

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Lincoln Park Strategies
RE: Legislative Priorities in Maine: Survey Results
DATE: August 5, 2019

As the 2019 legislative session came to a close, State Innovation Exchange (SiX) commissioned Lincoln Park Strategies to conduct a survey of Mainers¹ to gauge voters' feelings about the state's future and their views on the legislative leadership's policy agenda. One thing is clear: a majority of Mainers support the recent progressive policies that the legislature passed and are supportive of policies under consideration for 2020.

While there were many interesting findings throughout the data, this memo focuses specifically on Mainers' reactions to the recent legislation passed by the state legislature.

1) Overall, health care is the largest concern Mainers have, and healthcare-focused legislation is among the most popular. This concern is followed by concerns about jobs, education, access to quality and affordable health care, the increasing cost of prescription drugs, and drug and opioid abuse. Concern over health care access and costs have only increased since last year.

Key findings on this topic include:

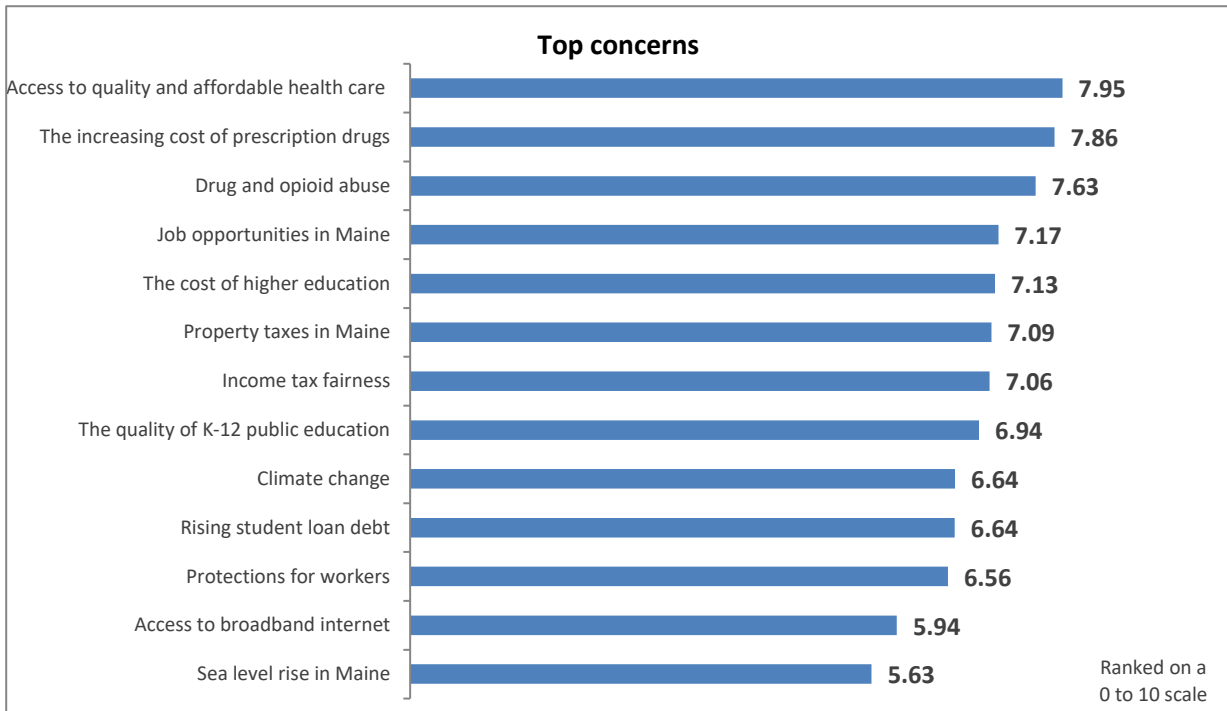
- Across the state, residents are very concerned about access to quality and affordable health care (69%), the cost of prescription drugs (66%), and drug and opioid abuse (62%).
- Mainers over 65 are equally concerned about access to affordable health care (74%) and the increasing cost of prescription drugs (74%) while non-college men (74%), residents of the western region² (74%) and the mid and upper-coastal counties³ (75%) are more concerned about access to affordable health care. Kennebec County (78%), however, is more concerned about the increasing cost of prescription drugs.
- Fifty-three (53%) percent of respondents are very concerned about job opportunities in Maine, with non-college men most concerned (62%). Additionally, Mainers over 45 (56%) are more likely to be very concerned about job opportunities than those under 45 (46%).

