

2021 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 individuals and organizations worked to advance legislation in many areas to move Maine closer to our Vision for an Equitable Maine. The following are some of the initiatives that were successful:

Racial Equity	<p><i>LD 1034, “An Act To Provide Funding To Support the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations”</i> will provide more funding for the Permanent Commission, which was needed to staff the Commission so that it can advance “programs that create and improve opportunities and incorporate the goal of eliminating disparities for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations in Maine.”</p>	<i>Signed into law</i>
	<p><i>LD 2, “An Act To Require the Inclusion of Racial Impact Statements in the Legislative Process”</i> will introduce ‘Racial Impact Statements’ as a powerful tool to address racial disparities through law making. This will give lawmakers information and data that will allow them to consider the impacts of future laws on racial, indigenous, and tribal populations.</p>	<i>Signed into law</i>
Health Care is a Human Right	<p>Organizations and impacted community members worked together to pass <i>LD 996, “An Act To Improve Dental Health Access for Maine Children and Adults with Low Incomes”</i> to ensure that adults covered by Medicaid have dental coverage, including preventive, diagnostic and restorative care. This will provide dental coverage to over 200,000 Mainers.</p>	<i>Signed into law</i>
	<p><i>LD 718, “An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program and the Children’s Health Insurance Program”</i> would provide access to MaineCare for people who cannot afford health coverage regardless of immigration status. The Legislature supported coverage for children and pregnant people but other adults who are immigrants are still barred from coverage. More is still needed to ensure universal access to health care in Maine.</p>	<i>Amended version passed in the supplemental budget and LD 718 was carried over.</i>
	<p><i>LD 1573, “An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues”</i> will assure that direct care workers in behavioral health, long term care, and developmental disabilities receive at a minimum 125% of the minimum wage starting in 2022.</p>	<i>Added to the budget and passed into law</i>

Because our new normal should be more equitable.

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Worker Health, Safety & Power	LD 1559, “Resolve, To Create the Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program” established a Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1656, “An Act To Promote Energy-efficient Affordable Housing” creates affordable housing with labor standards attached (will require project labor agreements and apprenticeship utilization).	<i>Became law in LD 1733</i>
	LD 875, “An Act To Protect Taxpayers in the Privatization of Services and To Establish the State Procurement Review Committee” sets out requirements for state agencies seeking to enter into a contract to privatize services that would increase accountability in this process as well as protections for workers who are impacted.	<i>Signed into law</i>
Boost Incomes; Shrink Income Inequality	LD 1603, “An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income Security” creates another commission to continue to study a universal basic income.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 78, “An Act To Protect Children from Extreme Poverty by Preserving Children’s Access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Benefits” ends ‘full family sanctions’ for families who receive income support (TANF). Before this change, entire families, including children, lost their income if the parent/caretaker breached TANF program rules (even though these “breaches” are often simple misunderstandings or clerical errors).	<i>Signed into law</i>
Universal Family Care	LD 296, “An Act To Provide a Tax Credit for Family Caregivers” was amended to create a family caregiver grant pilot program that will provide a \$2,000 grant to unpaid caregivers to support their important work.	<i>Passed and funded with 2-year ARPA funds</i>
Modernize Unemployment Insurance; Support Workers in Tough Times	LD 1571, “An Act To Strengthen the Unemployment Insurance System To Better Serve Maine Workers” was combined with LD 1564, “An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Unemployment Compensation” to reform Maine’s unemployment insurance system in many ways including increasing help for dependents, providing help to part-time workers, and establishing a community-based navigator program to improve access to unemployment benefits.	<i>Signed into law (New navigator program was funded with 2-year ARPA funds)</i>

