



# Senator

# MARK LAWRENCE

DISTRICT 35

Proudly representing the people of Eliot, Kittery, Ogunquit, South Berwick, York and part of Berwick

Dear Friend,

After hearing from folks all across southern York County, I came to Augusta to get work done and make real change to help everyday Mainers. Bringing back respect and civility to Augusta was long overdue.

**“ I promise to keep fighting for your health, family, job and the environment in Augusta next year.”**

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.

- **We protected internet users' personal information.** As Chair of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, I worked on this important issue directly. Internet service providers shouldn't be able to sell, share or give away their customers' personal information. With a new law we passed, customers' rights will be protected in Maine.
- **We set aggressive goals to protect our natural resources.** By 2050, we will have reduced Maine's carbon emissions by 80%. We're taking a stand against harmful plastics and non-recyclable containers. Finally, we are investing in renewable energy. It's in our hands to protect Maine's environment, and we're doing something about it.

Looking back on this year, these are just the highlights. I promise to keep fighting for your health, family, job and the environment 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,

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## Investing in good-paying green energy jobs

As Chair of the Energy, Utilities & Technology Committee, I believe combating climate change is vital to preserving Maine's natural resources, our economy and our way of life. **That's why I'm proud 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 percent 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, another law that will boost Maine's workforce training efforts in the renewable energy sector, and support energy conservation and solar energy generation at Maine schools.



Marshwood High School student Reid Johnson sang the National Anthem at the start of the day's legislative session in March. Here I am with Reid and her mother. Come back anytime, Reid!

## Protecting your online privacy

These days, almost everything is done online, from banking, to health care and other business. For many students and local businesses, being able to connect to high-speed internet is vital to their success. That's why our bipartisan budget allocates \$4 million for broadband and related rural development projects.

I am particularly proud of passing the nation's strongest online privacy law. Your internet service provider shouldn't be able to secretly profit off your personal data.

**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.** Last but not least, we passed a law to keep spammers and scammers from making robocalls to residential numbers, which have made many Mainers, including me, hesitant to answer their phone when it rings.

## 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.

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



It was a pleasure hosting a delegation from Montenegro at the State House. The delegation included representatives from Montenegro's government and U.S. military officials. Maj. Brian McClellan, pictured to my left, is a resident of Elliot and is the Montenegrin Bilateral Affairs Officer as part of the Maine National Guard.

“It’s an immense comfort having Senator Lawrence represent us in Augusta. His leadership and commitment to protecting the environment and standing up for equality and women’s health is invaluable.”

—Abby Kemble  
South Berwick Town Council



The third grade class from Eliot Elementary School joined me at the State House for a visit and tour. If you’re interested in visiting the State House, give my office a call at (207) 287-1515.

## Taking an honest look at CMP and the power corridor

Like many of you, I’ve been skeptical about CMP’s proposed corridor through our western forests. News over the past few years has shown that CMP hasn’t been acting in ratepayers’ interests.

That’s why I supported bills to give us a better picture of the environmental effects of this project and to improve record-keeping of ratepayer complaints sent to the Public Utilities Commission.

I sponsored a law to allow the Public Advocate to intervene in PUC cases and another to make sure that major changes made by a utility company will benefit its customers.

I also supported a bill that legally requires utility companies to give customers accurate bills and honest answers.

These changes will give us better oversight of utility companies like CMP and give the state ways to intervene when companies treat their customers unfairly.

We also approved a study exploring a consumer-owned model for our electric utilities, like how our water utilities are managed. **If our current electricity providers can’t prove they care about Mainers, I believe more changes may be needed.**

## Improving access to quality, affordable health care

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 their company bureaucrats.

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

We also took on “Big Pharma” and we won. 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.

We passed a package of bills to begin addressing this problem. The first allows Maine to wholesale import prescription drugs from Canada, which are both safe and more affordable. The second 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 holds corporations, acting

as middlemen, that have pocketed savings designed for consumers accountable. The final piece of this puzzle is a bill that requires drug companies to share information on costs related to drug production, marketing, advertising and consumer price.

I’m proud that we were able to pass into law this suite of bills that go beyond simple fixes; it brings real change and accountability to a dysfunctional system.



Former Senate President Beth Edmonds, center, stopped by the State House and joined me and current Sen. Pres. Troy Jackson, D-Allagash, for a photo. A lot of history right here!

2019 Legislative Update  
**Senator Mark W. Lawrence**  
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Me and my wife, our two daughters,  
two Danish exchange students and  
our beloved dog, Skeet.

## 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)
- 

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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