

Maine Council on Aging's 131st First Regular Session Review



The Maine Council on Aging is a broad, multi-disciplinary network of businesses, organizations and older Mainers that advances policy initiatives to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives as we age in our homes and community settings. Our broad and on-going priorities include:

- Promoting equitable delivery services
- Strengthening Maine's direct care workforce across all settings
- Increasing housing and home repair options
- Growing transportation options and funding
- Expanding access to supports and services
- Promoting integrated and coordinated care
- Increasing the food and financial stability of older Mainers

MCOA tracked over 250 bills during the first Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature related to aging and issues impacting older Mainers. Some bills didn't pass muster, many good bills were carried over for various reasons and many more were enacted and will become law. Below is an overview of enacted bills and bills that were carried over.

Biennial Budget Recap: In addition to the Services Budget passed earlier in the session, the second portion of the Governor's Biennial Budget was enacted in July. Beyond the specific bills that were incorporated into this package, here are the investments that impact older Mainers.

- \$15m to increase eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program and remove asset tests for this program and Drugs for Maine's Elderly
- \$5.5m for Meals on Wheels Delivery
- \$2m to create a Food Security Hub addressing the needs of food insecure people
- \$1m for Maine's Area Agencies on Aging to enhance the state's Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- Funding to support the Elder Justice Roadmap including:
 - \$40k for the Elder Victims Restitution Fund
 - \$1.4m for the continuation of the Elder Services Connection Project, and
 - \$175k for continued funding of the Purchased Goods and Services Pilot Program
- \$19.8m toward a one-time 3% cost-of-living adjustment for Maine State Retirees
- \$15m in one-time funding for low-income energy assistance
- Increases the annual income tax pension deduction by tying the deduction amount to the maximum Social Security benefit (which is indexed to inflation)
- Appropriates funding to significantly increase eligibility for the State Property Tax Deferral Program and the Senior Property Tax Fairness Credit
- Establishes the Housing First Program to address needs of those facing chronic homelessness
- \$70m for construction of affordable housing via the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program
- \$12m in one-time funding to the Emergency Housing Relief Fund
- \$4m in one-time state funding to legal aid providers to represent tenants in evictions
- \$4m increase for Civic Legal Services Fund
- \$25m to establish the Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance Fund

Increased Access to Safe Housing

Enacted: LD 2 - An Act to Address Maine's Housing Crisis

Enacted: LD 330 - An Act to Ensure Legal Representation for Residents Facing Eviction

Enacted: LD 475 - An Act to Simplify and Clarify the Licensing of Assisted Housing Facilities

Enacted: LD 611 - An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program

Enacted: LD 654 - Resolve, Directing the Finance Authority of Maine to Establish a Pilot Program to Encourage the Development of Accessory Dwelling Units

Enacted: LD 701 - An Act to Increase the Notice Period for Rent Increases

Enacted: LD 709 - An Act to Support Home Share Programming for Seniors

Enacted: LD 1706 - An Act to Clarify Statewide Laws Regarding Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units

Enacted: LD 1844 - An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program

Enacted: 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

Carried Over: LD 226 - An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis

Carried Over: LD 599 - An Act to Provide Support Services for a Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Persons

Carried Over: LD 691 - An Act to Reduce Barriers to Housing by Prohibiting Tenant Application Fees

Carried Over: LD 853 - RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Housing

Carried Over: LD 1074 - An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-income Households

Carried Over: LD 1490 - An Act to Reduce Rental Housing Costs by Eliminating Additional Fees at or Prior to the Commencement of Tenancy

Carried Over: LD 1493 - An Act to Increase Affordable Housing by Expanding Tax Increment Financing

Carried Over: LD 1540 - Resolve, to Establish an Eviction Prevention Pilot Program

Carried Over: LD 1710 - An Act to Clarify Statewide Laws Regarding Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units

Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce

Enacted: LD 1925 - An Act to Clarify and Improve the Laws Relating to the Background Check Center and the Maine Certified Nursing Assistant and Direct Care Worker Registry

Carried Over: LD 251 - Resolve, to Classify Employee Health Insurance as a Fixed Cost for MaineCare Reimbursement in Nursing Facilities

Carried Over: LD 1376 - An Act to Create a Livable Wage by Increasing the Minimum Hourly Wage

Carried Over: LD 1718 - An Act to Encourage Participation in Maine's Essential Support Workforce Through Access to Higher Education

Carried Over: LD 1935 - An Act to Promote Workforce Development by Establishing a Workforce Development Program

Access to Transportation

Enacted: LD 1559 - An Act to Advance the State's Public Transit Systems by Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing Funding

Access to Quality Food Sources

Included in Budget: LD 1612 - An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture

Enacted: LD 87 - An Act to Permit Emergency Funding for Food Banks When a State of Emergency Is Declared