¹ 600 interviews among adults were conducted from June 14 – June 20, 2019 via both internet and phone survey. The results were weighted to ensure proportional responses. The margin of error is ±4 percent at the 95% confidence level.

² Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties

³ Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo, and Washington counties

- In addition, Mainers are very concerned about issues around access to quality education at every level, including the cost of higher education (53%), access to quality K-12 public education (52%), and rising student loan debt (45%). After the top three health care concerns, Mainers under 45 (59%) are most concerned about access to quality public education. The cost of higher education is most concerning to non-college men (60%) and in Kennebec County (60%) while 49% of residents of Cumberland and coastal areas are very concerned about rising student loan debt.

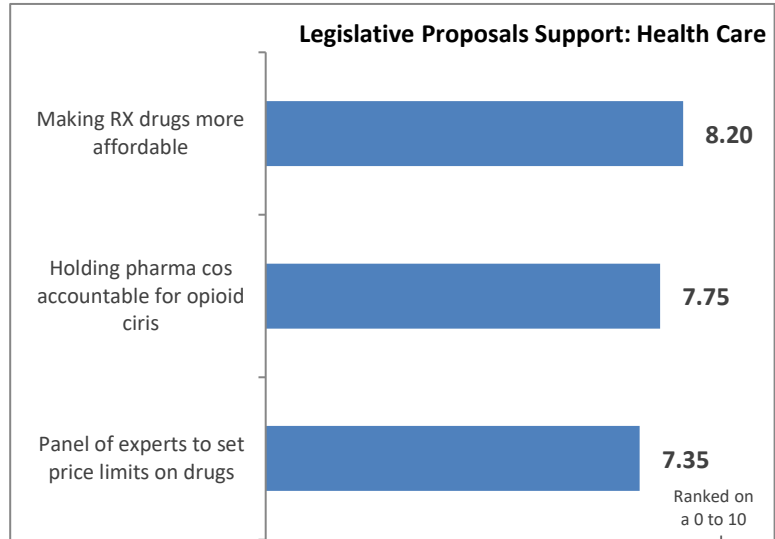


- Climate change is also a big concern to a majority of Mainers (53%) across the state, particularly in York (57%) and Cumberland (58%) counties, the western region (61%), and among residents over the age of 65 (61%).
- A majority (51%) of Mainers are very concerned about income tax fairness, particularly among residents 45 to 64 years old (63%) and in York County (54%), the western region (60%), the coastal region (55%) While a majority of non-college men (53%), college men (51%), York County (53%), Kennebec County (55%), and residents 45 to 64 (57%) are very concerned about property taxes.
- Fifty (50) percent of the residents in the northern counties⁴ are very concerned about access to high-speed internet.

⁴ Aroostook, Piscataquis, and Somerset counties

2) Given voters’ strong concern around healthcare-related issues, it is not surprising that healthcare-focused legislation was some of the most popular, including bills making prescription drugs more affordable and increasing transparency in drug pricing, holding pharmaceutical companies accountable for their role in the opioid crisis, and creating a panel of experts to set price limits on drugs. Each policy received strong support by at least three in five Mainers.

