



# Senator Justin CHENETTE

DISTRICT 31

Proudly representing the people of Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Hollis, Limington, and part of Buxton.

Dear neighbors,

After serving 8 years in the Legislature, with two terms in the House and most recently two terms in the Senate, I have decided not to seek a 5th term.

Looking back, I've spent every single year of my twenties running for and serving in the Legislature starting at age 20, being sworn into office just a week before graduating from college, and becoming the youngest lawmaker in the country. Combining that with a term on the State Board of Education as its first student member back in high school, I've spent nearly a decade in public office. That drive to make a difference will always be with me. It may be packaged differently, but inherently, whatever I choose to do next will reflect my passion for people.

We were able to accomplish much together during my time in office, culminating this past session in monumental progress. After many years of persistence, I was finally able to pass my top legislative priority: comprehensive campaign finance reform. We moved the needle on money in politics, lobbyist influence, and created a more ethical state house so that your voice is heard over donors, corporations, and special interest groups.

Here are a few of the ethics reforms I've championed that have become law: Banned lobbyist contributions to state officials and candidates; closed the revolving door of legislators becoming lobbyists; ended political action committee (PAC) slush funds; enabled the Ethics Commission to enforce caucus PAC rules; and banned Clean Election candidates from operating PACs.

Chairing the bipartisan Government Oversight Committee has allowed me to be in the driver's seat in holding state agencies, department heads, and programs accountable. It's been the ideal committee assignment, and we've made an impact in ensuring government runs as effectively and efficiently as possible.

As I've always believed, this has been and continues to be your seat, not mine. I will be working for you as your Senator through the end of the year, but I'm always here for you. That will never change. While I'm stepping away from elected office, I remain steadfast in my commitment to public service. It's why I voted twice to reconvene the Legislature so we could finish delivering for you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the honor of representing our area, fighting for our shared values, and lifting up my hometown for so long.

Sincerely,



Promoting Small Business Saturday with Saco Mayor Doyle from the Saco Scoop.



Chairing the bipartisan Government Oversight Committee to ensure programs and agencies are held accountable.



Serving free Thanksgiving meals for 8 years running at Most Holy Trinity Church.



Had a great time marching in the Saco Main Street Parade of Lights last year with Rep. O'Neil.



Testifying on my bill to fund Saco traffic improvements.

## Meeting our future infrastructure needs

High-speed internet is essential for businesses, education and telehealth. This year, we passed measures to expand internet access in underserved areas including a \$15 million broadband bond and a law to streamline grant applications.

This past session we set out to double the current rate of new affordable housing production by creating the Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit program. The program is capped at \$10 million per year for 8 years with specific focus for senior housing and rural housing. I also supported a new law that allows Maine companies and people to transport tiny homes built here for more affordable housing options.

To improve roads in our district, **I spearheaded an effort to get Maine Turnpike Authority money for a newly designed interchange for Exit 36.** After pressure from my bill, the \$40 million project was approved as part of a 4-year capital investment plan. Work is scheduled to begin in 2022. This will hopefully address the headaches we all experience getting on and off the Interstate and the congestion on Route 112. I also met with DOT and Old Orchard Beach officials to improve the dangerous stretch getting in and out of Smithwheel and the Halfway Intersection. DOT has drafted preliminary proposals and hopes to get town input and buy-in before proceeding.

This past February, I brought state, local, and federal officials together to chart a new course for the erosion issues at Camp Ellis. Through communication, we know we'll have accountability for the next steps. I remain committed to a long-term solution that involves the Federal Government taking responsibility for a fix.



Presenting Old Orchard Beach VFW Post 7997 with a specialty license plate alongside Rep. Gramlich.



Serving free meals to Saco seniors during COVID-19 with Rep. Bailey. (Photo by Andrew Dickinson/City of Saco)

## Coming together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic

Food insecurity is real. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in Maine, our community took action to help those who needed a hot meal.

Over a 13-week period, **I was proud to join the team at Saco Parks & Recreation to volunteer more than 130 hours packing and distributing more than 3,000 free meals to 460 Saco seniors.** Not only that, local Saco restaurants received over \$20,000 through local funds, donations from community members, and sponsorships from other businesses and non-profits. This helped many of our small businesses stay afloat. To recap: We fed people, supported our small businesses, and came together to help one another in times of need. This is what community is all about.

