

2023 Positive Outcomes



We helped guide a collaborative process to build a shared **Vision for an Equitable Maine** that 61 Maine-based organizations support. Our shared Vision provides a blueprint for the systemic change we need. This year many initiatives that would advance our vision became law. The following are some of the initiatives that were successful:

Issue Area	Summary	Outcome
Racial Equity	LD 1703 An Act to Amend the Maine Equal Pay Law by Prohibiting Pay Discrimination Based on Race - added race as a protected category to the Maine Equal Pay Act	<i>Became law</i>
	LD 1613 An Act to Prohibit Profiling and to Strengthen Civil Rights in Maine - defined profiling and created enforcement of law enforcement that violates profiling definition	<i>Became law</i>
	LD 1620 An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the Mi'kmaq Nation and to Provide Parity to the Wabanaki Nations - finally created a governing agreement between the State of Maine the Mi'kmaq Nation, created the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians Tribal Court	<i>Signed into law</i>
Housing	LD 691 An Act to Reduce Barriers to Housing by Limiting Tenant Application Fees bans most rental application fees, which will help all Mainers who are searching for housing in a tight market, but especially people with low incomes who can't afford multiple, non-refundable application fees.	<i>Governor signed into law</i>
	LD 701 An Act to Increase the Notice Period for Rent Increases of 10 Percent or More will ensure that most tenants in Maine have at least 75 days notice when their rent is going up by 10% or more. This is so important for families with low incomes, for whom a big increase in rent can be the same as eviction.	<i>Became law without the Governor's signature</i>
	LD 470 An Act to Support Lead Abatement in Older Residential Properties Supports lead abatement in older residential properties.	<i>Passed to be enacted</i>
	LD 1931 An Act to Foster Stable and Affordable Home Ownership in Mobile Home Parks by Amending the Laws Relating to the Sale of Mobile Home Parks	<i>Passed to be enacted</i>

Because our new normal should be more equitable.
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Housing	<p><u>LD 2 An Act to Address Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund</u> establishes the Housing First Program within DHHS to deliver stabilization and support services to residents of properties to provide permanent housing to persons who have been experiencing chronic homelessness and to fund technical assistance, administered by the Maine State Housing Authority, for the development of housing consistent with the program.</p>	Included in the supplemental budget
	<p><u>LD 1609 Resolve, Directing the Department of Education to Develop a Pilot Program to Help Maine Students Avoid Homelessness</u> - While the bill itself did not pass, the language from this bill informs the aspect of the Governor’s budget that addresses student homelessness in Maine. This pilot program provides McKinney-Vento liaisons with access to emergency financial assistance for students at risk of homelessness.</p>	Included in the supplemental budget
	<p><u>LD 1781 Resolve, to Continue Case Management Services for the Homeless Opioid Users Service Engagement Pilot Project Within the Department of Health and Human Services</u> - This bill continues funding, in the amount of \$300,000, for the Homeless Opioid Users Service Engagement Pilot Project. This funding will be for case management services ending on June 30th of 2024.</p>	Passed as amended.
	<p><u>LD 45 An Act to Prevent Retaliatory Evictions</u> This bill provides that in an action of forcible entry and detainer there is a rebuttable presumption that the action was commenced in retaliation against the tenant.</p>	Passed to be enacted
	<p><u>LD 330 An Act to Ensure Legal Representation for Residents Facing Eviction</u> ensuring legal representation for residents facing eviction.</p>	Passed to be enacted
	<p><u>LD 1706 An Act to Clarify Statewide Laws Regarding Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Unit</u></p>	Enacted
	<p><u>LD 144 An Act Regarding the Monitoring of Municipal Abandoned Property</u> Abandoned municipal property list will go to the newly created Maine Redevelopment Land Bank for potential housing development.</p>	Enacted
	<p><u>LD 1931 An Act to Foster Stable and Affordable Home Ownership in Mobile Home Parks by Amending the Laws Relating to the Sale of Mobile Home Parks</u></p>	Passed without signature

