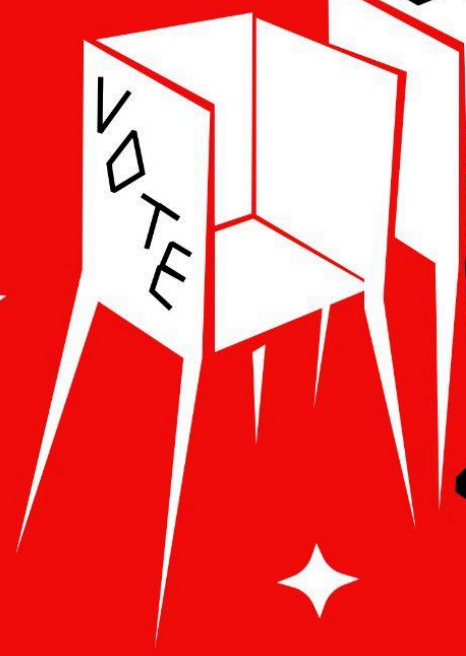




# VOTER GUIDE

June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**MAINE  
DEMOCRATIC  
SOCIALISTS  
of  
AMERICA**



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## Here it is! Your Maine DSA Election Voter Guide for the 2026 Primary!

**We believe it's important to contextualize these races:** Who are these candidates and how did they build power? What are the dynamics of the races they're running in? Will their priorities build socialism, or provide at least a modicum of support for the working class in Maine? We hope this guide will function as an educational tool to understand what it takes to bring working class power to the state, as well as help you fill out your ballot.

**We've got to keep building power to take on these forces of capitalism, and we must keep on organizing to make sure these candidates have viable challengers in the future.** That being said, there are some races with candidates extremely worth voting for, and in many down ballot votes, your vote and the votes of your friends and family can make a big difference in our collective lives.

**Elections are one of the primary avenues through which working people experience politics, but not the only one.** Our economy must be built democratically, by and for working people, not by billionaires for profit. All across the country, DSA is fighting for a stronger labor movement, a Green New Deal, housing and healthcare as human rights, and more. **A better world is possible, but not guaranteed.** [Join or recommit to DSA today to build working class power — together!](#)

### **ENDORSEMENT vs. RECOMMENDATION**

**Maine DSA requires a membership vote to endorse a candidate or ballot question.** An endorsement includes a commitment for the chapter to devote time and member power to that campaign. Our endorsement means something because it signals a priority from our chapter to organize for the election and beyond. That's why we are proud to endorse Troy Jackson for Governor for the Primary as our *only* endorsement.

**Some other races on the ballot are given recommendations.** A recommendation is NOT an endorsement. In these cases, a candidate might not call themselves or be a socialist, but we believe that their platform can materially benefit the working class in Maine (especially in comparison to other candidates in their race). A ballot question might be a more incremental (or even unrelated) step towards a socialist vision for Maine, but a step nonetheless.

**We will NOT give a recommendation outside of Democratic primaries** or where the primary is a single, uncontested Democratic candidate.

All of this voter guide was written, edited, researched, and designed by Maine DSA volunteer member labor. We strive to produce a detailed, educational analysis about the electoral landscape with a material lens in mind. **We hope you find it useful!**

### **Need help voting?**

#### **Voting in Maine**

Who can *register* to vote in Maine? Anyone who is a United States citizen, at least 16 years of age and has established a fixed principal home in Maine.

To actually **vote** in a Referendum or General Election, however, you must be registered in the community where you reside, and be at least 18 years of age. A 17 year old may vote in a Primary Election only if that person will be 18 by the General Election. So, if you're reading this, you likely can—and *should*—vote!

Want to learn how to register to vote as well as get more information on voting, including what forms of identification you need? Check out the link found through the QR code below that directs to [the Secretary of State's Voter Guide](#). The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) offers helpful information (particularly under the *How Do I Register to Vote* section) and links to direct you to the right next step.



Have questions about your **voter registration status**? Your best bet for determining what your registration status is, party affiliation, or otherwise is through your local municipality. You can determine if you're registered to vote at all through [this link here](#).

You can vote early at your city's local town office or town hall during regular business hours 30 days prior to Election Day. You can also check where your regular polling place is [here](#).

## **Primary and general elections**

When most people think about elections in the United States, their mind goes to a democrat and republican competing for victory, but that's not the only form of election.

The above is *usually* referred to as a **general election**, which is where each political party (Democratic, Republican, Green, etc.) submits their candidate. In general elections, you vote for federal, state, and local officials as follows:

- Elected federal officials are U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives to Congress.
- Elected state officials are Governor, Lieutenant Governor, General Assembly, Attorney General, Auditor General, and State Treasurer.
- Elected local officials are county and city officials, judges and magisterial district judges.

Before the general election, there is a **primary election**, which is where members of each respective party vote for the candidate to represent them. Whoever wins the primary election (known simply as a “primary”) for each party will go on to face the other parties’ candidate in the general election. **Maine has semi-open primaries**, so only those who are registered under a certain party can vote in their party’s primary.

If you are not registered Democrat, you will not be able to vote in the Democratic primaries. But if you are unenrolled (not the same as Independent, Green, or No Label), you can still vote in a Democratic primary. **Unenrolled voters can show up to vote early or on election day regardless of the party primary.** That said, if you wish to change your party affiliation, you must re-register at least 15 days prior to the election.

