



Senator Erin HERBIG

DISTRICT 11

Proudly representing all 26 towns of Waldo County

Dear Neighbor,

I serve in the Maine Senate to break down barriers to success in Waldo County. This session, we focused on supporting working people, investing in small businesses and laying the groundwork for our children's success. Having finished the first year of our work, I'm proud of what we accomplished for our communities.

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.

We worked to make health care more affordable and more accessible. We passed laws to require insurance companies to cover hearing aids, protect coverage for those with preexisting conditions and lower prescription drug costs.

We worked to expand access to reliable, high-speed internet. As you know, it's not uncommon to see kids parked outside a town library or high school at 9 or 10 p.m. because it's the only place they can connect to the internet in order to complete homework or a college application. We approved \$4 million to improve this critical infrastructure.

These are just the highlights. We made significant strides, but there is still a lot to do. In Augusta next year, I will continue to work hard to ensure a promising future for our kids.

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

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Erin".



Visiting neighbors in Prospect on Memorial Day



Working with Winterport town councilors



Recognizing Unity College Professor Pat Clark

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Working with the Randall Collins VFW of Belfast and Sheriff Trafton



My son, Charles, looks on as I stand with Maine fire chiefs including Chief Bill Gillespie of Liberty

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.

Maine will now join several other states in allowing police officers who have served in the military to wear veterans' insignia on their uniforms. This change, which I sponsored, will recognize veterans when they come home and help them better connect with other veterans in their community.

I supported a bill to increase the penalty for breaking Maine's "move over" law. This will help keep law enforcement officers safe while they do their jobs.

One of the biggest challenges rural Maine towns face is attracting volunteer firefighters. **I introduced legislation this year to provide modest retirement benefits to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical workers to attract volunteers and reward their service.** This bill has been carried over to next year — I look forward to getting it across the finish line.

Standing up for veterans across Maine

Our veterans have sacrificed a lot to keep us safe. While we can never fully repay them, we can ease their transition home.

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

Many servicemen and women return in need of physical or mental health treatment for service-related injuries. It's why we passed a bill this session to create veteran-friendly workplaces in Maine. This law ensures veterans can take time off for medical and other appointments.

Finally, we took action to reduce veteran homelessness by passing a bill to support local organizations working to give veterans the tools they need to get back on their feet.

We still have work to do next year, from expanding the veteran property tax exemption, to supporting female veterans, to providing Gold Star families free entry to our state parks, camping areas and beaches.

Fighting for justice in cases of domestic violence

Domestic violence and sexual assault victims need all the support we can offer, so they can pull their lives back together and move forward. **This year, I sponsored legislation that expands the statute of limitations for prosecuting sex crimes from just 8 years to 20 years.**

Our new state budget also includes my proposal to increase funding for sexual assault and domestic violence services for the first time in almost 20 years. My proposal was cosponsored by 126 lawmakers: Democrats, Republicans and independents. With this funding, victims and survivors will be able to access critical services.



Supporting domestic violence and sexual assault victims and survivors

“Erin works incredibly hard on behalf of the people of Waldo County. I was honored to work with her to support Waldo County veterans.”

- Waldo County Sheriff Jeff Trafton



Collaborating with Rep. Scott Cuddy, Searsport Selectman Mark Bradstreet and Ruth Lind of the Maine Auctioneers Association

Improving internet access and privacy

Today, more and more things are done online, from banking to health care and shopping. For many students and local businesses, being able to connect to high-speed internet is vital. That's why **our budget allocates \$4 million to fund high-speed internet and other rural development projects.**

We passed a “net neutrality” law for a free and open internet, ensuring that Maine’s small businesses can compete on a level playing field with big companies online. **We passed a law to keep scammers from making robocalls to home phones.**

We also passed a law to create a state plan to improve cellphone coverage in rural Maine, where right now there are substantial gaps in service.



Meeting with Sarah Nelson and her class from Ames Elementary School in Searsmont at the State House

Keeping our promise on property tax relief

Over the course of this legislative session, 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 towns 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

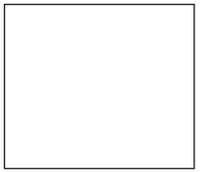
the budget, we also passed a law that provides a direct refund of \$100 to those who qualify for the Homestead Exemption.

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.



One of the best parts of my job is getting to chat with neighbors at annual town meetings, like this one in Palermo

2019 Legislative Update
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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)

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)
-

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.