Enacted: LD 1947 - An Act to Amend the Maine Food Sovereignty Act

Carried Over: LD 568 - An Act to Provide Funding for the Fund to Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives

Carried Over: LD 1584 - An Act to Provide Funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to Temporarily Restore Benefits Being Reduced by the Federal Government

Carried Over: LD 1823 - An Act to Respect and Protect the Right to Food

Promoting Equity, Economic Justice and Equitable Delivery of Services

Included in Budget: LD 1522 - An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged Older Citizens by Amending the Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program

Enacted: LD 707 - An Act to Update the Maine Human Rights Act with Respect to Gender Identity

Enacted: LD 942 - An Act to Ensure the Collection of Complete Information by Adding a 3rd Option for Gender on State Forms

Enacted: LD 956 - An Act Concerning Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data Collection in Health Care Facilities

Enacted: LD 976 - Resolve, to Establish the Task Force on Accessibility to Appropriate Communication Methods for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Patients

Enacted: LD 1040 - An Act to Require Reimbursement for Gender-affirming Care for MaineCare Members

Enacted: LD 1050 - Resolve, Directing the Department of Labor to Request a Federal Waiver to Allow Presumptive Work Eligibility for Asylum Seekers

Enacted: LD 1432 - An Act to Amend the Law Governing Racial Impact Statements

Carried Over: LD 988 - Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Conduct an Accessibility Study of All Maine State Parks and Historic Sites and to Develop a Plan to Remove Access Barriers

Increasing Health, Financial Stability & Security

Included in Budget: LD 564 - An Act to Improve Access to Civil Legal Services

Included in Budget: LD 1522 - An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged Older Citizens by Amending the Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program

Enacted: LD 35 - An Act to Establish Adult Protective Services Training Requirements for Professionals Mandated to Report Suspected Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation to Enhance Protection of Incapacitated and Dependent Adults

Enacted: LD 430 - Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Promote Translation and Interpretation Services in Health Care Settings

Enacted: LD 451 - An Act to Ensure Transparent and Accountable Temporary Nurse Agencies

Enacted: LD 523 - Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 5, Section 63: Home Based Supports and Services for Older and Disabled Adults and Chapter 11: Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Services,

Major Substantive Rules of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Aging and Disability Services (Emergency)

Enacted: LD 636 - An Act to Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to License and Ensure the Quality of Personal Care Agencies

Enacted: LD 753 - An Act to Allow Retired Teachers and Educational Technicians to Be Recertified

Enacted: LD 757 - An Act to Expand Telemonitoring for MaineCare Patients

Enacted: LD 915 - Resolve, to Establish the Blue-Ribbon Commission to Study the Organization of and Service Delivery by the Department of Health and Human Services

Enacted: LD 985 - Resolve, to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Provide Additional Reimbursement to Maine Veterans' Homes

Enacted: LD 1082 - An Act to Advance the Maine Retirement Savings Program

Enacted: LD 1104 - Resolve, to Amend the MaineCare Hospital Readmission Protocol

Enacted: LD 1474 - Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Expedite Reimbursement of Nursing Facilities

Enacted: LD 1936 - An Act to Allow Certified Nurse Practitioners to Provide In-home Care Without a Home Health Care Provider License

Carried Over: LD 20 - An Act to Further Protect Survivors of Economic Abuse

Carried Over: LD 70 - An Act to Eliminate the Cap on Retirement Benefits for State Employees and Teachers to Which a Cost-of-living Adjustment is Made

Carried Over: LD 111 - An Act Requiring the State to Pay a Share of a Retired State Employee's or Retired Teacher's Premium for Medicare Part B Under Medicare Advantage

Carried Over: LD 130 - An Act to Eliminate Senior Citizen Property Tax Stabilization and Expand the Homestead Property Tax Exemption

Carried Over: LD 185 - An Act to Reduce the Benefit Penalty Imposed on Career Educators Who Retire After 35 Years of Service

Carried Over: LD 208 - An Act Concerning Home Care Services

Carried Over: LD 225 - An Act Regarding Reimbursement to Hospitals for Patients Awaiting Placement in Nursing Facilities

Carried Over: LD 227 - An Act Regarding Health Care in the State

Carried Over: LD 299 - An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Health and Human Services

Carried Over: LD 472 - An Act to Support Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Projects

Carried Over: LD 587 - Resolve, to Automatically Increase a Residential Care or Nursing Facility Resident's Personal Needs Allowance Under the MaineCare Program When the Consumer Price Index Increases

Carried Over: LD 904 - An Act Supporting the Rural Health Care Workforce in Maine

Carried Over: LD 938 - An Act to Assist Nursing Homes in the Management of Facility Beds

Carried Over: LD 997 - Resolve, to Reduce Workforce Barriers for Mental Health Professionals in Maine

Carried Over: LD 1096 - An Act to Provide a Cost-of-living Increase to State Retirees

