



Senator BEN CHIPMAN

DISTRICT 27

Proudly representing part of Portland, including the Peninsula, Oakdale, USM, Back Cove, East Deering, Peaks Island, Cliff Island and Great Diamond Island.

Dear Friend,

After hearing from people all over our community, I returned to Augusta to get work done and make real change to help everyday Mainers. Bringing back respect and civility to Augusta was long overdue. This session, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate sat beside each other instead of being divided by a partisan aisle.

It was also time to refocus Augusta on supporting working people, investing in small businesses, laying the groundwork for the success of our children, and helping Maine's aging population.

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

- **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.

- **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.

- **I also sponsored a law that will help make roads safer.** My "yield-to-bus" law will require that drivers yield the right of way to transit buses that are pulling back into the street from a stop. This is a common-sense fix that will clear up any confusion in case there is a gap in city ordinances.

These are just some 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 all for your input. It's an honor to serve you in Augusta.

Sincerely,

BEN

“I promise to keep fighting for your health, family, job and wallet in Augusta.”

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Testifying in committee is one way I make my constituents' voices heard here in Augusta.

New paid time off law

In Maine, working families and small businesses are at the core of our communities and economy. This session, we prioritized legislation that makes it easier to not only make ends meet, but thrive.

I was proud to support a first-in-the-nation statewide earned paid time off policy. **Under this new law, more Mainers won't have to choose between their paycheck and dealing with an unexpected emergency.** This includes caring for a sick child, bringing an aging parent to a doctor's appointment or dealing with a flat tire. This new law provides earned paid time off to 85% of all Maine workers while exempting more than 40,000 of Maine's 50,792 businesses.

Working to reduce homelessness in Portland

We currently have over 500 people homeless in Portland, only one-third of whom are from our city, and our shelters are beyond capacity. For years other cities and towns have been sending their residents to Portland when they become homeless. Separating a homeless individual from their family, community, employment, and social services by sending them to the largest city in the state makes their situation more difficult and prolongs the process of getting back on their feet.

I introduced and passed a bill this session to require all cities and towns in Maine to provide housing locally for the homeless using emergency general assistance funds. If they do not have a shelter, they must provide housing at the nearest hotel or motel. It is no longer acceptable to displace homeless residents by sending them to Portland. This new law should reduce the number of homeless individuals in our city while we work on more longterm solutions to reduce and eliminate homelessness in Maine.

Expanding access to quality health care in Maine

Access to quality, affordable health care is about having the freedom to have control over your health, your life, and your future. From the start of this session, **making health care more affordable and accessible for all Mainers has been my 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. We put strict limits on short-term health plans, also known as "junk" plans, which trick folks into buying faulty coverage. **We also passed a comprehensive prescription drug reform package into law with strong bipartisan support.** This suite of laws approaches these issues from all angles to make medicine more affordable and accessible for all Mainers, increase price transparency and hold corporate middlemen accountable.

We took action to eliminate the red tape from insurance companies to ensure that decisions about coverage and care are made by medical professionals with relevant expertise, instead of company bureaucrats. **Finally, the Legislature funded and implemented Medicaid expansion,** which was approved by Maine voters in 2017.



Speaking with constituents from Portland who visited the State House.

Getting big money out of local elections

This session, I introduced and passed a bill to reduce the maximum individual contribution a municipal political candidate can receive from \$850 to \$500.

In recent years, we have seen candidates running for local offices raise more and more money. **Municipal elections are extremely important and should be centered around the issues.** There's no reason to have such large amounts of money spent on these local races. This law will help candidates focus on grassroots efforts and conversations with voters, not raising money from big donors.

“Ben is a champion for affordable health care and a woman’s right to choose.”

**- Belinda Ray,
Portland City Councilor**



With advocates from Speak About It in the Senate Chamber. This group focuses on educating people about harassment and consent.

Fighting for equal treatment for all Mainers

All Mainers — regardless of who you are or where you’re from — deserve fair treatment. Mainers deserve equal pay for equal work. That’s why we passed a law to ensure one act of pay discrimination won’t hurt a worker through their entire career. This will help more Maine workers achieve financial stability.

We also made sure references to the Governor and Maine Supreme Court Justices are gender-neutral in official documents. And we started the work needed to remove the “luxury tax” from feminine hygiene products.

These changes are key steps toward achieving real equality.

As we reflect on 100 years of women’s suffrage, it’s wonderful to celebrate how far we’ve come, while looking forward to the work we still have left to accomplish.

It’s more important than ever that our Constitution clearly states that all people should be treated the same, regardless of their gender. That’s why I voted for an Equal Rights Amendment for Maine, and I’m proud to say the Senate gave bipartisan, two-thirds support to this bill. When we come back next year, the House will have another chance to pass this important legislation.

Keeping our promise on rent and 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.

Under Democratic leadership, 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, 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 at a press conference in Portland.

2019 Legislative Report



Ben Chipman State Senator

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Working for Portland

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)
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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.