

**2019 Legislative Update**  
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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



Volunteering at the Saco Sidewalk Art Festival



Providing college scholarships to area high school students at Thornton Academy and Old Orchard Beach High School



Leading the caroling at the Saco Holiday Festival



With the Rotary Club at the OOB Chowder Festival

2019 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



# Senator Justin CHENETTE

DISTRICT 31

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



Gov. Mills recognized Saco Middle School student Sebastian Shields, Maine's Spelling Bee Champion



Carried Capt. Chris Cash's memorial rock in the OOB 5K race organized by the Kelleys in his honor



Took part in an AARP discussion with seniors at Snickerdoodles in Limington



Fourth year of emceeing the Hollis Pirate Fest to benefit parks and rec student programs

Dear Neighbor,

I came to the State House to work for you each and every day. Now that the first year of our work has come to a close, here is a snapshot of the highlights.

**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 steps towards both fully restoring revenue sharing and increasing the state's share of education funding. This means more Mainers can afford to stay in their homes and towns and cities have more resources for essential services.

**We stood up to "Big Pharma"** by passing our sweeping prescription drug package that received unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate. This suite of laws will make prescription drugs more affordable and more accessible while increasing price transparency and holding drug companies more accountable.

**We championed ethics reform.** We closed key loopholes that previously allowed lawmakers to profit off their positions by becoming lobbyists right after leaving office and another that enabled political candidates to directly benefit themselves and their businesses from political contributions to their political action committees.

**We tackled telemarketing harassment** with the passage of my bill to ban robocalls. This new law gives the Attorney General's office more tools to hold scammers accountable and take legal action against those who spoof local numbers and bombard you with unwanted and unsolicited calls. Please report robocall activity to the state AG's office.

Remember, this is your seat. I work for you. Don't hesitate to reach out to me about your questions or ideas.

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## Improving government ethics

As chair of the Government Oversight Committee and as a member of the Senate Ethics Committee, I fought to strengthen our laws to ensure legislators are operating above board and to reduce the influence of lobbyists.

**I introduced a campaign finance reform package to hold lawmakers, lobbyists and former officials accountable.** One bill closes a loophole that allowed lawmakers to become lobbyists right after their service ended, essentially ending the revolving door. The second bill will enact ethics reforms to make sure legislators can't use political action committees to benefit themselves with political contributions. These bills passed with unanimous, bipartisan support and were signed into law by Governor Mills.

These efforts are moving Maine toward having the strongest ethics rules in the country. You deserve a government that serves you over wealthy donors, special interest groups, and corporate lobbyists.



All of the fourth-graders from Burns School in Saco visited the State House to learn about state government in person

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

The health and well-being of our children is critical to our 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 banning vaping in school.

Hungry kids can't learn. We made the online application for free school meals universal and statewide, expanded "breakfast after the bell" programs, prohibited shaming students who can't pay for meals, and made sure more kids in need get free lunches.

We took steps to help children manage their own well-being by providing families and teachers with support to help kids with behavioral challenges and adding mental health education to the curriculum. **We also passed my bill to improve our anti-bullying laws.** The Education Commissioner will work with a stakeholder group to collect data, understand what is needed to prevent bullying, and ensure there are resources available.

On a personal level, **I was proud to co-sponsor a bill that bans the dangerous practice of conversion therapy, protecting LGBTQ youth in Maine.**



I hold town hall forums in every corner of our district to ensure I listen to you and you can hold me accountable



Judging student mock debates at Saco Middle School

## Investing in green energy

As a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I believe combating climate change is vital to preserving Maine's natural resource-based economy and our overall 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 strengthens Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard by increasing the proportion of electricity sold in Maine that comes from renewable sources, setting the goal of reaching 100 percent use of renewable sources by 2050. Another incentivizes more solar power projects in Maine and makes it easier for small- and medium-sized groups to move forward on solar projects.

We passed a new law that will support energy conservation, boost Maine's workforce training efforts in the renewable energy sector and solar energy generation at Maine schools.

**My fight to push back on the corporate control of our water supply had some success this session with the passage of my bill to declare water a public right.**



Served up over 600 sticks of cotton candy at Saco Police Department's annual Night Out event

## Increasing access to quality, affordable health care

Making health care more affordable and accessible for all Mainers has been an ongoing priority.

The Legislature funded and implemented Medicaid expansion, which was approved by Maine voters in 2017, to expand healthcare coverage to those most in need.

**We took action to eliminate the red tape in insurance companies to ensure that decisions about coverage and care are made by medical professionals** with relevant expertise, instead of their company bureaucrats.

But our work didn't end there.

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. Mainers have watched the cost of prescription drugs skyrocket because lawmakers were too afraid to take on "Big Pharma."

I joined my colleagues to support a suite of prescription drug reform bills, which earned unanimous, bipartisan approval in the Senate. These new laws will make medicine more affordable and more accessible, increase price transparency and hold corporate middlemen accountable.

**This year, we took on "Big Pharma" and we won.**



Keynote speaker at the student-organized TEDx Talk event at my alma mater, Thornton Academy



Helped organize the installation of a free little library as Vice President and Past President of our downtown revitalization organization, Saco Main Street

## Keeping our promise on property tax relief

Mainers need property tax relief, especially for seniors on fixed incomes and families working hard to get by. When I was the Ranking Democrat on the Taxation Committee, I led the charge to increase the Homestead Exemption Program in 2017 and the Property Tax Fairness Credit in 2018. 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.

**In addition, we added \$111 million in education funding, which will invest in our kids while reducing the amount of school funding raised through property taxes.** Outside of the budget, we also passed a law that provides a direct refund of \$100 to those who qualify for the Homestead Exemption.



I had a blast reading to kids at a literary event at Saco Scoop this past year. Let me know if you find Thing 2!