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Dear Neighbor,

It has been a great privilege to serve as your state representative. It is a duty and responsibility I don't take lightly. As a former journalist, transparency and accountability are firmly embedded as a foundation for how I do business. This newsletter serves as one avenue to keep you informed about how state government is working for you, how your legislator is tackling the most pressing issues and what resources are available to you.

The Legislature's agenda this year has been limited mostly to emergency legislation and bills carried over from 2015.

One of the most important issues we are working on is Maine's heroin epidemic. As a member of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, I've been front and center in the discussions and implementation of solutions that aim to tackle different aspects of this crisis.

We are also working on finding ways to boost the economy, support seniors, take care of veterans, keep down energy and heating costs, provide additional aid to local schools and address the state's growing infrastructure needs.

Whatever the issue, I continue to work with all of my colleagues, regardless of party affiliation, to make sure we're doing the best work we can for the people back home in our community and for all the people of our beautiful state.

Sincerely,

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2016 Legislative Update

Supporting Our Heroes



Rep. Chenette organized a Welcome Home Rally for Vietnam Veterans with the Saco Bay Center for Civic Engagement and the Vietnam Veterans of America chapter.



Rep. Chenette visited with President of the Vietnam Veterans of American Chapter Joe Armstrong and his fellow Vietnam Veterans Ray Hallczuk and Richard Litwin at the American Legion Post during a resource fair for veterans organized by the group.

Community Involvement

- Runs the Saco Bay Center for Civic Engagement
- Started the Arts Action Fund, a mini grant to help local arts teachers; raised \$1,500 for it so far
- Created the Spirit of Service Scholarship at Thornton Academy and the Future Entrepreneur Scholarship at OOB High School
- Promotes downtown development as a Saco Main Street board member
- Organized a Vietnam Veterans welcome home rally to honor our heroes
- Participated in Mary's Walk to raise money for cancer research
- Active community volunteer as a Saco Bay Rotary Club member
- Involved in area chambers of commerce
- Started JT Cares, a charitable outreach program at the Journal Tribune newspaper with several projects: Shoe collection drive, blood drive, and Salvation Army boxes



Reading to Elementary students on Read Across America Day.



Thornton Academy students Griffin Brumer and Allison Cannon were honorary pages at the State House.



Participated in Mary's Walk with York County Sheriff Bill King and crew.



Hosted the Voices in Harmony concert at Thornton Academy.

ADDRESSING THE DRUG CRISIS

The opiate epidemic continues to be a growing problem across the state. 272 Mainers lost their lives to drug overdose in 2015, a 31 percent increase from just the year before. This is unacceptable.

I supported a bipartisan bill that made an initial \$3.7 million investment in prevention, treatment, recovery and law enforcement. It adds 10 Maine Drug Enforcement Agency positions that will focus on large-scale, often out-of-state dealers and suppliers, a 10-bed detoxification center, access for inpatient and out-patient treatment for the uninsured and money to support innovative law enforcement initiatives that focus on treatment like Operation Hope in Scarborough.

Only by taking a comprehensive approach can we bring this crisis under control.



Rep. Chenette toured the Milestone Foundation's residential drug treatment facility to better understand ways of tackling the state's drug epidemic.



At work in Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee.

PROTECTING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PROPERTY TAXPAYERS

School districts across the state recently learned that they were facing a \$23 million gap in state funding. The gap stems from changes in statewide valuation and how they affect the complex school funding formula.

After weeks of hard negotiations, we secured an additional \$15 million for public education. It was a significant accomplishment in the continuing battle to protect schools from cuts and stop the cost shift of education to local property taxpayers.

I originally voted for a proposal to provide schools with an additional \$23 million to fill the full gap in funding, but that proposal did not gain traction.

The public outcry from parents, educators and local property taxpayers succeeded in moving the needle on the \$15 million education compromise. It is less than what I had hoped for, but it's a foundation that I will fight to build on. It's vital that we don't make further cuts to our classrooms or increase already high property tax bills.



Saco Middle School science teacher Michaela Lamarre was honored with the 'Oscars of Teaching' award, the prestigious Milken National Educator Award.



Spoke to Saco Middle School students about how to be a good journalist.

ARE YOU MISSING MONEY?

Unclaimed property is money and other personal assets presumed to be abandoned or lost when an owner cannot be contacted. It includes checking accounts, certificates of deposit, overpayments, gift certificates, paid-up life insurance policies, unpaid wages and other forms of money. In fiscal year 2015, \$25.2 million was left behind in unclaimed property.

See if you're missing money by visiting the State Treasurer's list of unclaimed property. You can find it at:

www.maine.gov/treasurer/unclaimed_property/index.html

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

Do you have or know a student at Thornton Academy set to graduate this year?

The Spirit of Service Scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior from Thornton Academy that has demonstrated a passion for helping others, strong leadership skills, and has worked to improve the community outside of the school's campus. I started this scholarship last year at my Alma Mater as a way to give back.

\$500, a state pin, and a legislative letter of recognition will be awarded to the student who best represents the goal of the scholarship: to encourage and assist the next generation of Saco leaders in achieving their educational objectives.

Applications are available in the Guidance Office and must be turned in by April 28th.

FIXING OUR ROADS

It's almost construction season! The Maine Department of Transportation recently announced its plans for road, bridge and other transportation projects for the next three years. There are nearly 1,000 projects planned for this year to repair and maintain our roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

To learn about projects in our area, please visit Maine Department of Transportation's website at:

www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/



Alongside Sen. Linda Valentino, Rep. Chenette presented a legislative sentiment to Saco resident Angeline Tardif Beland for hitting the century milestone birthday.



Rep. Chenette raised \$1,500 for a grant for area arts teachers at the 1st annual Kidz Winter Jamboree at Thornton Academy with performers Rick Charette and Rob Duquette.



Rep. Chenette spoke to PACK 311 Den 4 about what it means to be a leader. They honored Chenette with their Local Hero Award.