



# Senator Eloise VITELLI

ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Proudly representing the people of Senate District 23:  
Sagadahoc County and the Town of Dresden in Lincoln County

Dear Friend,

Every day I go to the State House, I'm intent on making real change to help you, your neighbors, and our communities. Bringing back respect and civility to Augusta helped us achieve that goal, and was long overdue. To set a new tone, senators of both parties sat beside each other instead of being divided by a partisan aisle. We also refocused Augusta on supporting working people, investing in small businesses, laying the groundwork for the success of our children, and helping Maine's aging population.

**“ We took major steps forward in making 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 of what we were able to accomplish.

- **We made progress on fighting climate change.** My bill to increase investment in local clean energy projects and jobs passed unanimously in the Senate and was signed into law.
- **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 progress toward fully restoring revenue sharing.

- **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 expanded access to reproductive health care for rural and low-income Mainers.
- **We moved forward on connecting more Mainers to quality, high-speed internet,** including allocating \$4 million in the budget to fund broadband and related rural development projects and passing a law I introduced to make it easier for towns and cities to set up their own broadband networks.

These are just the highlights. Looking back on this year, I believe we took major steps forward in making Maine a better place to live, work, raise a family and retire. But I know there is still much work left to do. 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. I hope to hear from you soon. It is an honor to represent our communities in the State House.

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## Supporting law enforcement and public safety workers

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.**

Last winter, two Maine State Troopers who were pulled over on the side of the road were struck by passing vehicles. I 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.



Recently, I was able to tour Bath Iron Works with fellow lawmakers. Generations of Mainers have supported themselves and their families with good-paying jobs at BIW. I'm proud to support efforts to bolster our workforce at the State House.

## Investing in education and protecting Maine students

This session, lawmakers made serious investments in young Mainers' education so they can become successful leaders and workers. The state budget provides \$111 million in new funding for K-12 education. We also passed a law I introduced to increase the amount of local food in Maine schools, which will benefit both Maine students and the farmers and producers in our communities.

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 investments in adult education, early college, degree completion and continuing workforce training to help fill critical gaps in Maine's workforce.

Additionally, **I introduced two bills to protect Mainers from being taken advantage of by student loan companies and for-profit colleges.** The first, a Student Loan Bill of Rights, creates critical oversight for student loan companies. The second requires for-profit schools to be held to the same reporting standards as state universities and other private colleges. These new laws protect Mainers who are trying to further their careers and pay back their debt responsibly.

## Delivering on health care, prescription drug reform

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 lead 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 new law allows Maine to import prescription drugs wholesale 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 corporations, acting as middlemen, that have pocketed savings meant for consumers. The final piece of this puzzle, the bill I introduced, requires drug companies to share information on costs related to drug production, marketing, advertising and consumer price.

## Fighting for equal treatment for all Mainers

All Mainers — regardless of who you are or where you're from — deserve fair treatment. Mainers deserve equal pay for equal work. That's why **we passed a law to prevent employers from asking prospective hires about their prior salary, to ensure even one act of pay discrimination at the beginning of someone's career won't hurt them for decades to follow.** Helping more Maine workers achieve financial stability is a key step toward real equality.

Additionally, I supported an Equal Rights Amendment for Maine. It's more important than ever that our Constitution clearly states that all people should be treated the same, regardless of their gender.



Lila Bell of Topsham, Miriam Patterson of Topsham and Abigail Harrington of Richmond (left to right) were among the local students who served as Honorary Pages in the Senate this year.



Standing with lawmakers and Gov. Janet Mills after she signed into law a number of bills to combat climate change, including mine.

**“Senator Vitelli worked in a new, innovative way to support municipal broadband projects by reducing costs with the passage of her ‘make ready’ bill.”**

**- Carlos Barrionuevo, Georgetown**

## Protecting our environment, creating green energy 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, which I introduced, strengthens Maine’s Renewable Portfolio Standard by increasing the proportion of electricity sold in Maine that comes from renewable sources, and sets a 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.

**Working with the Department of Marine Resources, and as a member of the Marine Resources Committee, I introduced two new laws on aquaculture.** The first moves oversight of land-based aquaculture back to DMR to ensure the health of our marine resources and ecosystems. The other protects limited-purpose aquaculture licenses from people misusing the program.

We also enacted Governor Mills’ proposal to create the Maine Climate Council, a tremendous step forward. The Council will spearhead efforts to mitigate the impact of the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas pollution by 80% and achieving 100% renewable energy by 2050.

## 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 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.

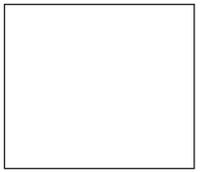
Outside of the budget, we also passed a law that provides a direct refund of \$100 to those who qualify for the Homestead Exemption.

Reducing property taxes is the number one concern for many Mainers, and I’m pleased we were able to make sure more of your money stays in your wallet.



We proudly displayed art from midcoast artists in our offices this year, including pieces from Laurie Burhoe of Bath, Livy Glaubitz of Arrowsic and Lea Peterson of Georgetown (left to right).

2019 Legislative Update  
**Senator Eloise Vitelli**  
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With Seth Wescott, climate activist and Olympic gold medalist snowboarder

## 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)

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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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