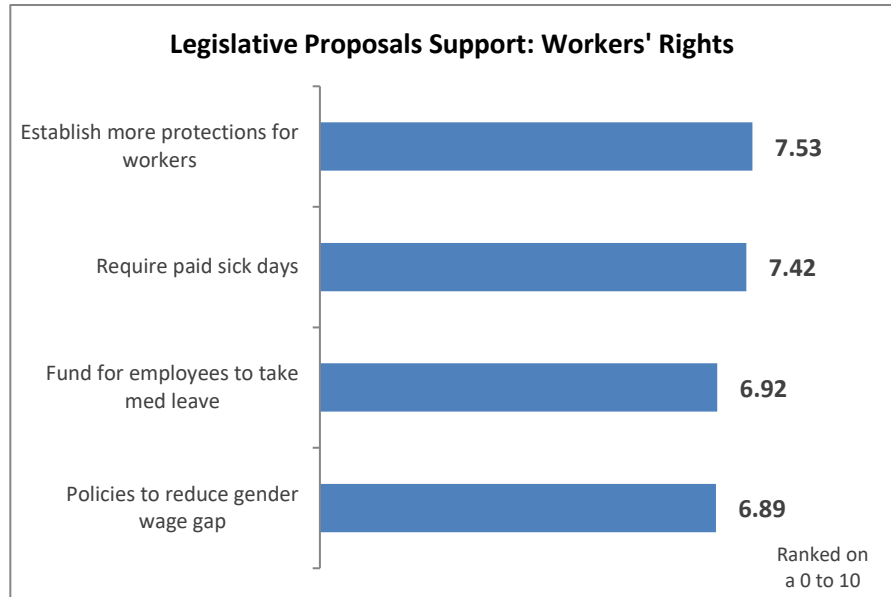
- When asked to rate various legislative policies that are pending, over seven in ten Mainers (71%) strongly supported making prescription drugs more affordable and increasing transparency in drug pricing. Over three-quarters of non-college women, residents of Kennebec, the western region, and coastal counties, and voters over 45 strongly support making prescription drugs more affordable.



- More than three in five Mainers (63%) strongly support holding pharmaceutical companies accountable for their role in the opioid crisis and a majority (56%) support establishing a panel of experts of set price limits on common drugs. Non-college men (67%), college women (65%) and those over 45 (67%) are most supportive of holding pharmaceutical companies accountable.
- Overall, two-thirds of Mainers (67%) strongly support at least two of the recent healthcare-related legislation, including a majority of residents 65 and older (51%) who strongly support all three.

3) The state of the economy and workers’ rights in Maine are keeping many up at night and Mainers see easy solutions to help ease the burdens many workers face. Indeed, legislation establishing more protections for workers, including fairness in overtime pay and scheduling and preventing wage theft, is the third most popular policy behind making prescription drugs more affordable and holding pharmaceutical companies accountable for their role in the opioid crisis.

Establishing more protections for workers is particularly popular among non-college men, college women, and among residents in the western region. Mainers also strongly support additional worker



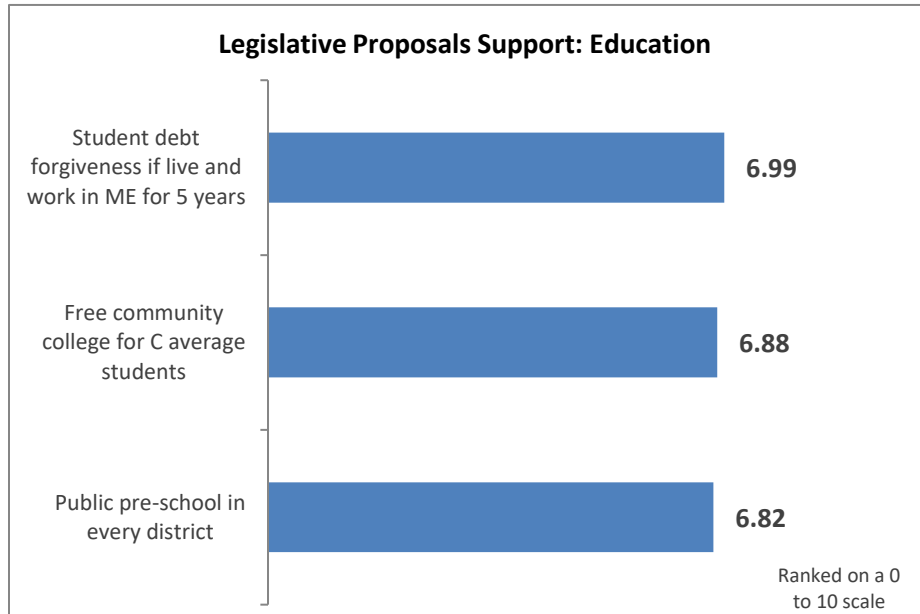
protections, including requiring paid sick days, establishing a state insurance fund so all employees can take medical or family leave, and policies to reduce the gender wage gap.

