



## REP. JUSTIN CHENETTE

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Dear Neighbor,

Sometimes it's easy to see the political back and forth in the news and wonder if anything of substance ever gets done at the state house. This is only my third year, but I've come to learn that a lot of great work happens behind the scenes, the stuff that isn't necessarily reported on, that is noteworthy and impactful.

As co-chair of legislature's youth caucus, I led an effort to bring both Republicans and Democrats together. In a hyper partisan climate with some rather difficult heads of government, it wasn't an easy task. Legislators under the age of 30, on both sides, set aside differences to champion key initiatives that passed, like my efforts to expand the Opportunity Maine Tax Credit to reduce student loan debt.

After going all in on campaign finance reform since I got to Augusta, we passed a version that bans Clean Election candidates from operating political action committees; one important step towards reducing the influence of special interest and lobbyists in our policy making.

This is aside from overall budget items like:

- Property tax relief
- Middle-class tax cuts
- Reasonable welfare reform
- Affordable senior housing
- Investments in Maine's next generation

As we enter the new session, please know that you can reach me anytime you have a question, concern, or comment. Your input is critical into how I cast our collective vote. This is your legislative seat, so the more involved you are, the better.

Sincerely,

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## 2015 Legislative Review

### Community Leadership

- Runs the Saco Bay Center for Civic Engagement
- Created Spirit of Service Scholarship at Thornton Academy and the Future Entrepreneur Scholarship at OOB High School
- Promoted downtown development as a Saco Main Street Board member
- Organized Blue Light Project to honor local law enforcement
- Spoke to Saco Middle School students, Thornton Academy, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership seminar, & Maine Youth Action Network conference
- Involved in area chambers of commerce and small business networking groups
- Participated in Mary's Walk to raise money for cancer research
- Served on the City of Saco's 2025 Visioning Committee
- Active community volunteer as a member of the Saco Bay Rotary Club



As co-chair of the Legislature's Youth Caucus, Rep. Chenette organized the 1st Youth Advocacy Day at the State House



Visited Smarty Pants Preschool to talk about the role law enforcement plays in our community.



Students from CK Burns visited the State House.



Hosted an anti-bullying benefit concert at Thornton Academy.



Spreading holiday cheer to parents dropping off their kids at Saco Middle School with student council members.



Serving hot meals to those most in need at Most Holy Trinity Church.

## Budget: Putting Maine's middle class first

Maine families will see tax cuts, property tax relief and increased investment in students and workers under the balanced \$6.7 billion bipartisan budget passed by the Legislature over the governor's veto.

### Middle-class tax cuts

- Provide a \$135 million tax cut per year for 579,000 Maine families, with 75 percent of the benefit going to the bottom 90 percent of families
- Make the Earned Income Tax Credit refundable up to 5 percent
- Nearly double the standard deduction to \$11,600
- Eliminate the income tax on pensions for military families

### Property tax relief

- Double the Homestead Exemption to \$20,000 for all Maine families
- Protect revenue sharing to support local services like fire and police, while keeping property taxes in check

### Meaningful welfare reform

- Encourage work by fixing the welfare cliff, the sharp drop-off in benefits that occurs as recipients work more and their incomes increase; ensure that individuals in Maine illegally do not receive public benefits

### Protection for vulnerable Mainers

- Increase funding by \$16.2 million to help clear waitlists for people with intellectual disabilities and brain injuries

## Honoring & Supporting our Veterans

- Eliminate the income tax on pensions for military families
- Allow Vietnam veterans to receive an existing veterans' property tax exemption their counterparts from other conflicts are able to access
- Provide a gravestone for deceased veterans with no next of kin
- Honor the service of authentic veterans by making false claims of military service a crime

## Investing in Maine's next generation

- Incentivizing college graduates to stay and work in the state through an expansion of the Opportunity Maine program; a tax credit that aims to tackle student loan debt (Primary Sponsor)
- Increase investment in K-12 education by \$80 million and in the University of Maine and Maine Community College systems by \$28 million
- Make college more affordable by investing another \$10 million into the Maine State Grant scholarship program
- Provide flexibility in college debt repayment for students and their families
- Make the funding formula fairer and more predictable for public charter schools and local school districts



*Rep. Chenette recognizes the Saco Little League 9-10 year old Maine State Champs at a Saco City Council meeting.*



*Rep. Chenette awards Christina Scenna of the Thornton Academy class of 2015, with the first Justin Chenette Spirit of Service Scholarship based on her leadership on and off campus.*

## Boosting business and the economy

- Help workers learn new skills through expanded access to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program
- Promote economic development by increasing companies' access to operating capital
- Develop Maine's broadband infrastructure by making grants and technical assistance to communities
- Put \$1 million into job training for workers

## Increasing Public Safety

*As a member of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee*

- Worked with Sen. Linda Valentino on creating a cold case squad to investigate unsolved homicides
- Fight drug crime by increasing the number of drug enforcement agents, prosecutors and judges as well as creating a new drug court
- Crack down on meth labs and illegal uses of the opioid painkiller fentanyl
- Strengthen stalking laws, increase protections for domestic violence victims

## Helping seniors age in dignity and security

- Address the shortage of affordable housing for Maine seniors with a \$15 million bond proposal for housing and weatherization efforts
- Protect the Drugs for the Elderly and Medicaid Savings programs that help low-income seniors pay for medicine and doctor's visits
- Help seniors live independently longer by boosting wages of in-home direct care workers and providing support to family caregivers of elderly Mainers
- Improve the quality of life of homebound seniors with expanded access to Meals on Wheels
- Protect older adults from financial exploitation through a personal finances management program
- Increase funding for nursing homes by \$16 million to \$216 million

## Protecting a clean environment, growing clean energy

- Restore funding for energy efficiency efforts to save consumers money and provide predictability to the business community
- Build a comprehensive solar policy so Mainers can reap the benefits of an abundant, clean energy source
- Safeguard Maine waters from pollution and protecting taxpayers from clean-up costs by defeating weak mining rules
- Protect Maine lakes and local economies by prohibiting the use of certain fertilizers near shorelines



*Rep. Chenette, a member of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, speaks at work session.*



*Rep. Chenette and Sen. Linda Valentino toured the Xuron facility on the Industrial Park Road after honoring them with the Maine Manufacturer of the Year award.*