



# Senate Majority Leader NATE LIBBY

DISTRICT 21

Proudly representing all the people of Lewiston

Dear neighbor,

The people of Lewiston sent me to Augusta to pass legislation that will help them live healthy, productive, prosperous lives. This session, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate sat beside each other instead of being divided by a partisan aisle. We were intent on supporting working people, investing in Maine's economy, laying the groundwork for the success of our children, and helping Maine's aging population.

**“ I know we helped make Maine a better place to live, work, raise a family and retire.”**

Now that our work this year has come to a close, I'm proud to report on some of what we were able to accomplish for the people of Lewiston and Maine.

- **We created the first-in-the-nation statewide earned paid time off policy**, with strong bipartisan support in the Senate. This bill provides working Mainers with some breathing room if and when the unexpected happens, while also protecting small businesses, by allowing workers to accrue one hour of paid time off per 40 hours worked, for up to one week off per year.

- **We passed a bipartisan budget that provides \$130 million in property tax relief without raising taxes.** We expanded the Property Tax Fairness Credit for homeowners and renters, increased the Homestead Exemption and made significant steps toward fully restoring revenue sharing.
- **We fought insurance companies to make health care more affordable and accessible** by passing laws to prevent them from discriminating against Mainers with preexisting conditions.
- **We also passed our sweeping prescription drug reform package** that received unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate. This set of laws will help lower the cost of prescription drugs while increasing price transparency and holding drug companies accountable.

These are just the highlights. Looking back on this year, I know we helped make Maine a better place to live, work, raise a family and retire. But there is still a lot of work left to do. I promise to be a forceful advocate for Lewiston, your family, and you.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly about the issues that matter to you. It is an honor to serve you, and all the people of our city, in Augusta.

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Standing with fellow lawmakers as Gov. Janet Mills signs a law that I sponsored to allow Mainers with disabilities to take full advantage of the ABLE Act and pay for things like wheelchairs, making home modifications, or medical services not covered by insurance.

## Supporting law enforcement and public safety workers

The men and women who make up Maine's law enforcement and public safety personnel sacrifice more than we know to keep our communities safe. **I was proud to sponsor and enact a number of bills this year to honor and help members of law enforcement and public safety.**

The Retired County and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Municipal Firefighters Health Insurance Program was created so people who put themselves on the line to protect and serve our communities have the benefits they deserve. Two bills I sponsored this session protected and strengthened this vital program.

## Investing in the next generation of Mainers

This year we made serious investments in young Mainers' education so they have the best chance at success in life. These investments included three new laws I wrote.

One will improve school attendance for our youngest learners so they get a solid start on their education. Another will ensure all kids will be tested for lead poisoning, so quick action can be taken if this harmful toxin is present in their lives. And another provides an increased stipend for high-need, low income school districts like Lewiston to recruit and retain high-quality teachers.

Additionally, we standardized the online application for free school meals and made it statewide, expanded "breakfast after the bell" programs, and made sure more kids in need get free lunches.

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

## Fighting for affordable, accessible 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.

From the start of this session, making health care more affordable and accessible for all Mainers has been our 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, ambulances and maternity care.**

We also took action to limit insurance companies' use of "prior authorizations," to ensure that decisions about coverage and care are made by medical professionals with relevant expertise, instead of corporate bureaucrats.



Talking with fourth-graders from Montello Elementary School about what they learned during their field trip to the State House.

## Looking out for the health and well-being of children

The health and well-being of our children is critical to Maine's future. This year, we passed vital laws to make sure our kids are safe and healthy both at home and in school — by addressing lead exposure and testing, banning vaping in school, and removing a senseless rule so kids can apply sunscreen while they're at school without needing a note from home.

We took steps to help children manage their own well-being, by providing families and teachers with support to help kids with behavioral challenges, adding mental health education to the curriculum, and funding a study to improve our anti-bullying laws.

With reports of our broken child protective system mounting, I knew we needed to make changes. **I voted for a law that adds staffing and funding to the office reviewing reports of child abuse, and our bipartisan budget added 62 child protective positions tasked with keeping kids safe.**

“Nate’s leadership on the Universally Accessible Playground Committee was instrumental in making Jude’s Place a reality. It is a huge benefit to Lewiston, and it brings me joy to see so many kids of all ability levels enjoying the playground each day.” – Betsy Norcross Plourde, Executive Director, Promise Early Education Center



Enjoying Jude’s Place at Marcotte Park with Andrea, Charlie, and Jude this summer.

## Delivering on prescription drug pricing reforms

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 joined my colleagues to introduce 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 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 accountable middleman corporations that have pocketed savings meant for consumers.

The final law requires drug companies to share information on costs related to drug production, marketing, advertising and consumer price.

**These laws will bring real change and accountability to a dysfunctional system.**

## 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 taxpayers and renters. 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. With the revenue sharing increase, Lewiston is projected to receive \$4.3 million dollars next fiscal year, one of the

biggest increases in the state.

In addition, we added \$111 million in education funding, which means Lewiston will receive \$1.25 million more than last year. This 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.



Andrea, Jude, and I were thrilled to welcome baby Charlie into our lives earlier this year. He’s growing and learning every day, and we couldn’t be happier.

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)
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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)

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

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