- Establishing more protections for workers including fairness in overtime pay and scheduling and preventing wage theft (60% strongly support), is strong across demographic groups. Non-college men (65%), college women (63%), and the western region (67%) are driving the support.
- A majority (58%) support requiring companies to allow their employees to earn paid sick days with non-college men (61%), college women (62%), northern counties (60%), western region (64%), and residents 45 to 64-years-old (60%) are the most supportive.
- A majority of Mainers also strongly support establishing an insurance fund so all employees can take medical or family leave (51%) as well as policies to reduce the gender wage gap (52%). Support for helping employees take medical or family leave is strongest among non-college men (59%) and residents of York (54%) and Cumberland (56%) counties.
- College women (61%), residents 65 and older (56%), and York (58%), Cumberland (57%), and Kennebec (56%) counties are most supportive of policies to reduce the gender wage gap.
- Overall, two-thirds of Mainers (66%) support at least two of the policies focusing on workers’ rights with almost half (49%) supporting at least three. However, over a quarter of college men (30%), York County (27%), and coastal areas (27%) do not strongly support any of the policies.

4) Legislative proposals that focus on education issues receive broad support from Mainers, but some groups remain skeptical when it comes to ensuring public pre-school in every district.

Mainers are on board with helping residents attend college: a majority strongly support providing student debt forgiveness for any Mainer who lives and works in the state for at least five years after they graduate, and making community college free for all Maine residents who maintain a C average or better while they attend school. However, less than a majority of Mainers support ensuring every school district offers public pre-school.

- A majority (54%) strongly support forgiving student debt for any Mainer who lives and works in the state for at



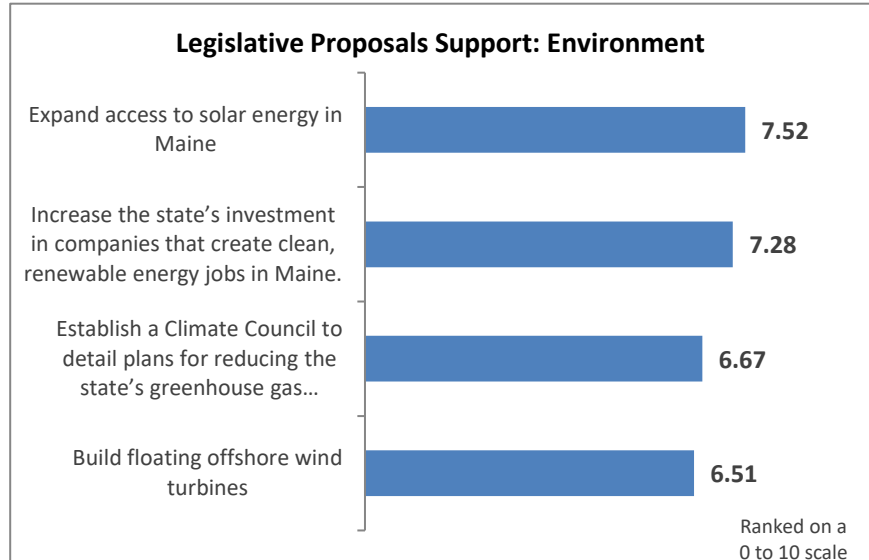
- least five years after they graduate, with non-college men (58%), college women (59%), residents of northern counties (61%), and those under 45 (58%) most supportive.
- Similarly, 53% of Mainers strongly support free community college if students maintain a C average with non-college men (59%), college women (56%), York County (59%), and western (56%) and northern (56%) regions most supportive.
- While just under half (48%) of Mainers strongly support public pre-school in every district, it receives strong support from non-college men (53%), York County (54%), Kennebec County (51%), northern counties (50%), western region (54%), and residents over 65 (53%).
- Overall, a majority (53%) of Mainers strongly support at least two of the four education proposals tested.

5) Mainers are very worried about climate change and attribute most of the changes in the environment to human activity. As a result, Mainers are supportive of various proposals to help protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas. Three in five Mainers strongly

support expanding access to solar energy in Maine, but non-college women and those on the coast are less supportive than other groups. A majority also strongly support investing in renewable energy jobs, particularly men, residents 65 and older, and those in Cumberland County.

