3 million for early college
  - Providing a 3.35% increase for higher education and training programs at Maine’s public colleges to help keep tuition and fees down
  - Continuing workforce training funding for the Maine Community College System
- To support K-12 public education, we are:
  - Adding \$111 million in state funds for local education
  - Paving the way for a \$40,000 minimum teacher salary and reimbursing towns at 100% to offset the cost on local budgets
  - Allocating \$18 million in the School Revolving Renovation Fund, which provides critical funding to repair school infrastructure
  - Funding programs to feed more hungry school children

## *Looking to the Future*

- To improve our infrastructure, energy, climate and planning, we are:
  - Allocating \$4 million to fund broadband expansion initiatives and rural development grants
  - Providing \$735,000 in funding for revitalized state planning across state agencies
  - Supporting a plan to triple in-state renewable energy generation, so we can save money and power our electricity, heating and transportation needs in a sustainable way
  - Funding a working group that will help us lower Maine's carbon footprint in order to achieve 30-year goals we've set for the state