



Maine Equal Justice 2025 Legislative Priorities

These are our priorities to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity as of April 2025. As more bills are printed, we may add them at www.maine.equaljustice.org. Questions about other legislation can be directed to Kathy Kilrain del Rio, kathy@mejp.org. Sign up to stay informed: maineequaljustice.org/take-action/

Income Solutions

LD 1294, An Act to Expand the Dependent Exemption Tax Credit

Sponsor: Senate President Mattie Daughtry

Staff contact: Ann Danforth, adanforth@mejp.org

The Child Tax Credit has a proven track record of strengthening the economic security of Maine families and reducing poverty for children. It's an investment with significant rewards for our state's families and economy. This bill builds on steps we've taken in Maine to strengthen the Child and Dependent Tax Credit – it doubles the credit for children under six and targets the credit to provide additional resources to families most in need of additional financial support.

Health Care

Staff contact: Alex Carter, acarter@mejp.org

Maine is a stronger, healthier, and more resilient state when everyone has health care. Yet, immigration status prevents many Mainers from getting the care they need. We are advocating at the federal and state level to protect and improve access to essential health services, regardless of immigration status, making progress toward ensuring all Mainers with low incomes can access health care coverage.

Consumer Rights

LD 558, An Act to Strengthen Consumer Protections by Prohibiting the Report of Medical Debt on Consumer Reports

Sponsor: Sen. Donna Bailey

Staff contact: Andrea Steward, asteward@mejp.org

For many Maine families and individuals, medical debt is an unavoidable reality and a significant barrier to meeting their basic needs. Medical debt that affects a credit score can keep people from renting or purchasing a home, securing certain jobs, or

buying a car to get to work. This bill will put protections in place to limit medical debt reporting and the financial harm it causes.

Housing

LR 2260, An Act to Maintain Housing Stability by Strengthening Support for Eviction Prevention

Sponsor: Rep. Ambureen Rana

Staff contact: Andrea Steward, asteward@mejp.org

All people in Maine need a safe, stable place to call home. In 2024, Maine legislators created the Eviction Prevention Program as a pilot to provide stability to households at most risk of becoming unhoused. This bill will make improvements to the program and provide additional resources to meet the needs of Mainers struggling with housing insecurity.

LD 847, An Act to Prohibit Housing Discrimination

Sponsor: Rep. Cheryl Golek

Staff contact: Andrea Steward, asteward@mejp.org

Many landlords have been unwilling to accept tenants with housing supports like vouchers or General Assistance, making it even more difficult for families and individuals with these financial supports to secure homes in their communities or close to school and work. This bill will restore protections in the Maine Human Rights Act for tenants who experience discrimination based on their source of income.

General Assistance

Staff contact: Dina Malual, dmalual@mejp.org

All Mainers need a place to call home, food on their table, and essential health care. GA is a program of last resort for people who have exhausted all other options to pay for their basic needs. Rules for getting GA are strict and once someone receives support, there are caps (maximums) on specific assistance types (categorized such as utilities, medical, housing, etc). These can only be exceeded if the individual or family is experiencing an emergency. To remain eligible, recipients must also make good-faith efforts to reduce their need for GA. We advocate against any cuts to this essential program and for legislation that strengthens GA.

Civil Legal Aid Funding

LD 1022, An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes

Sponsor: Sen. Anne Carney

Staff contact: Robyn Merrill, rmerrill@mejp.org

Civil legal aid provides legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families when they cannot afford it on their own. This bill would sustain one-time state funds that are slated to expire in July 2025, and would increase funding for legal services to increase access to justice. Without legislative action, civil legal services will be reduced in Maine when there is significant unmet need.

Changing Systems that Cause Racial Inequity

Bills to Advance Tribal Self-Determination

Sponsor: Sen. Rachel Talbot Ross

Staff contact: Dina Malual, dmalual@mejp.org

Restoring self-government to Wabanaki Nations is necessary for racial equity. We support bills that would implement consensus recommendations from a bipartisan task force convened by the Maine Legislature to address long-standing issues with the land claims act passed in 1980 that governs the relationship between the state and the tribes in Maine.

Access to Education & Employment

LR 2349: An Act to Modernize Maine's Workforce Training Services, Increase Access to In-Demand Careers, and Grow Maine's Economy

Sponsor: Sen. Margaret Rotundo

Staff contact: Catherine Buxton, cbuxton@mejp.org

Economic security is so much more than just finding a job – it's about accessing education and community resources to meet your basic needs and thrive. This bill modernizes the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program so more Maine people can access education and training for in-demand jobs. It also moves the Peer Workforce Navigator program from a pilot program to an ongoing program that works in tandem with MDOL to offer culturally-inclusive, strengths-based case management services to workers from marginalized communities by empowering peer navigators to assist workers as they access public benefits, education, and employment opportunities.