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	<p><u>LD 3 An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program</u></p> <p>\$398m: \$450 payments to tax filers under \$100,000 \$40m: HEAP \$10m: MCAP for emergency fuel assistance \$21m: Emergency Housing Relief Fund \$11.5m: compete \$850 pandemic relief checks”</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
<p>Health Care is a Human Right</p>	<p><u>LD 1204 An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program for Incarcerated Persons</u> directs the DHHS to seek a federal Medicaid waiver (Section 1115) to provide at least a 90-day period of MaineCare coverage to eligible incarcerated individuals who are being released from a correctional facility, county jail, or regional jail to facilitate continuity of care and a successful transition back into the community.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p><u>LD 1522 An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged Older Citizens by Amending the Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program and the Elderly Low-cost Drug Program</u> expands eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to 250% of the federal poverty level and eliminates the asset test to qualify. By helping older Mainers with low incomes pay for health care costs, they will have more money available to meet their basic needs.</p>	<p>The bill was included in the supplemental budget, LD 258.</p>
	<p><u>LD 263 An Act to Ensure Access to Care</u> protects access to and availability of sexual and reproductive healthcare by ensuring that the availability of care is not diminished by health care mergers or acquisitions.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p><u>LD 616 An Act to Protect Health Care Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care</u> strengthens protections for healthcare providers so that they may offer care to people traveling to Maine for abortion care safely without threats to their ability to practice medicine by preventing malpractice insurers from taking adverse action against them based solely on violations of another state's laws and licensing requirements prohibiting abortion or related reproductive health services.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p><u>LD 935 An Act to Remove Barriers to Abortion Coverage in Private Insurance</u> expands access to ensure that Mainers who have the right to an abortion under state law can afford the care they need by requiring health plans to cover abortion care without deductible, co-pay or other cost sharing mechanisms. Applies to all qualifying health plans beginning January 1st 2024.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>

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	<p>LD 1343 An Act to Protect the Reproductive Freedom of Maine People by Preempting the Field of Abortion Regulation ensures that every Mainer, regardless of what town they live in, has the same rights to abortion care. It prohibits towns or municipalities from enacting any local ordinance in conflict with Maine’s Reproductive Privacy Act, preventing local municipalities from restricting access.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p>LD 1619 An Act to Improve Maine’s Reproductive Privacy Laws does three things: (1) It puts the decisions on abortions later in pregnancy in the hands of patients and providers; (2) It removes the criminal penalties for medical providers who offer abortion care later in pregnancy as well as those who help someone acquire the pills for a medication abortion in Maine; (3) It removes the antiquated and invasive data collection requirements for abortion patients and providers</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p>LD 1719 An Act to Invest in Recovery-ready Communities by Establishing Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers Statewide - created two new detox facilities in Kennebec & Washington Counties</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p>LD 1781 An Act to Establish the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Service Program This bill establishes the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Service Program to provide rapid access to low-barrier treatment for substance use disorder and stable housing to support recovery.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
<p>Food Security</p>	<p>LD 1612 An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture provides one-time funding to the Preble Street Food Security Hub to address food insecurity throughout Southern, ME by purchasing and processing local agricultural products to make and distribute pre-prepared meals and emergency food aid to those experiencing hunger.</p>	<p>The full \$2M in funding was included in the budget</p>
	<p>LD 1670 An Act to Strengthen Maine’s Agriculture, Food and Forest Economy by Funding the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund and Amending Related Provisions of Law: https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?LD=1670&snum=131. Fund to facilitate strategic investments in food processing, with requirements that investments meet needs of underrepresented populations that have lacked access to capital/TA for food economy.</p>	<p>\$500,000 appropriated for Maine Ag, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund; racial equity objectives included in bill/fund statute. LR 2943 will pursue additional support to launch this fund, make investments.</p>

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Safety, Health and Power of Working Mainers	<p><u>LD 1964 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program</u> will create a statewide Paid Family & Medical Leave program. The program will ensure that all workers (including an opt-in for self employed people) can access up to 12 weeks for the birth or placement of a new baby, to care for themselves or loved ones, for safe leave, and certain military deployments. Contributions are shared between employers and employees, and begin Jan 2025. Benefits begin May 2026. More info on implementation and rule-making is available at mainefamilyleave.org</p>	<p><i>The full policy and \$25M in start-up funding was included in the budget (the bill died when it was no longer needed)</i></p>
	<p><u>LD 1423 An Act to Increase the Maximum Limits on Awards for Compensatory and Punitive Damages Under the Maine Human Rights Act</u> - increase caps on compensatory & punitive damage awards under Maine Human rights Act</p>	<p><i>Became law</i></p>
Education and Training Opportunity	<p><u>LD 1394 An Act to Expand and Strengthen the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program</u> will mean that workers across Maine will have access to funding for transformative education and training programs and related expenses like transportation and childcare. LD 1394 supports eligible Maine residents to pursue two and four-year degree programs or employer-recognized credentials leading to high-wage, in-demand jobs in Maine, and extends CSSP funding to programs like apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, which have a proven track record for doubling wages for participants.</p>	<p><i>Governor signed into law</i></p>
Boost Incomes; Shrink Income Inequality	<p><u>LD 945 An Act to Allow Maine Families to Increase Their Savings by Changing the Asset Limits for Eligibility for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program</u> will enable families to save for larger or unexpected expenses in order to build long-term economic security. Unfortunately, for low-income families in the TANF program, saving is discouraged due to an asset limit, a rule which is also burdensome for DHHS to administer. By removing the asset limit for this program, low income families can truly begin to plan for and realize a brighter economic future.</p>	<p><i>Governor signed into law</i></p>