Voters have mixed feelings about establishing a

climate council to reduce greenhouse gas, with non-college women, those in Penobscot and northern counties, and residents under 65 the least supportive. Building offshore wind turbines is only strongly supported by men, and those 65 and older.

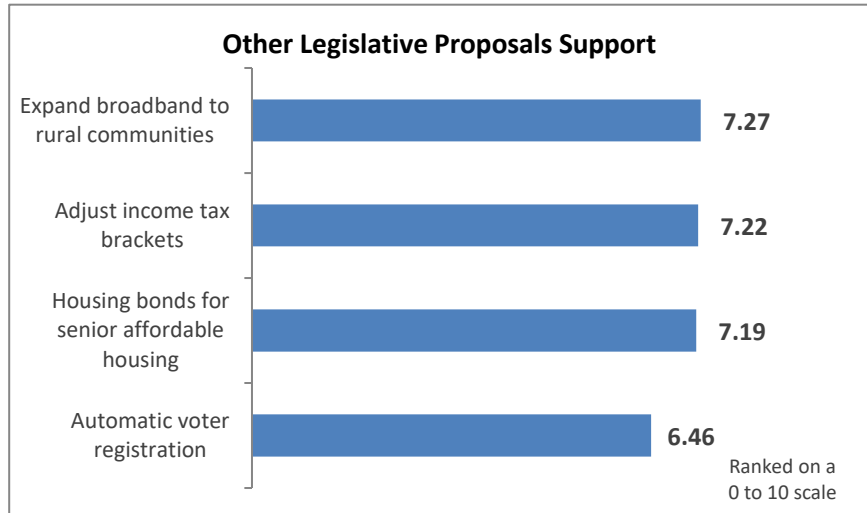


- Three in five (62%) Mainers strongly support expanding access to solar energy, but support weakens among non-college women (55%) and residents of the coastal counties (52%).
- Investing in renewable energy jobs is popular across the state (55%) but is strongest among both non-college men (63%) and college men (61%) as well as in Cumberland County (63%) and among older residents (63%).
- Establishing a council to reduce greenhouse gas has mixed results with non-college men (57%), college women (52%), York County (51%), Cumberland County (57%), Kennebec County (54%), the western region (58%), and older Mainers (59%) on board. Residents of Penobscot (36%) and northern counties (38%) are the most skeptical.
- Similarly, Mainers are also mixed when it comes to building floating offshore wind turbines with non-college men (53%), college men (51%), and those over 65 (52%) strongly supportive of the idea, but non-college women (35%), college women (37%), and residents under 45 (35%) unconvinced.
- Overall, 46% of Mainers support at least three of the environmental proposals tested with just a quarter (25%) not supporting any.

Other policies that focus on issues that affect Mainers, including access to broadband internet, taxes and housing receive strong support across the state.

Adjusting the income tax brackets so Maine’s wealthiest residents pay a greater share receives strong support across the state, particularly among women and with older residents. Expanding broadband internet to rural communities is popular with everyone except college men and residents under 45.

Similarly, funding housing bonds for the construction of new affordable housing units for low-income seniors is popular in most areas of the state, except among younger residents. Residents have mixed opinions when it comes to automatic voter registration but support only dips below forty percent among residents of Penobscot County.



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- A majority of Mainers (54%) strongly support expanding access to broadband internet to rural communities with non-college men (62%), the northern region (64%), and the western region (61%) most supportive.
- Three in five Mainers (60%) support adjusting the income tax brackets so that Maine’s wealthiest residents pay a greater share. Support is strongest among non-college women (64%), college women (63%), Cumberland County (64%), the western region (70%), coastal counties (62%), and with older residents (64%). While the intensity of support is mixed across demographics, support does not dip below 51%.
- Similarly, housing bonds for senior housing (53%) is popular across the state and among most demographic groups, except for residents under 45 where just 39% strongly support the policy.

In conclusion, progressive legislative policies are popular in Maine and legislators will garner strong support from their constituents, including harder-to-convince cohorts which are not typically viewed as being supportive of progressive lawmakers. These polling results show strong support for those policies that have already passed, and equally strong support for a progressive legislative agenda in the coming session.