

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?

Continuing 'shift and shaft' from the Feds in Medicaid funding, economic stagnation from level population growth, "silo"ed funding/administration/planning approach to governing at local, county level for public services, schools, police, fire/EMS, etc.

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)?

My particular area of interest has been in the corrections system where I have been working to recognize the need for services for that underserved population before they get locked up. I support additional funding for housing-first projects, home-based and day hab services for MHMR populations, no raids on the home fund, and more services within our correctional system.

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?

I am open to raising revenue. We need to continue to look at tax reform which proposes a 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 approach to local property, sales and income taxes. That helps to reduce the volatility of our current structure.

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 shortfall in federal funding for Amtrak?

I am a train fan...but I am not sure that I have a good answer to how to make sure that with the funding that we get from our transportation budget get appropriately earmarked for expanded rail service. Congress is looking at a user-based funding system for transportation to make the taxation fairer by making it based on usage rather than reliance on gas taxes that are counter-productive to energy saving goals. I am open to suggestions.

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?

Yes, I have been a co-sponsor as far back as my previous service in the legislature in the late 80's and was a co-sponsor of the last legislation. I have worked to support s/s marriage and will continue to do so.

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

I am interested in the local voting issue, but think that the voters will likely not be ready to support it at the polls. A participatory voice for the community can be found and will create some stepping stones to fuller participation. Some good federal legislation would help, too.

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

There's a great study that came out of the Finance Authority of Maine called "Where they go and why" and it answers statistically a lot of these questions. We must be more strategic in our plans by knowing and understanding the size and reality of this phenomenon and what is happening in other states before we make public policy based on anecdotal theories. I think the work of the LYV has been very important in Maine and could be part of the answer.

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

I support single payer health care, and have voted for it. Dirigo is headed in the right direction by having the gains it has made embraced by the federal healthcare legislation. Maine was ahead of the curve with the three part elements of Dirigo. We need to continue to talk about the research, prevention and data collection parts of the plan and not just focus on the enrollment in public discourse.

Thanks for the opportunity to talk about these issues and I look forward to speaking with the League whenever you desire.

I would also like to add that LYV may want to become active in the work being done by the Juvenile Justice task force in the prevention and early detection areas. When we begin to "look upstream" in the lives of juveniles in the corrections system, there are lots of early warning signs. The newest research in brain development is extraordinarily valuable in setting public policy and avoiding the loss of young members of our communities when much of it can and should be prevented.