



# Senator MIKE CARPENTER

DISTRICT 2: Proudly representing the People of Southern Aroostook and Northern Penobscot Counties

Dear Friend,

As a lifelong resident of Aroostook County, my number one priority in the Legislature is to make sure The County has a voice in Augusta. It's why I returned to the State House determined to put partisan politics aside and get things done for working people, small businesses and rural health care.

**“I'm proud of what we were able to accomplish for rural Mainers.”**

Now that the first year of our work has come to a close, I'm proud of what we were able to accomplish for rural Mainers.

- **We passed a budget that provides \$130 million in property tax relief without raising taxes.** We expanded the Property Tax Fairness Credit, increased the Homestead Exemption and made significant steps toward fully restoring revenue sharing. This means more Mainers can afford to stay in their homes and make ends meet, and that's good for our economy.
- **We fought to make health care more affordable and more accessible.** We passed laws to prevent insurance companies from discriminating against Mainers with preexisting conditions and stood up to “Big Pharma” by passing our

sweeping prescription drug reform package. Prescription drug costs in the U.S. and in Maine are simply out of control and have been for years. Instead of waiting on Washington to do something about it, at the State House we decided to take the matter into our own hands.

- **We stood up for rural hospitals and ambulance services** by providing critical funding to keep these services operating in our region. No matter where you live, you should be able to get help in a health emergency. I'm proud to have done my part to secure funding for Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital in Presque Isle and Houlton Regional Hospital.

These are just the highlights. Looking back on this year, I believe we did a lot of good work to make Maine a better place to live, work, raise a family and eventually retire. But I know there is still a lot of work left to do. I promise to keep fighting for your health, family, job and wallet in Augusta next year.

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.

Sincerely,

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As a veteran myself, I was especially proud to honor the American Legion, the nation's largest veteran service organization, by placing a plaque in the State House to celebrate their 100th Anniversary.

## Supporting law enforcement and public safety members

Our law enforcement and public safety members put their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe. That's why I was proud to support a number of bills this year to honor and help members of law enforcement and public safety. Last winter, two Maine State Troopers who were pulled over on the side of the road were struck by passing vehicles. I supported a bill to increase the penalty for breaking Maine's "move over" law. **This will help keep police officers, public safety workers and road crews safe while they do their jobs.**

I also supported two bills this session that protect and strengthen the Retired County and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Municipal Firefighters Health Insurance programs.

## Delivering on Prescription Drug Relief for Mainers

Too many Mainers are struggling to afford the prescription drugs they need to survive. At the same time, drug companies and corporate middlemen are making outrageous profits on the backs of hardworking people. It doesn't have to be this way. This year, I joined my colleagues to support a suite of prescription drug reform bills, which earned unanimous, bipartisan approval in the Senate. **These new laws will make medicine more affordable and more accessible, increase price transparency and hold corporate middlemen accountable.**

The first allows Maine to wholesale import prescription drugs from Canada, which are both safe and more affordable. The second 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 holds corporations, acting as middlemen, that have pocketed savings designed for consumers accountable. The final piece of this puzzle requires drug companies to share information on costs related to drug production, marketing, advertising and consumer price.

## Standing up for veterans

As a veteran, I understand the sacrifice that people in the military have made to keep us safe. While we can never fully repay them, we can help ease the transition home.

**This year, we passed a law to allow moose lottery winners to donate their permit to a disabled veteran and to provide complimentary hunting, fishing and trapping licenses to our Gold Star Families.**

Many servicemembers need treatment for service-related injuries. **This year, I supported a bill creating veteran-friendly workplaces in Maine to ensure veterans can take time off for medical appointments.**

Finally, we worked to address veteran homelessness by supporting local organizations that give veterans the tools they need to get back on their feet. We still have work to do next year starting with a bill to provide property tax relief for veterans.



It was great to be with Jay McCrum, owner of Penobscot McCrum, and Senate President Troy Jackson at the 72nd Potato Blossom Festival.

## Putting Maine jobs and workers first

Working families and small businesses are integral to our communities and economy. This session, we prioritized bills that make it easier for both to thrive.

**I cosponsored a bill to facilitate the construction of the McCrum processing plant in Washburn** and promote rural economic development. This law creates a tax credit for Maine-based food processing and manufacturing companies. Eligible companies must offer good-paying jobs, create new jobs, use mostly Maine agricultural products and invest in their communities. **It should have a profound impact on the potato and local foods industry.** Finally, we extended the Mainers Feeding Mainers program, which provides food banks with the resources to purchase fresh produce from 75 participating farms, increasing demand for farmers. **It shows that when we come together, we can solve our greatest challenges.**

“I want to thank Mike for his strong leadership in support of rural hospitals, such as Houlton Regional, this year. This is one more example of how he has our backs representing us in The County.”

—Shawn Anderson  
Chief Operating Officer of Houlton Regional Hospital



I was proud to stand with the Chief Operating Officer of Houlton Regional Hospital, Shawn Anderson, in support of a new law to provide critical funding for rural hospitals, including Houlton Regional and Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital in Presque Isle.

## Fighting for affordable health care

From the start of this session, making health care more affordable and accessible for all Mainers has been our top priority. We've passed legislation to protect Mainers with preexisting conditions and preserve the patient protections in the Affordable Care Act, such as coverage for hospitalization, ambulance services and maternity care. But our work didn't end there.

Having always lived in rural Maine, I know our health care system is broken. It's why I **successfully fought for legislation to secure critical funding for our rural hospitals, including Northern Light AR Gould in Presque Isle and Houlton Regional Hospital, and ambulance services, because I know your zip code shouldn't determine your ability to access health care.**

This year, we also took action to eliminate the red tape in insurance companies to ensure that decisions about coverage and care are made by medical professionals with relevant expertise, instead of their corporate bureaucrats.

We also passed legislation to require insurance companies to cover telehealth services the same way they cover traditional health care services. This technology allows people in our community to more easily access quality health care services without having to drive hours south.

## Keeping our promise on property tax relief

Mainers need property tax relief. It's why lowering property taxes has remained at the top of our agenda for years. In 2017, we increased the Homestead Exemption. In 2018, we increased the Property Tax Fairness Credit. This year, we built on that success.

Lawmakers crafted and 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 provide relief to an additional 13,000 Mainers. Seniors can save up to \$1,200 in property taxes and eligible working Mainers and families can save up to \$750 on property taxes or rent.

We increased the Homestead Exemption to \$25,000 — a \$5,000 increase from the previous year. This means Maine homeowners can take \$25,000 off the value of their home when calculating their property tax bill.

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

In addition, we added \$111 million in education funding,

which will reduce the amount of school funding raised through property taxes. Outside of the budget, we also passed a law that provides a direct refund of \$100 to those who qualify for the Homestead Exemption.

Reducing property taxes is the number one concern for many folks, and I'm pleased we were able to make sure more of your money stays in your wallet.



I was honored to present Curtis Harrison (right) of New Limerick with a sentiment recognizing him for his achievement of being named 2019 Young Farmer of the Year. Congratulations!

2019 Legislative Update  
**Senator Mike Carpenter**  
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Speaking on the Senate floor  
this session

## 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)
- 

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)
- 

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)

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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?

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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