



Senator CATHY BREEN

DISTRICT 25

Proudly representing Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gray, Long Island, Yarmouth and part of Westbrook

Dear friends and neighbors,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones in good health and good spirits after our glorious Maine summer. This past legislative session, Democrats and Republicans in Augusta worked together to accomplish so much for the people and businesses of Maine.

Restoring respect and civility in the State House allowed us to invest in small businesses, expand access to health care, lay the groundwork for the success of our children and support our aging population.

“ Restoring civility and common sense to Maine’s budget was goal #1 for me this session. I’m happy to report that we delivered.”

As Senate Chair of the Legislature’s Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am proud that **we passed a budget that prioritizes \$130 million in property tax relief**. It focuses on core state government functions like public education and health care. And it does not raise any state taxes. For District 25, it means:

- \$1.4 million in new money for K-12 education, and
- \$1.3 million in new money for municipal services.

The budget increases funding for our youngest students all the way up to our college students and adult learners. It makes vital investments in services for seniors, children and Mainers living with disabilities. And it hedges against a potential economic downturn by adding over \$37 million to the Rainy Day Fund, for a balance of \$236 million. This budget is strategic and fiscally sound.

Perhaps most importantly, it was debated and passed in a bipartisan way, with over 99 percent of the initiatives receiving unanimous committee votes. This is the way Mainers expect us to work.

Additionally, **we made health care more accessible** by funding Medicaid expansion and preventing insurance companies from discriminating against Mainers with preexisting conditions. And **we stood up to “Big Pharma” by passing our prescription drug reform package** to make them more affordable while increasing price transparency and holding drug companies accountable.

Next year, I promise to keep fighting for your health, family, job and wallet in Augusta. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me about the issues that matter to you.

Thank you for your input. It’s an honor to serve you in Augusta,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Breen". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue background.

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Protecting our environment

From working waterfronts to forest and agricultural products, Maine's natural resources contribute billions to our economy. This session, I worked hard to keep it that way.

As a member of the bipartisan Land Conservation Task Force, I was proud of our final report laying out practical ways we can help preserve our natural environment. Based on the report, I sponsored a bill to send a bond question to the voters requesting critical funding for the Land for Maine's Future program and our state park system. The bill garnered 104 co-sponsors: Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

My bill has been held over until the next session. Gov. Mills introduced her own bond initiative to fund LMF, but it failed to gain the votes needed for passage during August's special session. I look forward to working to secure badly needed funding for this popular and effective program next year.

Additionally, I fought to protect the water quality of our rivers and the Gulf of Maine, voted to ban offshore drilling and backed laws to ban single-use plastic bags, consumer Styrofoam products, and toxic chemicals that can lead to an increased risk of cancer and other health problems. I was also proud to be appointed to the Governor's Climate Council, which will lead efforts to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050, and create good-paying green energy jobs.



The Land Conservation Task Force announced its report and advocated for additional Land for Maine's Future funding with the help of Gov. Mills.

Improving women's lives

The gender wage gap has persisted for too long. That's why I re-introduced my bill, now law, to prevent one act of pay discrimination from hurting a worker throughout her career, leaving her more economically secure in later years. We also worked to remove the "luxury tax" from feminine hygiene products.

I also voted for the Equal Rights Amendment, which passed in the Senate. The House will have another chance to advance this important legislation next year. And I sponsored a joint resolution recognizing the 100th Anniversary of women's right to vote in Maine. As we reflect on this milestone, it's wonderful to celebrate how far we've come, while looking forward to the work we still have to accomplish.

Prescription drug relief

Too many Mainers are struggling to afford the prescription drugs they need to survive while drug companies are making enormous profits. This year, I joined my colleagues to support four prescription drug reform bills, which earned unanimous support in the Senate. These new laws will make medicine more affordable and accessible and increase price transparency.

The first bill allows Maine to wholesale import prescription drugs from Canada, which are both safe and more affordable. The second bill creates a Prescription Drug Affordability Board that will give consumers a voice in drug pricing, curb public spending and help drive down costs. The third bill holds corporations accountable when they pocket savings meant for consumers, and the last one requires drug companies to share information on their costs.

Maine is leading the nation with these new laws. We're bringing real change and accountability to a dysfunctional system and tipping the scales toward consumers.

Investing in technology

We all depend on access to the internet, from banking to health care and other personal business. For many students and local businesses, being able to connect to high-speed internet is vital to their success. That's why our budget allocates \$4 million to fund internet access and related rural development projects. We also passed the nation's strongest online privacy law. Your internet service provider is no longer allowed to secretly sell and profit from your personal data.

