



Senator Justin CHENETTE

DISTRICT 31

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



Providing a scholarship at OOB High School to Dylan Boudreau.



Moderating the Saco Middle School Geography Bee.



Speaking to Bonny Eagle Middle School about bullying.



Reading to 1st and 2nd graders at Young School.

Dear Neighbor,

Transparency is the cornerstone of my service to you, our community, and our state. This legislative newsletter aims to inform you of a few of the highlights from the 128th Legislature.

- **We fought to increase the Property Tax Fairness Credit** so more Maine families and seniors could make ends meet and remain in their homes.
- **We passed legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs.** Too many seniors and families are struggling as the cost of prescription drugs continues to skyrocket. This bill will give lawmakers the information they need to lower the cost of prescription drugs.
- **We made smart investments to strengthen our workforce and economy.** Lawmakers fought to protect the voter-approved increase to the minimum wage and passed strategic tax credits to keep good-paying jobs in Maine.
- **We also passed a measure to expand Maine’s successful drug treatment court system to fight the opioid crisis.** The legislature implemented several recommendations of the Opioid Task Force including increasing funding for treatment.

This is good work but we still have a lot to do to make Maine a better place to work, live and raise a family. I will continue to fight for our shared vision and values as long as I have the privilege of representing you in Augusta. As always, I look forward to hearing from you. This is your seat. I work for you.

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Fighting for an ethical, transparent government

Between 2014 and 2015, more than 400 companies hired 229 lobbyists and spent nearly \$5 million to lobby state legislators.

Recent polling shows that Mainers are tired of big money in politics. They want a government of, by and for the people — not the wealthy special interests with the largest checkbook. This may not be the most popular issue to tackle in Augusta, but I'm up for the challenge.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Conduct & Ethics, I've introduced legislation to ban lobbyist contributions to sitting lawmakers, ban lawmakers from operating PACs (political action committees), end the revolving door of lawmakers becoming lobbyists and lobbyists becoming lawmakers and prevent outside, big money interests from writing their own legislation.

I believe that as long as this pay-to-play system exists, we will continue to see the erosion of public trust in government. I will remain steadfast in my effort to get money out of politics even if it takes a few tries to pass common sense reform.

Improving our transportation infrastructure

We have some movement on the new exit/route 112 traffic congestion in Saco. We've brought all parties together; DOT, Turnpike Authority, and the City to determine a tangible solution that can be funded and completed in the next few years.

A public meeting was held over the summer to get feedback from the community, a final traffic study is being conducted now, and recommendations along with a final report will be made this winter.

While this is long overdue, I feel confident we have momentum on our side with everyone at the table working towards a positive outcome. We must fix this issue as we are one of the fastest growing areas in the state.

Learn more and get updates along the way:

sacomaine.org/route112



Having lunch with 5th graders at Burns discussing school issues.



Serving hot meals to residents on Thanksgiving at Most Holy Trinity.



Spoke to all of the 4th graders at Loranger Middle School.



Recognizing the State Champion Thornton Academy Boys Lacrosse Team.

Increasing health care options and lowering costs

Maine people should be able to access the health care they need regardless of their ZIP Code, income or medical history.

When a constituent approached me last year about her problems getting insurance to cover her Lyme disease treatment, **I sponsored and passed a bill to prevent insurance companies from discriminating against care received from a naturopathic doctor. It is now law.**

Lawmakers also passed a bill to fund the voter-approved Medicaid expansion, which will cover more people, strengthen rural health centers and stabilize health care costs for people with private insurance. However, the governor once again vetoed the bill.

Lastly, we passed legislation to lower costs for Maine seniors, families and workers. The new law will increase transparency in drug pricing by requiring pharmaceutical companies to disclose how much it costs to develop these drugs. This new information will help lawmakers craft more aggressive policies to address the rising cost of prescription drugs going forward.

Commitment to the community through action

I believe legislators have a responsibility to provide leadership, not just at the State House, but right here in our community as well.

