

FAITH BASED ADVOCACY
131ST LEGISLATURE – FIRST SESSION
February 4, 2023

“The Social Justice Quilt”

Gun Safety	Environment	Democracy	Housing
Hunger	Indigenous	New Mainers	Vaccines
Restorative Justice / Youth	Aging	LGBTQ+	Racism
Reproductive Rights	Drugs	Gaming	Health
Mandatory Reporting	TBD	Economic Justice	Paid Family Leave

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AGING

The **Maine Council on Aging** has identified dozens of bills of interest to Maine's older adults including:

Home Care Services	Property Tax	Retirement Benefits	Housing
Health Insurance	Voter ID	Home Care Services	Pharmacy
General Assistance	Mental Health	Long Term Care	Utilities

DEMOCRACY

Bills that would require photo ID and updated registration practices have been introduced and a couple are already scheduled for a public hearing next week.

DRUGS

As Maine and every other state continue to battle the drug crisis and as states are still reporting record number of overdose deaths, there will be several bills to follow this session. Some of the early titles seek to clarify, strengthen, or expand the Good Samaritan law that was passed in the last session. We can expect many public policy enhancements as the death tolls continues to rise.

ENVIRONMENT

The [Environmental Priorities Coalition](#) will be working on several policy initiatives this session.

The coalition's **seven priority bills** for 2023 include legislation to:

- Recognize tribal sovereignty;
- Advance environmental justice for all Maine people;
- Foster a responsible offshore wind industry for Maine;
- Conserve endangered & threatened species habitat;
- Secure the future of Maine's forests;
- Invest in Maine trails statewide; and
- The legislature amend Maine's Constitution to establish environmental rights for all, for generations.

GUN SAFETY

We can expect another busy session working on bills to strengthen Maine's gun safety laws as well as those that would weaken or expand access to guns at a time when the nation is experiencing record mass shootings. Someone told me they counted 53 gun related titles to monitor.

HOUSING

The legislature has created a new committee solely focused on housing. Legislators on this committee from the greater Portland area include Senator Teresa Pierce (Cumberland), Representative Grayson Lookner (Portland), and Representative Drew Gattine (Westbrook).

INDIGENOUS

Tribal sovereignty will once again be a high priority for us and many of our allies working in the legislature.

LGBTQ+

I have counted about 36 bills targeting the LGBTQ+ community this session. Bill titles have been submitted to deal with curriculum in schools, school climate (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), financing and governance of schools, parent bill of rights, health, school sports, libraries, student names and pronouns, health care, and voting. There are several proactive bill titles dealing with broadening HIV testing, trans inclusive health care, and data collection.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

We are expecting several bills dealing with reproductive rights from both sides of the issue.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE / YOUTH

Prisoner re-entry, banning solitary confinement, criminal justice reform, the closing of Long Creek, and many other issues will need our attention during this session.

VACCINES

Several bill titles have been submitted that seek to reinstate the option of a religious exemption for vaccines despite an overwhelming public vote. Others seek to classify the Covid vaccine as “unapproved” or prohibit the requirement for children in public schools to be vaccinated.