We passed a "net neutrality" law for a free and open internet, ensuring that Maine's small businesses can compete on a level playing field with big companies online. Finally, **we passed a law to keep spammers and scammers from making robocalls to residential numbers**, which has made many Mainers, including me, hesitant to answer their phone when it rings.



When the Maine State Museum opened its exhibit to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of women's suffrage, I was asked to make remarks and introduce Governor Mills. Senate President Troy Jackson looks on.

“Thanks for all your hard work to pass a very good budget, one that serves the best interests of Mainers and puts the state on a very positive path forward.”

- Karen Jacobsen, Falmouth



Entrepreneur Gabrielle Melchionda, founder of Mad Gab's, offers free business classes to young people in her Yarmouth headquarters.

Investing in Maine's workforce

This session, we made serious investments in our students to set them up for success and keep Maine's economy growing.

My bill to keep our youngest kids in a learning environment by providing a consultation program for teachers and parents was signed into law. This program has proven successful at reducing expulsions that can have adverse consequences for our children's future education and career opportunities.

Hungry kids can't learn. This session, **my initiative to make sure more kids in need get free lunches became law.** We also improved the statewide online application for free school meals and expanded "breakfast after the bell" programs. Our goal is to reverse the recent upward trend in children's food insecurity all over Maine.

We added funding for Career and Technical Education and passed a measure to study creating a career training program in high schools. CTE programs lead students to good-paying jobs and bright futures.

The budget provides \$18 million to repair crumbling school buildings and builds a bridge to a \$40,000 minimum teacher salary by 2022. If we want our kids to be taught by the best teachers, we need to pay educators appropriately.

We also increased funding for the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System and Maine Maritime Academy to help keep tuition down. We funded adult education, early college, adult degree completion and continuing training to help fill gaps in our workforce.

Keeping our promise on property tax relief

Mainers need property tax relief. It's why lowering property taxes has been one of my top priorities this session. And I'm proud to report that we delivered.

Under Democratic leadership, lawmakers passed a strong, bipartisan budget that provides \$130 million in property tax relief for hardworking Mainers, seniors, families, and small businesses.

We expanded the Property Tax Fairness Credit to include an additional 13,000 Mainers. Seniors can save up to \$1,200 and eligible working Mainers and families can save up to \$750 on property taxes or rent.

We increased the Homestead Exemption by \$5,000, so homeowners can now take \$25,000 off the value of their home when calculating their property tax bill.

We began restoring revenue sharing, which means municipalities will have more funds to help stabilize property tax rates and fund essential services.

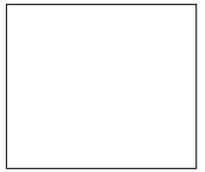
In addition, we added \$111 million to the education budget to reduce the amount of school funding raised through property taxes. We also passed a law that provides a direct refund of \$100 to those who qualify for the Homestead Exemption.

As Chair of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, I know that property taxes have been too high for too long. This year, I'm pleased we were able to make sure more of your money stays in your wallet.



I appreciate Maine Outdoor Brands for providing businesses with resources to help them succeed and letting the world know what Maine has to offer. There's no other place like it!

2019 Legislative Update
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SURVEY: Your voice and your ideas matter!

1. What should be our biggest priority next year?

- Making health care more affordable
 - Improving our economy
 - Supporting education, especially career tech
 - Protecting Maine's natural resources
 - Investing in good-paying, green energy jobs
 - Other (please specify)
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2. What do you think Maine needs to do to strengthen our economy?

- Invest in career and technical education
 - Support companies to create good-paying jobs
 - Support new emerging industries
 - Retain and grow manufacturing jobs
 - Other (please specify)
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3. What is the biggest challenge you and your family face when it comes to health care?

- Cost of prescription drugs
- Cost of health care coverage
- Lack of transparency and accountability
- Lack of medical professionals in our area

Other (please specify)

4. What do you think presents the largest challenge for education in Maine?

- Student debt
 - Inadequate funding for public schools
 - Inadequate funding for career tech
 - Lack of support for teachers
 - Other (please specify)
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5. Which of the bills we passed this year was most important to you or your family? If none, do you have any bill ideas for next year?

Thanks for your feedback. Please reach out if you ever need assistance.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Please visit mainesenate.org to sign up for my email updates.