

League of Young Voters Questionnaire

Questions for State Representative Candidates

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What do you think are the 3 biggest issues Maine faces over the next four years?

[Jobs - the decline in private sector jobs has depleted the tax base; lack of quality, high-paying jobs forces many people \(young and old\) to leave Maine in search of employment and lifestyles that better match their image of what they hope for their future.](#)

[Deficits - State spending is now the lowest in years, taxes are a burden for all but a small percentage; it may be necessary to make choices that are unpopular, but which provide a sustainable economy.](#)

[Infrastructure - roads and rails are in decline; government buildings are inefficient; Maine produces more energy than it can export due to inadequate transmission lines; our commercial waterfront needs refurbishment and re-energizing.](#)

How will you represent *all Portlanders*, including the traditionally marginalized members of our community (for example, the homeless, the poor, those with mental or physical disabilities)?

[I would encourage a greater level of involvement by the community through churches and non-profit organizations for the homeless and poor. Avesta, Habitats, Portland Housing, and faith-based efforts need community support in the form of contributions and volunteers.](#)

[Having worked with people with disabilities directly, I have to question whether the concept of "mainstreaming" is sustainable. I am not convinced that this has served the disabled community most effectively as opposed to just being a feel-good solution.](#)

[For all marginalized people, the question that first needs to be asked is ... why ... why is this person poor, or homeless. The second question needs to be what service\(s\) will offer the optimal outcome for the individual. One-size-fits-all solutions provide success for some but failure for many others.](#)

Pick two of Maine's greatest natural resources and describe your vision for how those resources can be utilized in fostering economic stability/growth and at the same time judiciously conserved for future generations.

[With 25,000 miles of coastline, I fail to understand why aquaculture isn't a huge industry in Maine. We could be a major supplier of cultured seafood products to the World and create a lot of jobs in the process.](#)

[Maine's forests are a tremendous resource. I believe we currently practice good forest management. And I believe the research into alternate uses for wood is or will be fostering economic growth.](#)

How will you deal with the budget shortfall? Augusta has been committed to only dealing with one side of the budget, by cutting expenses. Are you open to raising revenues? If so, in what ways?

[Proper fiscal management has been lacking in the outgoing administration. That is unfortunate. Many people feel backed into a corner as a result. As a former Director of Accounting for Maine Medical Center, I know how to budget for good times and bad. You can't keep spending as if revenues were always going to be at the highest levels. You must budget for rainy days. You must be sensitive to unexpected or undesired economic downturns, and upswings, and respond immediately to such changes. Don't let things get so bad that we have to make drastic, and irresponsible cuts.](#)

[The good news is that these spending cuts are not permanent. As the economy returns to health, employment and the taxable income base will grow, and State revenues will increase accordingly. When that occurs, we need to be thoughtful about keeping our spending at a level that allows us to accumulate at least a six month reserve.](#)

[We will all have a stake in restoring jobs and the economy. Nobody is telling us as individuals what we can do to improve the odds. That is something I think the next administration needs to do. Tell us how the average person can really make a difference in getting us back on a solid footing. I'd be glad to work on that.](#)

There has been persistent uncertainty regarding federal subsidies for Rail in Maine (specifically the Downeaster). Are you committed to Maine's Amtrak link? How would the state make up any short fall in federal funding for Amtrak?

[Rail is marketable \(sustainable\) if and only if it provides a service which is quicker, cheaper or more extensive than its competing service\(s\). I have to believe that with a little ingenuity someone could find a way to make the Downeaster more profitable on its own merits. If Maine wants to help, I'd suggest using economic development funds to fund that ingenuity and inventiveness instead of just keeping a weak business plan afloat.](#)

Do you support same-sex marriage? (please answer yes or no) If yes, what will you do to further the cause? If no, why do you oppose same-sex marriage?

[No. Why would I support it? However, I do support development of a legal structure that would give all significant others the same rights as if they were in a married relationship.](#)

What policies do you believe need to be enacted to support Maine's growing immigrant and refugee population?

First, limit the growth of that population to a sustainable level. Maine's economy can only support just so many. Second, provide remedial education that would develop their skills to age appropriate levels before merging them into age-level classwork. Riverton School just got rated as one of the worst in the State and the entire District is upset. The belief is that some students are keeping the rest of the students "left behind". Immigrants need to "become informed and get involved" in the larger community to break the isolation that currently exists. That is a two-way street.

How would you improve labor conditions in Maine?

I think the sole purpose of unions should be limited to the improvement of working conditions. They have focused far too much energy on pay, benefits and political power.

There must be some form of cooperative relationship between labor and management that could produce better outcomes than layoffs and closures. I'd encourage such relationships.

I am specifically interested in reducing layoffs by encouraging fellow employees in an enterprise to take a small paycut in order to prevent the elimination of many.

How can the government of Maine keep our youth from leaving and attract new youth to the State?

The question assumes that there is something wrong with youth leaving Maine. I don't agree. Many Maine youth leave the State and become quite successful in the larger World. Often, those people return to Maine at a later date to raise their family, to be near relatives, for the jobs that Maine does offer. So Maine is a great source of talented youth, and a great place to come home to.

To optimize this cycle, Maine does need to improve it's selection of instate jobs and/or assure that long-distance commuters have adequate transportation in and out of Maine.

How would you improve access to healthcare in Maine? What steps would you take to improve Dirigo Health? Do you support single payer healthcare?

Access? I have yet to find one person who was denied access to health care in Maine. This is due to the generosity of past and present donations to Maine's primary healthcare facilities in the form of free care endowments. I would want to keep the this door open.

Dirigo should be replaced with a simpler program whereby individuals can purchase their own insurance and receive a premium subsidy based on an individual needs assessment.

What is the objective of "single payer healthcare"? It proposes that it will eliminate cost-shifting that exists in the current reimbursement model. Cost-shifting drives the cost of services and premiums higher. Single payer healthcare won't fix this problem. This is far too complex an issue to give a simple answer. I would be glad to spend an hour or two discussing this with the LYV because I have a strong background in healthcare finance in Maine.

Let's reduce the costs of healthcare