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<p>Promote housing as a human right and preventive healthcare measure</p>	<p><i>LD 1508, “An Act To Prevent Homelessness by Establishing an Eviction Mediation Program”</i> would have created an eviction mediation program to help people avoid evictions, improved notices to tenants, provide more support for legal aid on evictions.</p>	<p><i>The bill was amended to improve notice to tenants and signed into law. The Courts are subsequently moving forward with a mediation program. Maine Housing is providing ARPA funding to legal aid providers on eviction cases.</i></p>
<p>Reimagining Public Safety & Ending Mass Incarceration</p>	<p><i>LD 1703, “An Act to Amend the Maine Bail Code”</i> eliminates cash bail for most Class E crimes.</p>	<p><i>Became law without the governor’s signature</i></p>
	<p><i>LD 474, “An Act Regarding School Discipline for Maine’s Youngest Children”</i> ends the ability of schools to expel or give out-of-school suspensions to kids in grades 5 and below.</p>	<p><i>Signed into law</i></p>
<p>Democracy Reform</p>	<p><i>LD 1126, “An Act To Update the Voter Registration Process”</i> establishes an online voter registration system. This provides another option for people as we work to ensure that everyone is able to vote securely and safely.</p>	<p><i>Signed into law</i></p>
	<p><i>LD 1575, “An Act To Improve Maine’s Election Laws”</i> ensures that student IDs can be used for proof of identity when registering to vote.</p>	<p><i>Signed into law</i></p>
	<p><i>LD 148, “An Act To Establish Ongoing Absentee Voting”</i> establishes a permanent absentee voting list for disabled voters and those over the age of 65, and calls for Maine to join the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a non-profit organization that helps states maintain clean, accurate, up to date voter rolls.</p>	<p><i>Incorporated and passed in supplemental budget bill</i></p>
	<p><i>LD 1363, “An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Elections”</i> expands the use of ballot dropboxes across the state. This is another step taken to make it possible for every Maine resident to engage in the democratic process and have their vote counted.</p>	<p><i>Signed into law</i></p>

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Consumer Rights and Protections	LD 1380, “An Act To Increase Protections for Option Contracts for the Purchase of Real Property or Rent-to-own Real Property” will provide protections to tenants who enter into rent-to-own contracts and land installment contracts that often harm people with low income.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1466, “An Act To Improve the Efficiency of Certain Consumer Credit Protection Laws” provides protections to consumers in debt collection cases, prohibits debt collectors from bringing cases in small claims court, prohibits debt collectors from suing on medical debt where consumer was/ or should have been found eligible for free care.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1645, “An Act To Establish Protections for Private Student Loan Borrowers and a Registry of Lenders” expands student loan protections to private lenders	<i>Signed into law</i>
Climate Action, Environmental Protection, and Healthy People	LD 1503, “An Act To Stop Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Pollution” will phase out toxic PFAS chemicals.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1572, “Resolve, To Analyze the Impact of Sea Level Rise” will adopt official sea level rise projections.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1094, “An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Reduce Homeowner and Municipal Energy Bills through Increased Efficiency and Weatherization Projects” will fund energy efficiency and weatherization projects.	<i>Part of Maine Jobs and Recovery Act</i>
	LD 1659, “An Act To Create the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator” will establish a Green Bank to Finance Climate Solutions.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1682, “An Act To Require Consideration of Climate and Equity Impacts by the Public Utilities Commission” will align state agencies with climate requirements.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	LD 1541, “An Act To Support and Improve Municipal Recycling Programs and Save Taxpayer Money” makes packaging producers responsible for the costs of recycling or disposing of packaging. This incentivizes them to use less packaging and make it easier and more profitable to recycle. This is a first-in-the-nation law that several other states are pursuing to save their recycling programs.	<i>Signed into law</i>
	For the first time, the Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) program, typically funded through bonding, received a \$40 million appropriation to be spent over four years in the state budget. LMF secures public access to beloved mountains, lakes, rivers, and shorelines in all 16 counties.	<i>Passed in the state supplemental budget</i>

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Education and Training	<p><i>LD 1712, “An Act To Support Children’s Healthy Development and School Success”</i> supports regional coordination and child care partnerships in 5 areas of Maine to grow access to quality child care.</p>	Signed into law
	<p><i>LD 474, “An Act Regarding School Discipline for Maine’s Youngest Children”</i> limits out-of-school suspensions for children grade 5 and below.</p>	Signed into law
	<p><i>LD 1373, “An Act To Keep All Maine Students Safe by Restricting the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools”</i> limits the use of these techniques to address student behavior.</p>	Became law without the Governor’s signature
Human Rights	<p><i>LD 559, “An Act To Improve the Rights and Basic Protections of Persons with Acquired Brain Injuries”</i> authorizes the Legislature to report out legislation during the short session related to a report submitted by a task force established in this legislation. It also directs the state to adopt rules on the rights and protections of persons with acquired brain injuries.</p>	Became law without the Governor’s signature

Some initiatives that would have advanced our mission did not succeed this year. Efforts will continue to get there efforts across the finish line.

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