



# Senator BROWNIE CARSON

DISTRICT 24

Proudly representing the people of Brunswick, Freeport,  
Harpwell, North Yarmouth and Pownal

Dear Friend,

I serve in the Maine Senate to help ensure that future generations can live, work and thrive in Maine. Restoring civility, respectful discussion of difficult issues, and a commitment to move Maine forward were hallmarks of our 2019 legislative session. We worked together on many issues, from ending childhood hunger to modernizing solar energy policy.

**“Future generations depend on us to enact policies that protect our environment and safeguard our natural resources.”**

The first session of the 129th Legislature has come to a close, and I am proud of what we accomplished. While much work remains to be done, we made real progress.

**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 took a significant step toward fully restoring revenue

sharing. As a result, more Mainers will be able to stay in their homes and make ends meet.

**We fought to make health care more affordable and more accessible,** passing laws to protect coverage for preexisting conditions and lower the cost of prescription drugs.

**We created a first-in-the-nation statewide earned paid time off policy.** No one should worry about losing a job or paycheck if child care is unexpectedly canceled or an aging parent has a health scare.

These are just the highlights. We made significant strides, but I know there is still much work left to be done. In Augusta next year, I will continue the fight to expand health care coverage, improve our schools, protect our natural resources and ensure a promising future for our children.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me about the issues that matter most to you.

Thank you all for your input. It's an honor to serve you in Augusta.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brownie Carson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## CONTACT BROWNIE:

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On the Legislature's Education Committee, I work closely with Pender Makin, Maine Education Commissioner and former assistant superintendent of schools in Brunswick

## Protecting our environment

As we look to the future, a clean and healthy environment is one of Maine's greatest assets. Serving as chair of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I worked with my colleagues to safeguard our natural resources. We passed major environmental legislation.

**We banned single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam containers statewide**, eliminating these significant sources of pollution. On the committee, **I led negotiations that resulted in unanimously supported proposals to improve the water quality of our rivers and protect the sustenance fishing rights of Maine tribes.** My fellow committee members and the public deserve enormous credit for their hard work and advocacy on this legislation.

We made progress toward keeping toxic chemicals out of any packaging material sold in Maine.

**We also enacted Governor Mills' proposal to create the Maine Climate Council, a tremendous step forward.**

I'm proud to say I have been appointed to serve on this council. The council will spearhead efforts to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 80 percent and achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

## Investing in green energy

Climate change poses a dire threat to our future — as of this year, there is more carbon dioxide in our atmosphere than at any other point in human history.

Since we must transition from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy, **we passed a law to encourage more solar power projects in Maine and make it easier for small and medium-sized groups to move forward on solar projects.** We also updated Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard, requiring that more of Maine's electricity come from renewable sources including solar and wind.

**Another new law will boost Maine's workforce training efforts in the renewable energy sector, support energy conservation and encourage solar energy generation at Maine schools.** By generating their own solar energy, schools can not only save money, but also help protect our environment.

## Fighting for affordable health care

We must continue to expand access to affordable, quality health care. Many Mainers are uninsured or underinsured, leaving them vulnerable to the crippling costs of health care. Not only that, politicians in Washington continue to try to weaken the Affordable Care Act.

**This session, we passed legislation to protect Mainers with preexisting conditions.** We strictly regulated short-term health plans, also known as "junk" plans, which offer faulty coverage.

We also passed a comprehensive prescription drug reform package into law with strong bipartisan support. This suite of laws makes medicine more affordable and accessible for all Mainers while holding prescription drug companies accountable.



These students from Freeport Middle School came to the State House to interview me for a school project. If you're interested in visiting the State House, please contact me at (207) 287-1515.

## Looking out for the health and well-being of children

I strongly believe that we must ensure the health and well-being of our kids. This year, **I sponsored a bill to require a comprehensive study of early childhood services in Maine.**

Research into childhood brain development has shown that it is essential to address child health and well-being issues as early as possible and provide children with services they need to thrive. My bill was unanimously passed by the House and Senate, and will give us the tools we need to tackle this issue.

I also sponsored a successful bill to add mental health to the school curriculum. **Teaching our kids how to talk about mental health — and that it's okay to talk about mental health — will help them be more mindful and proactive about their well-being.**

“I’m so happy to have Brownie Carson as my state senator. When I met with him at the State House about the environment and voter rights, he took as much time as necessary to talk with me about my concerns.”

-Michele Stapleton, Brunswick



Recognizing Gail Hart for her service as rescue chief of the Harpswell Neck Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department

## Providing oversight of the proposed CMP corridor

I have deep reservations about CMP’s proposal to build a transmission corridor through western Maine. The environmental impact on western Maine’s forests, trout streams and wetlands would be very real; energy benefits to Maine appear illusory; and serious greenhouse gas reductions to our region are questionable.

**This session, I sponsored a bill that would have required a study of the project’s impacts on regional greenhouse gas emissions.** Although my bill was endorsed by both the House and Senate, it did not garner the necessary two-thirds majority it needed for emergency enactment. However, much oversight and environmental review of the project is still ahead.

In fact, CMP’s application for federal environmental permits was declared “incomplete” by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and it appears likely that the environmental process will have to begin all over again. **I will continue to fight for strong oversight of the CMP corridor proposal.**

The CMP corridor has aroused strong public opposition throughout Maine, especially in the western mountain region. The people of our state have a long and proud tradition of protecting our natural resources — and we will do so again.

## Keeping our promise on property tax relief

High property taxes create a burden for people across Maine. It’s why lowering property taxes has been 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 work.

This session, we 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, which means 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 people, and I’m pleased we were able to make sure more of your money stays in your wallet.



Speaking on the Senate floor as we debate legislation

2019 Legislative Update  
**Senator Brownie Carson**  
3 State House Station  
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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)
- 

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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