



Senator Heather SANBORN

DISTRICT 28

Proudly representing parts of Portland and Westbrook

Dear Friend,

After hearing from people all over our community last fall, I came to Augusta in January to get things moving forward again and to make real changes to help everyday Mainers. Bringing back respect and civility, and providing real solutions to the most pressing problems we face was long overdue. This session, Senate Democrats and Republicans sat beside each other instead of being divided by a partisan aisle.

“A new suite of laws will make prescription drugs more affordable and more accessible while increasing transparency at every step.”

It was also time to refocus Augusta on supporting working people, tackling the escalating cost of health care and prescription drugs, laying the groundwork for the success of our children, and protecting our environment.

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

- **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 municipal 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 implemented MaineCare expansion – finally taking advantage of more than \$700 million a year in federal funding for our health care system – and passed laws to prevent insurance companies from discriminating against Mainers with preexisting conditions.
- **We passed a sweeping prescription drug reform package that received unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate,** standing up to “Big Pharma,” the insurance companies, and the middlemen, known as pharmacy benefit managers. This suite of laws will make prescription drugs more affordable and more accessible while increasing price transparency at every step of the prescription drug supply chain.

Looking back 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, your family, and your job 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.

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Investing in green jobs

Combating climate change is vital to preserving Maine's natural resources, our economy and our way of life. **That's why we passed laws to invest in local clean energy projects, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, stabilize energy costs and support good-paying green energy jobs.**

One new law strengthens Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard by increasing the proportion of electricity sold in Maine that comes from renewable sources, setting the goal of reaching 100% use of renewable sources by 2050. **Another will incentivize more solar power projects in Maine, and make it easier for small and medium-sized groups to move forward on solar projects.** We also passed a new law establishing the goal of installing 100,000 heat pumps in Maine by 2025, as well as one that will boost Maine's workforce training efforts in the renewable energy sector.

By investing in green jobs, we're leading the way for future economic successes while facing head-on the threat posed by climate change to our state and well-being.



Testifying in support of my bill to hold accountable prescription drug middlemen, known as pharmacy benefit managers.

Protecting Maine's natural resources

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

I took action to protect the water quality of our rivers and the Gulf of Maine. I supported efforts to continue restoring the Penobscot River and protect sustenance fishing rights of Maine tribes. And I voted to ban offshore drilling. These measures will help ensure the long-term health of our inland fishing and marine resources.

I proudly supported the bipartisan 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.

I also backed laws to ban single-use plastic bags, Styrofoam products, and toxic chemicals that can lead to an increased risk of cancer and other health problems. These laws will protect our natural resources for future generations.



Standing alongside Maine parents and seniors to unveil our comprehensive prescription drug reform package.

Delivering on prescription drug relief

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. This year, **I led my colleagues in introducing a suite of prescription drug reform bills, which earned unanimous, bipartisan support in the Senate.** These new laws will make medicine more affordable and more accessible, increase price transparency and hold corporate middlemen accountable.

The first law allows Maine to wholesale import prescription drugs from Canada, which are both safe and more affordable. The second law 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 law, which I sponsored, holds pharmacy benefit managers accountable. These are the companies that act as middlemen for insurance companies, and they have been pocketing millions of dollars in savings that should have been passed to Maine 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.

As the Senate Chair of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, I was proud to lead the Senate Democratic bills through the committee process, as well as being the lead sponsor of one.

I'm ecstatic that we were able to pass into law this package of bills that go beyond simple fixes; they bring real change and accountability to a dysfunctional system.



I was proud to stand with Gov. Janet Mills when she signed the prescription drug reform bills into law.

“Senator Sanborn works tirelessly for Westbrook and Portland. She always responds immediately to any questions or concerns I have.”

**- Brendan Rielly,
former Westbrook City Councilor**



I had the opportunity to attend a Portland Sea Dogs game when they transformed into the Maine Whoopie Pies, and I presented them with a legislative sentiment before the game.

Fighting for affordable access to quality health care

Access to quality, affordable health care is about giving you the freedom to have control over your health, your life, and your future.

Along with prescription reform, making health care more affordable and accessible for all Mainers was a top priority for me.

We 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 rules on short-term health plans, also known as “junk” plans, which trick folks into buying faulty coverage.

This session, we updated family planning laws and fought to expand access to reproductive health. **Government shouldn’t get between a patient and their doctor.** 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 company bureaucrats.

Finally, the Legislature funded and implemented Medicaid expansion, which was approved by Maine voters in 2017.

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 Program. 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 Program 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. 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 community members, and I’m pleased we were able to make sure more of your money stays in your wallet.



It was an honor to meet Betsy Parsons, a leader in LGBTQ civil rights movement in Maine, in the senate chamber.

2019 Legislative Update
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With Senate President Troy Jackson and Senator Justin Chenette after the Senate passed a bill to ban the harmful practice of conversion therapy

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: _____

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