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2009 Legislative Update



State Representative Linda Valentino

2009 Legislative Update

★ Attention Veterans' Families ★

Looking for names of Saco veterans who are Purple Heart recipients or who died during combat in WW II, Korea, Viet Nam, and Iraqi wars. Contact me immediately to be included in a special veterans' awards ceremony on November 12, 2009.

Dear Neighbor,

It has been an honor to serve as your state representative during a very challenging year for our state. An enormous budget shortfall and the challenge of reorganizing government services to improve efficiency meant the Legislature needed to make many difficult choices. As your representative, I always carefully consider the impact that the decisions we make will have on our community as we work on these critical issues.

While a handful of items took up much of our time and the public's attention, we passed a number of laws this year that will continue to move Maine forward in the critical arenas of job creation, tax reform, health care access, consumer protection, and energy.

The issues discussed in this newsletter are just a few of the many that were considered and approved by the Legislature. For more information I encourage you to contact me. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your representative in Augusta.

Sincerely,
Linda Valentino

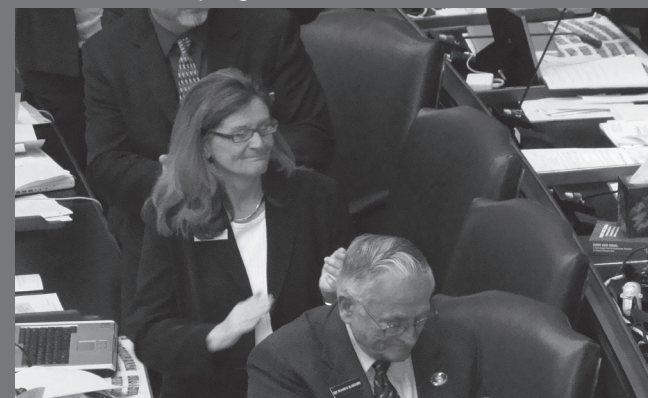
Property Tax & Rent Rebate

Applications for the 2009 Property Tax and Rent Refund Program are now available. You may be one of nearly 200,000 Maine households entitled to a rebate of up to \$1,600 on property taxes or rent paid during 2008.

You May Qualify If:

- You do not have a spouse or dependent(s) and your 2008 household income was \$61,400 or less; or
- You have a spouse or dependent(s) and your 2008 household income was \$81,850 or less.

To download an application or to apply online go to: <http://www.maine.gov/revenue/>
Or contact me for an application, or if you have questions about the program.



New laws passed in 2009

A lower tax burden for Mainers, quality health care access, new civil rights and ethics laws, clean energy and the environment, creating jobs and improving the economy

How to apply for tax rebates and refunds

Your tax dollars at work a summary of the state budget



House District 134 - Representing part of Saco



Linda supports local small businesses

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Linda Valentino is serving her third term representing part of Saco in the Maine House of Representatives. She currently serves on the Taxation Committee and the Legal and Veterans Affairs Committee, and is a former member of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee.

She is a former commissioner of the Maine Liquor and Lottery Commission and was elected for three terms to the Saco City Council, where she served as deputy mayor and chair of the Finance Committee.

She and her husband, Curtis Scamman, live on Boom Road in Saco. They have three grown children and two grandchildren.

Rep. Valentino discusses legislation with a visiting student from Thornton Academy

Job creation and the economy

- Passed a bond package that, if approved by voters, will create hundreds of new jobs and invest hundreds of millions in the Maine economy for roads, working waterfronts, Land for Maine's Future, research and development, higher education, conservation and state parks.
- Made training programs available to more workers affected by economic downturns.

Boosting conservation and building Maine's energy future

- Passed a sweeping energy package that included funds for renewable energy, weatherization and workforce development programming in emerging green industries. Established strong and ongoing funding to weatherize Maine homes and businesses.
- Created a new "Efficiency Maine Trust" to provide a "one stop shop" for consumers and businesses to access energy programs. Authorized \$79 million in federal economic stimulus funds in order to fund efficiency and weatherization efforts for low and middle income households as well as businesses.
- Directed manufacturers to establish a safe, free recycling system in all Maine communities for fluorescent light bulbs, a first-in-the-nation law that removes harmful mercury from the environment.
- Added printers, digital picture frames and gaming consoles to the state's landmark e-waste recycling law.
- Extended the solar and wind energy rebate program from 2010 to 2015.

Increasing access to affordable health care

- Created the Maine "Health Care Bill of Rights," which will improve transparency in the health insurance marketplace; increase disclosure; give the insurance superintendent more authority to oversee rate increases; and allow consumers to more easily compare health insurance plans.
- Began developing a plan for long-term care for elderly Mainers and adults with disabilities, and established a program of in-home and community support services for adults with long-term care needs.

Tax reform: Reducing the tax burden for Maine people

- Passed a sweeping tax reform package that reduces overall taxes for over 87 percent of Maine citizens.
- Lowers the top income tax rate and capital gains rate from 8.5 percent to 6.5 percent for Mainers making less than \$250,000 a year, and to 6.85 percent for those who make over that amount.
- Reduces overall taxes on Mainers by \$57.1 million per year and exports taxes to non-residents.
- Reduces taxes amongst all income groups fairly, and increases the progressivity of the tax code.

Veterans, seniors and civil rights

- Exempted meals prepared in assisted living facilities from being taxed in the tax reform bill.
- Allowed active-duty members of the military to be eligible for the Homestead Exemption.
- Waived undergraduate tuition for veterans attending the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and Maine Maritime Academy.
- Voted for LD 1020: *An Act To End Discrimination in Civil Marriage and Affirm Religious Freedom*

The state budget

- This biennial budget spends less money than the previous one for the first time since 1974.
- Reduced state spending in almost all departments across state government and made structural changes to increase efficiency in government.
- Cut the legislative budget by \$4.5 million.

Some of the bills I sponsored or supported

- **LD 1470** - *Resolve, To Recognize Women Veterans in the State House Hall of Flags*: Creates a working group to design and arrange for the placement of a plaque in the State House Hall of Flags to honor the state's female veterans. (passed)
- **LD 44** - *An Act Regarding Requirements for Approval of a Transmission Line*: Expands the items that must be considered when permitting new power line construction to include effects on the public health and safety, scenic, historic, recreational and environmental values, as well as the proximity of the proposed line to inhabited dwellings among other items. (passed)
- **LD 378** - *Resolve, To Direct the Department of Marine Resources To Study the Issues Surrounding the Harvest of Bait Fish within Territorial Waters*: Directs the Commissioner of Marine Resources to study the issues surrounding the harvest of bait fish within the territorial waters of the State and to report findings and recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources by January. (passed)
- **LD 906** - *An Act Relating to Sales Tax on Certain Trailers*: Removes the length restriction on trailers for which a trade-in credit is allowed. (passed)
- **LD 333** - (*Transportation Budget*) Secured Department of Transportation funding for both the Eastern Trail Project and the Repaving of Route 112. (passed)
- **LD 1424** - *Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Unicameral Legislature*: Would abolish the Senate and the House of Representatives and replace them with a unicameral Legislature made up of 105 members who would be referred to as Senators, creating considerable budget savings (\$15 million) for the state. (failed)



Linda with the state champion Thornton Academy boys basketball team



Linda works hard on senior citizen issues