

ACLU

Maine

SUMMER
2019

2019 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

A HISTORIC SESSION IN THE MAINE LEGISLATURE

The first regular session of Maine's 129th legislature has come to an end, and what a session it was! With the help of a legislature and a governor willing to challenge the status quo, we became a state that seizes on opportunities to protect and expand civil rights and civil liberties. **All told, we helped pass 34 bills to expand civil rights and liberties in Maine** and amended eight potentially harmful bills to fix our concerns.

Don't get me wrong – that doesn't mean we can let our guard down. This session **we also blocked 35 attempts to take our rights away**, going up against bills that would have chipped away at our voting rights and made immigrants feel less welcome. And we still have work to do to contend with unfair drug policies, a broken pretrial justice system, and a skyrocketing women's incarceration rate.

But even as we fight these injustices, with your help we are securing victories to expand our rights further and further. We are showing the nation that **Maine is a leader on everything from abortion access, to internet privacy, to Indigenous rights.** Together, we are reimagining what it means to create a "more perfect union" – one where the protections of the Constitution apply to more people than ever before.



You are crucial to this work, and we share these victories with you. **We were successful because you called and emailed legislators, testified in Augusta, participated in rallies, and made your voices heard.** So today, I celebrate you and all we have accomplished together. Thank you for all you do.

-Oami Amarasingham, Advocacy Director

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**ACLU OF MAINE
ANNUAL MEETING**

October 21

5:30 p.m. Reception

6 p.m. Program

at the Lewiston Public Library

with Author **Tess Gerritsen**

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PUBLISHED BY

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HIGHLIGHTS F



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Together we are working to end excessively harsh criminal justice policies that disproportionately affect poor people and people of color and stand in the way of a just and equal society.

LD 1516: “AN ACT TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY IN COMMUNICATION IN THE COURT SYSTEM”

More than 20 percent of all pretrial detainees in Maine jails are there for failure to appear for a court date. Under this law, the state will create a text message-based court reminder system — just like what you get from your dentist — to keep people out of jail and save Maine valuable resources.

Status: VICTORY! Signed into law June 27

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Access to safe and legal abortion care is critical to ensuring all people can make the decisions that are best for themselves and their families and participate fully in society. As many states roll back abortion rights, Maine has been a beacon of hope. With our coalition partners, we worked to pass two bills to ensure all people access to abortion care, regardless of where they live or how much money they make.

LD 820: “AN ACT TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN IN MAINE”

The decision about whether to have an abortion should not depend on whether a person can afford one or what insurance they use. This law requires public and private insurance providers that cover prenatal care to also cover abortion care.

Status: VICTORY! Signed into law June 13

LD 1261: “AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS TO PERFORM ABORTIONS”

This law expands abortion access in Maine by allowing qualified nurse practitioners and other advanced practice clinicians to provide abortion care. Now, Mainers in rural areas will be able to access the care they need from trusted providers in their communities.

Status: VICTORY! Signed into law June 10

FROM THIS SESSION

INTERNET FREEDOM

As technology develops and our digital footprint grows, so does the need for greater protection against government overreach. Maine has been a leader on privacy rights, and this year we helped pass two bills that give Mainers some of the strongest internet privacy protections in the country.



LD 946: "AN ACT TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF ONLINE CUSTOMER INFORMATION"

This law requires internet service providers that do business in Maine to get permission from customers before selling their data to a third party. This will put consumer privacy before corporate interests.

Status: VICTORY! Signed into law June 6

LD 1364: "AN ACT REGARDING NET NEUTRALITY AND INTERNET POLICY"

This law will require internet service providers that receive state funding to treat all internet communications equally, prohibiting them from charging differently for, or intentionally interfering with, the delivery of online content.

Status: VICTORY! Signed into law June 24

RACIAL JUSTICE

Though generations of civil rights activism have led to important gains, we have not yet achieved the promise of equal justice for all. We're working with directly impacted communities to end systematic discrimination from our schools to our criminal justice system and everywhere in between.

LD 777: "AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF RACIAL, INDIGENOUS AND MAINE TRIBAL POPULATIONS"

This law establishes a permanent commission to study how Maine's economic policies impact communities of color, including Indigenous and immigrant communities, and to advocate for policies aimed at reducing economic disparities.

Status: VICTORY! Signed into law June 21

GETTING BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

"I value my time at the ACLU of Maine because so many of my passions and concerns intersect there. I can work on juvenile justice one day, reproductive freedom another, and still have a chance to cover voting rights before I'm done. The ACLU of Maine is where all the good work is being done, and I love to do what I can to support it."

- DONNA EKART, VOLUNTEER



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LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

Doug Kimmel and Ron Schwizer are longtime advocates and supporters of the ACLU of Maine.

“We’re so glad to be a part of the ACLU’s work on the front lines to protect civil liberties. By including the ACLU in our estate plans, we can help win the fights of tomorrow.”

Join Doug and Ron by naming the ACLU of Maine in your estate plans. Contact Pablo Anaya at panaya@aclumaine.org or (207) 619-6228 to learn more.



Photo credit: Amy Paradysz/Portland Press Herald photo



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