

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?

Full and Fulfilling Employment; Equality in Rights and Opportunity; Clean Energy (inc., especially, maximum Energy Efficiency)

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 approach is to keep all Portlanders, as well as other Mainers, in mind when deciding on all public policy, including the actions take, the votes I cast, the bills I sponsor and when engaging in all other efforts that influence the course of government. The inquiry is basically this: How will this action affect those that face the biggest challenges, including those who are disenfranchised and marginalized, those who are poor, those who are disabled and others who, for whatever reason, do not feel fully part of the mainstream.

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 finding new revenues. I do believe that in hard times like these, it is more important than ever to make government as efficient as possible. However, while minimizing all needless costs of government is good, while doing this we need to keep essential services strong and deliver on functions and services that people legitimately look to government to accomplish. To do this, I certainly look at raising revenues. For example, I support raising the meals and lodging tax in line with what other states already collect. For another example, last session I proposed a tax of one cent on every gallon of groundwater withdrawn in Maine for bottling. (This modest levy would bring in an estimated \$7 million annually). Fiscal restraint and careful assessment of budget priorities is needed, but Maine could raise the revenues to enable the State to perform the functions that are required of it.

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?

Continuing and expanding Amtrak service should be a priority for the State of Maine. I do not

know how the state can make up for a shortfall in federal funding. (I do think that New Hampshire should be paying its fair share. All visitors to N.H. should deliver that message loudly and clearly.)

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 consistently active on this important issue and will do all that I can to advance marriage equality. In terms of achieving the result in law, it looks like there are two obvious ways at this stage: 1) achieve a majority positive vote at the polls; or 2) take the matter to court on a question of constitutional right (a failure to guarantee important rights and equality is not something that has to be left to the voters to fix.)

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

I believe that all of us -- including ordinary citizens and the companies and associations -- should be part of welcoming immigrants and offering them the opportunity to contribute and make a good life here. Government must guarantee equality under the law, including fairness when it comes to the kind of opportunity that public institutions help to create or foster. Government can also provide additional assistance. I commend the League for working to enable immigrant participation in our democracy through local voting. I am open to sponsoring legislation that would help to make progress on bringing the residents of Maine, no matter where their place of origin, together in the pursuit of quality education, economic opportunity and prosperity.

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

We should all support ways to make Maine ever for vibrant, cutting edge, fun and exciting. Needless to say, a big part of this is gainful, sustainable, meaningful, quality employment opportunities. The Opportunity Maine program, which I support, is an example of an effort that helps to make it easier for younger residents to get education and to stay in Maine. I believe that government can do more to support such sectors as the creative economy and new, generally small, cutting edge, increasingly clean and green, business and industry. Certainly, we should make sure that we do not create barriers to this kind of growth and we should not use limited public resources to give disproportionate support to old and outmoded industries that are not committed to keeping jobs and creating opportunity here. I remain on the look out for all new ideas to advance the best new economic growth here.

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 healthcare. In this most important of issues, I believe that there are better models in a number of other countries in the world. All of the best models have a form of a single payer system and do not cede control to private insurance and pharmaceutical

companies as this country has. The health care reform passed on the federal level this year should move in the right direction. The changes should be integrated with the best innovations of Dirigo health. We also need more concentration on cost control. This may mean less investment in the exotic and expensive treatments few can afford, less reliance on emergency rooms and an end to the diversion of public resources to massive private profit. The government should ensure that everyone has access to the best of basic health care and public resources should be directed toward providing excellent preventative medicine.