



Senator Susan DESCHAMBAULT

DISTRICT 32

Proudly representing the people of Alfred, Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Kennebunkport and Lyman

Dear Friend,

After hearing from folks all across the district, I knew we had a lot of work to get done in Augusta. This past session, we worked long and hard to pass important legislation. It was also a priority to bring back respect and civility to the State House, which was long overdue. Democrats and Republicans sat side by side in the Senate chamber instead of sitting apart, so we were no longer divided by a partisan aisle.

“After hearing from folks all across the district, I knew we had a lot of work to get done in Augusta.”

Now that the first year of our work has come to a close, I am happy to report we were able to accomplish a lot of great things for our part of York County, whether you live by the water, in the suburbs, on farmland or in the city.

- **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.
- **We supported local businesses.** Small businesses and shopping locally aren’t just a nice part of our community, they are what helps keep our economy running. Now craft breweries and other small-batch alcohol manufacturers can provide taste-tests at farmers markets across the state.

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. Mainers deserve to get the care and tax relief they need so that they can stay in their homes and stay healthy. I know there are issues that we still need to attend to. I promise to keep fighting for your health, family, job and wallet in Augusta next year.

Please feel free to reach out to me about the issues that matter to you. Thank you for all your input. It’s an honor to serve you in Augusta.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Deschambault".

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I visited the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard with my fellow legislator, Rep. Ryan Fecteau, D-Biddeford, to get a tour and learn about how the shipyard is a part of so many York County residents' lives.

Fighting for affordable health care and medicine

From the start of this session, making health care more affordable and accessible for all Mainers has been our top priority. We 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 company bureaucrats.

Too many Mainers are struggling to afford the prescription drugs they need to survive. At the same time, drug companies and middlemen are making outrageous profits on the backs of hardworking people. It doesn't have to be this way.

That's why I joined my colleagues to support a suite of prescription drug reform bills, which earned unanimous, bipartisan support in the Senate.

The first allows Maine to wholesale import prescription drugs from Canada, which are safe and more affordable. The second creates a Prescription Drug Affordability Board that will give consumers a voice in drug pricing and curb public spending. The third holds accountable middlemen corporations that have pocketed savings designed for consumers. The final piece of this puzzle is a law that requires drug companies to share information on costs related to drug production, marketing, advertising and consumer price.



It was a pleasure to host the Biddeford 50+ club at the State House.

Supporting law enforcement and public safety members

Our law enforcement and public safety members sacrifice more than we know 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.

I sponsored legislation that requires candidates for the office of County Sheriff to have law enforcement or corrections supervisory experience. Sheriffs have a tough job, and this new law will ensure that they have the necessary experience to excel and lead their departments.

I also 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.



Thank you Biddeford Cultural and Heritage Center for coming to the State House to celebrate Franco-American Day! Enchanté!

Promoting Maine's heritage economy and culture

Farmers' markets are a vital part of many of our communities. They provide residents with locally grown produce and other food products. With our growing craft beer, spirits and wine industry, it only makes sense to provide these small businesses with the same opportunity. **I sponsored a law this session that permits alcohol tastings at farmers' markets. This is a great way for our small breweries, wineries and more to grow their business in the state.** Local is always better!

We also adopted an official state ballad, to celebrate Maine artists and honor the state's role in the Civil War. The Buxton-born and Portland-based band Ghost of Paul Revere wrote the song called the "Ballad of the 20th Maine," which tells the story of Maine soldiers during the Battle of Gettysburg. Maine's rich history and culture make this state so special.

“Susan looks to do what is best for our students, schools and community in Augusta. She communicates with me and members of the community and seeks our input on important issues. She isn’t afraid to be an independent voice, which is something I really respect.”

—Jeremy Ray,
Superintendent of Biddeford Schools



After honoring the Biddeford Field Hockey and Cheerleading state champions at the State House, I took these student athletes to the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine, where the Executive Director of the center and my colleague, Senator Shenna Bellows, graciously gave us a tour. Senator Bellows and I are in the background in the center left.

Investing in the next generation of Mainers

Biddeford is the youngest city in Maine. It’s important that we support and encourage young families and workers to thrive in our state.

This session, lawmakers made serious investments in young Mainers’ education so they can become the successful leaders and workers of tomorrow.

Hungry kids can’t learn. We made the online application for free school meals universal and statewide, expanded “breakfast after the bell” programs, prohibited shaming students who can’t pay for meals and made sure more kids in need get free lunches.

We also added \$2.5 million in Career and Technical Education funding and passed a measure to study creating a four-year career training program in high schools. CTE programs lead students to good-paying jobs and bright futures.

We increased funding for the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System and Maine Maritime Academy, to help keep tuition down. We made further investments in adult education, early college, degree completion and continuing workforce training to help fill critical gaps in Maine’s workforce.

These changes will support the success of our next generation and attract young families to our state.

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.

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, all without raising taxes.

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.



The Maine Legislature celebrated Biddeford High School alum Jessica Gagne, Sports Anchor at News Center Maine Media, who was named Maine Sportscaster of the Year by the National Sports Media Association. She is an inspiration to us all.

2019 Legislative Update
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I gave a posthumous Legislative Sentiment in honor of Ray Gagnon on Franco-American Day at the State House. Ray's two sons, Mark and Guy, accepted the award on his behalf.

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)

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: _____

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