When Maine reported its first case of COVID-19, the Legislature moved quickly to unanimously pass laws that support Maine families, seniors, small businesses and public health. We approved a responsible spending package that prioritized public health nursing, Maine's CDC and senior care while growing the Rainy Day Fund to \$258 million, a historic high. We expanded unemployment benefits, made sure students wouldn't go hungry without schools open, prohibited utility companies from terminating service, and put \$11 million into a COVID-19 relief fund. I also co-sponsored legislation that expanded telehealth capabilities across the state. I will continue to do whatever is needed to help people through this difficult time both on a state government front and here on a local level with direct relief efforts.



Serving free meals to Saco seniors during COVID-19 relief. (Photo by Andrew Dickinson/City of Saco)



Teaching C.K. Burns School students about state government.

## Investing in Maine's next generation of leaders

In order to thrive in the future, we must invest in Maine students today. That's why I've continued my scholarship program and pre-pandemic, I visited numerous classrooms throughout our area.

**Last year, I sponsored a new law that directed the Department of Education to study bullying in our schools and recommend changes. The study group has shared its recommendations, and I'm eager to get to work making schools a safer place for all kids. No child should feel unsafe in our schools and should be free to be their authentic selves without fear of physical, emotional, or cyber bullying.**

## Protecting our environment and natural resources

As a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I sought to build on successes from last year to expand Maine's energy independence, encourage the hiring and training of Maine workers for the growing clean energy industry, and preserve our natural resource-based economy.

We passed legislation to strengthen Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard. A commission was convened to bring together government, industry and other experts to analyze the benefits of energy storage technology and to chart a path for Maine to expand its storage capacity, which will help lower emissions and increase use of renewable energy.

**I fought to protect the water quality of our rivers and the Gulf of Maine and helped lead the charge to ban offshore oil drilling.** To reduce pollution, I cosponsored a law to ban single-use styrofoam containers, making Maine the first state in the country to do so. I backed laws to ban single-use plastic bags and toxic chemicals that lead to an increased risk of cancer and other health problems. I also supported efforts to make it easier for Mainers to afford electric and hybrid vehicles.

I'm proud to serve on the bipartisan Governor's Climate Council, which will lead efforts to reduce carbon emissions, achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050, and create good-paying green energy jobs. My role on the Coastal and Marine Working Group has meant our area has had a front row seat to drafting long term solutions to protect our coastline.

## Fighting for an ethical, transparent government

Maine government should work for all Maine people — not just those who can afford the best lobbyist. Since I was first elected to the Legislature, I've been working to strengthen our ethics laws and policies to ensure that lawmakers are accountable to you, and that we truly are a government of, by and for the people.

Last year, I was proud to present and pass a package of bills to stop the revolving door of lawmakers becoming lobbyists and prevent politicians from profiting off political contributions through PACs, all with unanimous bipartisan support.

**This year, the Governor signed into law two additional measures I introduced to tackle lobbyist influence and ethics enforcement.**

The first is the most consequential reform since the creation of the Maine Clean Election system. My new law bans lobbyist contributions to sitting lawmakers and legislative candidates as well as bans out of state lobbyist contributions to the sitting Governor and gubernatorial candidates. We have now joined 5 other states — Alaska, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee and California — in preventing lobbyists from using money to influence lawmakers.

The other new law has to do with enabling the Maine Ethics Commission to fully enforce rules around caucus PACs by clearly defining them in statute and defining who runs them.

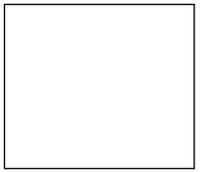
When combined, all 4 new laws represent a comprehensive overhaul of campaign finance rules.



I co-sponsored a successful bill that creates automatic voter registration in Maine with Speaker Sara Gideon.

# 2020 Legislative Update Senator Justin Chenette

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## Sen. Chenette's Leadership

- Chair of Government Oversight Committee
- Member of Environment and Natural Resources Committee
- Member of Senate Ethics Committee
- Co-Chairman of Democracy Reform Caucus
- Citizen Trade Policy Commissioner
- Member of Maine Climate Council's Coastal and Marine Working Group
- Chair of Marijuana Advisory Commission

## Empowering the Next Generation of Leaders



I loved joining in the fun of Read Across America Day at Jameson Elementary School in Old Orchard Beach.



Bonny Eagle High School's Robotics Team visiting the State House.



It's an honor to provide scholarships to local high school graduates.



Visiting with 4th graders at Hollis Elementary School.



Speaking at Thornton Academy Middle School about getting civically involved.