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	<p>LD 1544 An Act to Improve Economic Security for Maine Children by Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit The federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) has a proven track record of strengthening the economic security of Maine families and reducing poverty for Maine children. It's an investment that reaps significant rewards for our state's families and economy. LD 1554, which passed as part of the budget, strengthens Maine's CTC by expanding it to include families with the lowest incomes, families who file taxes with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs), and allowing it to increase with inflation. Starting in 2024, families earning below \$30,000 (or \$42,000 if married filing jointly) will now receive \$300 per child and dependent adult annually. Before this change, around 50,000 Maine families were not receiving the full credit because their incomes were too low.</p>	<p><i>The bill was included in the supplemental budget, LD 258.</i></p>
<p>Democracy Reform</p>	<p>Defeating LD 1365 An Act to Require Photographic Identification for Voting proposed to require voters to show a photo ID when voting. Maine law already requires voters to prove their identity before they can register to vote, making this bill unnecessary and redundant. Additionally, requiring photo ID would make it harder for some Mainers to vote, including seniors who don't drive and may not have a driver's license, people in rural areas, people of color, and younger voters. Defeating LD 1365 protected voting rights for eligible Maine voters.</p>	<p><i>A majority of the VLA committee voted "ought not to pass" and LD 1365 was soundly defeated in both chambers.</i></p>
	<p>LD 1690 An Act Regarding Ongoing Absentee Voting and Tracking of Absentee Ballots. This bill amends the provisions of law regarding ongoing absentee voter status, clarifies provisions regarding the tracking of absentee ballots and implements provisions regarding notification of ballot status for absentee voters and access of absentee voters to ballot tracking information."</p>	<p><i>Law without governor's signature</i></p>
	<p>LD 1704 An Act Regarding Incarcerated Individuals and Legislative Apportionment - unrigged prison gerrymandering where incarcerated populations were cut out of the count of their legislative and congressional districts.</p>	<p><i>Governor signed into law</i></p>

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Climate Action, Environmental Protection, and Healthy People	<p><u>LD 1986 An Act Relating to Net Energy Billing and Distributed Solar and Energy Systems</u> prospectively reforms Maine’s Net Energy Billing (NEB) program, which enables customers to offset their electricity bills with the solar power they generate. Cost concerns – stemming from both spikes in electricity rates due to Maine’s reliance on the volatile fossil fuel market for electricity generation and opaque utility assumptions about how much clean energy might be built in the NEB program – prompted reconsideration of the NEB program. The Legislature considered two conflicting proposals; the prevailing LD 1986 closes the costly commercial and industrial tariff program within NEB; creates a new program for solar projects to take advantage of federal funds and benefit low-income Mainers; directs the Maine Public Utilities Commission to account for NEB ratepayer costs and benefits instead of relying on utility calculations; and ensures the development of a new solar program for larger projects moving forward.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
	<p><u>LD 1895 An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources</u> is the result of productive collaboration between environmental groups, organized labor, fisheries stakeholders, legislative champions, and the Mills administration. The legislation sets a procurement schedule for 3GW of installed offshore wind energy by 2040 and centers equity by requiring strong labor standards, incentivizing development outside of priority fishing grounds, and requiring tribal consultation.</p>	<p>Governor signed into law</p>
Human Rights	<p><u>LD 1620 An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the Mi'kmaq Nation and to Provide Parity to the Wabanaki Nations</u> - gave Wabanaki Tribal governments access to the Federal Clean Drinking Water Act to proactively address concerns that were brought up to the Passamaquoddy Sipayik reservation in the 130th</p>	<p>Signed into law</p>