- President of Saco Main Street, Saco's downtown development organization
- Vice President of Friends of the Ballpark, working to reinvigorate this community resource
- Member of the Saco Bay Rotary Club
- Member of the Old Orchard Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Member of the Buxton-Hollis Historical Society
- President of the Chenette Scholarship Fund, a nonprofit providing college scholarships to students at Thornton Academy & Old Orchard Beach High School



Emceeding the Hollis Pirate Festival raising money for afterschool programs.

Promoting school safety

All kids, no matter where they live, what their parents earn or their background, deserve to go to school with the peace of mind that they will have a safe learning environment. I supported efforts to improve the security and safety of our schools. Now, the School Revolving Renovation Fund will make security-related upgrades a top funding priority. If we want to keep our kids safe, our schools should not be operating with outdated security equipment and procedures.

Clean water bond and erosion mitigation

Maine's natural landscape is central to our character and to our economy. It's critical that we do what we can to look forward and make deliberate plans for the future of our state. This session, we passed a clean water bond to clean up pollution, improve water quality and modernize our wastewater facilities.

I also introduced an emergency resolution earlier this year to direct the federal government to finally fix the erosion issues caused by the jetty in Camp Ellis. Homes are being destroyed with each passing storm and damage is seen along our coast including Ocean Park and Old Orchard Beach. Congress has earmarked money for the project, but the money has not yet been administered. Inaction is not an acceptable solution and I will continue to push the federal government to act. We will not abandon our coastal residents.

Strengthening Maine's coastal economy

I took action to protect Maine's coastal waters for the sake of our economy and environment. When the Trump Administration proposed opening up 90 percent of the nation's coastal waters to offshore drilling, I joined with my fellow state lawmakers to pass a resolution requesting that the federal government exclude Maine from this proposal. The consequences of offshore drilling could be devastating to our coastal economy.

We also need to create the right conditions and incentives for small businesses and downtowns to thrive. That's why I sponsored a bill to provide forgivable loans within the successful Communities for Maine's Future Program.

The bill would provide loans to start up businesses looking to relocate to a downtown area, village area, or along main street. This bill is still awaiting funding, and I will continue to push for its passage. As President of Saco Main Street, I see the impact supporting our small businesses and downtowns can have on our entire local economy.

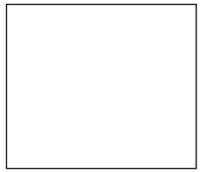


Speaking at Mary's Walk 20th Anniversary.



Proud to be a part of the effort to install historic panels throughout OOB.

2018 Legislative Update
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2018 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Holding the line on property tax relief

As the Senate Democratic lead on the Taxation Committee, my goal from day one was to prioritize property tax reductions and increase the amount of resources we send to communities to pay for essential services like fire, police, and education.

Skyrocketing property taxes have put Maine families and seniors on fixed incomes in a very tough spot. Last year, we increased the Homestead Property Tax Exemption, which is one of the best property tax relief programs, by 33 percent, bringing the total exemption up to \$20,000. This year, we sought to build on that success.

When Gov. LePage proposed a rewrite of Maine's tax code to reflect changes made at the federal level, I worked with my colleagues on the Taxation Committee to bring a compromise bill that targets the relief to those most in need by increasing the Property Tax Fairness Credit, a critical income-based property tax and rent relief program for Maine residents, by \$10.8 million. This bill passed in the Senate and is awaiting action in the House. If we pass this into law, Maine 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.

The bottom line is: Seniors should be able to afford to stay in their homes and Maine families should be able keep more of their money in their pockets.

Learn more about these programs below:

- [The Homestead Exemption](http://www.maine.gov/revenue/faq/homestead_faq.html) (for primary residents): www.maine.gov/revenue/faq/homestead_faq.html.
- [The Property Tax Fairness Credit](http://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxrelief/ptfcsunmary.htm) (for homeowners and renters): www.maine.gov/revenue/taxrelief/ptfcsunmary.htm for more information.



Raised \$1,500 to start a Homeless Veterans Fund to get our heroes back on their feet.