Carried Over: LD 1107 - Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Improve Access to Credit for Low-income Individuals

Carried Over: LD 1161 - An Act to Fund Free Health Clinics

Carried Over: LD 1178 - Resolve, to Reduce Barriers to Recovery from Addiction by Expanding Eligibility for Targeted Case Management Services

Carried Over: LD 1184 - An Act to Exempt Certain Prescribed Home Medical Supplies from Sales Tax

Carried Over: LD 1304 - Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Barriers to Achieving Behavioral Health Integration and Parity

Carried Over: LD 1335 - An Act to Amend the Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens Law

Carried Over: LD 1345 - An Act to Permit Municipalities to Establish by Ordinance a Program for Partial Deferral of Property Taxes for Seniors

Carried Over: LD 1412 - RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Establishing That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law

Carried Over: LD 1494 - An Act to Help Address the Worker Shortage in Behavioral Health Care Services by Allowing Provisional Licensure and Providing for Reimbursement for Out-of-state Licensees

Carried Over: LD 1506 - Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Study the Scarcity of Licensed Clinical Behavioral Health Professionals Across the State

Carried Over: LD 1639 - An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient Care

Carried Over: LD 1684 - An Act to Invest in the Health and Wellness of Older Maine Residents by Expanding Coordinated Community Programming

Carried Over: LD 1732 - An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program

Carried Over: LD 1735 - An Act to Safeguard Gender-affirming Health Care

Carried Over: LD 1792 - Resolve, to Establish the Rural Health Services Task Force Opportunities and Providing Tax Credit

Carried Over: LD 1797 - An Act to Expand Maine's Health Care Workforce by Expanding Educational

Carried Over: LD 1827 - An Act to Prevent Closures and Ensure Sustainability of Nursing Facilities, Private Nonmedical Institutions and Residential Care Facilities by Removing So-called Budget Neutrality

Supporting Community Healthy Aging Initiatives

Carried Over: LD 666 - An Act to Support Community-based Volunteer Organizations

Supporting Family Caregivers & Grandparents

Included in Budget: LD 346 - An Act to Clarify the Requirements for Family Caregivers

Included in Budget: LD 1544 - An Act to Improve Economic Security for Maine Children by Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit

Included in Budget: LD 1964 - An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

Carried Over: LD 999 - An Act to Support Family Caregivers by Expanding Family Medical Leave

Prescription Drugs & Insurance Issues

Included in Budget: LD 112 - An Act to Increase the State's Share of Retired Teacher Health Insurance

Included in Budget: LD 1077 - An Act to Fund Consultation Services to Ensure Affordable Health Care for Maine Residents and to Provide Targeted Outreach to Ensure Affordable Health Care for Maine Farmers

Enacted: LD 308 - An Act to Require That Insurance Companies Notify Workers over 65 Years of Age of Potential High Costs

Enacted: LD 1395 - An Act to Increase Transparency Regarding Certain Drug Pricing Programs

Enacted: LD 1856 - Resolve, to Study the Establishment of a MaineCare Public Health Plan

Carried Over: LD 223 - Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rules Regarding Pharmacy Services

Carried Over: LD 591 - An Act to Require the State to Pay Medicare Premiums for Certain Retired State Employees

Carried Over: LD 1740 - An Act to Support an Insured Patient's Access to Affordable Health Care with Timely Access to Health Care Prices

Carried Over: LD 1837 - An Act to Increase Oral Health Services

Utilities & Energy Enacted Bills

Enacted: LD 279 - An Act to Protect Against Discrimination by Public Entities

Enacted: LD 325 - An Act to Improve Consideration of Electricity Rate Increases

Enacted: LD 327 - An Act to Provide Maine Ratepayers with Equitable Access to Interconnection of Distributed Energy Resources

Enacted: LD 542 - An Act to Comprehensively and Equitably Reform Electricity Rates

Enacted: LD 923 - An Act to Improve Disclosure of Present and Future Costs to Maine Electricity Consumers

Enacted: LD 987 - An Act to Promote Electricity Price Stability for Standard-offer Service

Enacted: LD 1427 - An Act to Clarify the Public Utilities Commission's Authority to Consider the Impact on Low-income Residential Ratepayers When Setting Rates

Enacted: LD 1456 - An Act to Facilitate the Expansion of Broadband

Enacted: LD 1971 - Resolve, to Ensure that Eligible Customers Receive Payments from the Energy Rate Relief Fund

Carried Over: LD 143 - An Act to Support Rural Service Programming and Promote Volunteerism

Carried Over: LD 683 - An Act to Reduce Electricity Rates

Carried Over: LD 699 - An Act to Reduce Future Energy Costs

Carried Over: LD 1873 - An Act to Provide Heating Relief with Tax-free Home Energy Savings Accounts

Carried Over: LD 1932 - An Act to Require Broadband Internet Access Service Providers to Prorate Customer Bills