## **Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)**

Ranked-choice voting allows voters to choose their candidates in order of preference, by marking candidates as their first, second, third, and subsequent choices. The votes are tabulated in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there are only two candidates left. The one who is determined to have received the majority of the votes (more than 50%) in the final round is declared the winner.

This is different from previous methods of voting, in which voters choose only one candidate for each office and the winner is determined by plurality (whoever gets the most votes). RCV allows for more specific decision-making when it comes to a crowded field of candidates and can be used strategically to boost a slate of candidates who are more aligned and better options over the less allied ones. This

is what we saw when Zohran Mamdani and Brad Landers co-endorsed each other to beat Andrew Cuomo in New York City's Democratic primary.

*However*, as will be noted below, we may not recommend ranking more than two or even a single candidate depending on the individual race. Why? Well, there may not be more than one or two candidates aligned to the policies and messaging of Maine DSA, and leaving certain candidates off is strategically better.

### **What Are Your Rights?**

- You are **NOT** required to show an ID to vote.
- You **DO NOT** have to leave after the polling hours have ended if you haven't voted yet. If you are in line, **STAY IN LINE**.
- You **CAN** register for voting on election day before the polls close, but you **MUST** bring government issued documents or identification, and proof of residency at your address. Be prepared to wait for a long time.

Onto the voter guide!

# Federal Races

## Senate

Here is one of the most-watched races in the country, and Mainers can expect to be subjected to an onslaught of ads and buried in mailers until November. Buckle up, folks!

Up until April 30, this was shaping up to be a tight race that exemplified the centrist vs. progressive/leftist split taking place within the Democratic party. But that all changed when Chuck Schumer's chosen status quo candidate, Janet Mills, unceremoniously dropped out with a statement not too far off from a text app apology. But not before vetoing a moratorium on data centers in Maine. Maybe preserving her Microsoft stock is more important to her now that she's going to be out of a job.

So, here we're left with oyster farmer and political newcomer, Graham Platner, against the long time government office staffer, David Costello. There's also the write-in candidate, Andrea LaFlamme.

David Costello is coming back after his previous failed Senate campaign against Angus King in 2024 where he was trounced. We hope he has an ice pack ready for another bruising loss again. Though he has never held an elected position before, he has a long history of working within high elected offices in Maryland and Maine, notably for each of Martin O'Malley's terms during his time as mayor of Baltimore and governor of Maryland, who left with a legacy of increasing the militarization of the police force and criminalizing Black neighborhoods. His background in climate-focused governmental departments and NGOs gives us a lot of faith that he would be very strong on the environment and he shares a lot of progressive policy positions. But he also put out a [very weak statement on Gaza](#) and would rather [reform ICE instead of abolish the agency](#) altogether. He's like a slightly edgier version of Janet Mills. If Mills is Kraft Mayo, then Costello is Kewpie.

Meanwhile, union-leader of MSEA-SEIU 1989, Andrea LaFlamme, didn't make the signature requirement to get on the ballot, so now she's running as a write-in candidate and faces the *steepest* of steep hills. It's too bad, really! Out of all the candidates, LaFlamme is the only one who is 100% aligned with DSA and is leading with a class conscious message that's rooted in building the left-labor movement. LaFlamme is an exceptional candidate, and we wouldn't blame you if you voted for her.

It should be a safe assumption that everyone reading this voter guide knows about Graham Platner or at least has heard about him, for better or for worse. Platner skyrocketed into the political limelight after appearing with Bernie Sanders at his Fight the Oligarchy tour in Portland and has continued to draw enormous crowds with his fiery, outspoken critiques of the billionaire class. His populism speaks to the frustrations of the

working class, feeling that the system is set up against us, and he does it with genuine conviction that resonates with regular people - something the Democratic party seems allergic to. He supports Medicare for all, taxing the wealthy, ending the genocide in Gaza, getting private equity out of housing, abolishing ICE, and all the other progressive/leftist policies. It's proof that if you can capture the attention of voters, a leftist platform is popular and deeply felt. This is an exciting campaign that could represent a seismic shift in our country's political movement as the fracture within the Democratic party widens and leaves the uninspiring centrist party leaders on unstable ground.

Look – Platner isn't the perfect candidate. His unforced errors reflect a campaign that needs to tighten up and stop running like they know he's in the lead. We aren't going to rehash all the very real concerns about his time as a Blackwater mercenary, or online posting history, or his [lack of careful language](#). But his campaign is riding a wave of populist anger against MAGA and provides a crucial opportunity to take out the forever unpopular, but still powerful, Susan Collins. If someone is committed to growth and shows a willingness to be better than they have been, then we have to take this chance while it's available.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Graham Platner for U.S. Senate.**

## Congressional District 1

The race for Maine's first Congressional district is uncontested. Maine's current ME-1 Congresswomen, Chellie Pingree, has been in her seat since 2009, and while we strongly believe in term limits, especially in safe districts like hers, Pingree is a strong Representative for District 1 in Washington.

Pingree has consistently voted against legislation that would allow for more foreign military intervention. She has opposed operations in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, is clear in her messaging that Israel is committing a genocide in Gaza, and refuses to take any AIPAC money. Her statements are backed up by her votes to stop sending weapons to Israel, voting against a bill in 2019 (and again in 2024) that would have publicly opposed efforts to boycott Israel, and co-sponsoring a bill with DSA member Congresswoman Rachida Tlaib that condemned Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. However, her office did call police on [non-violent protesters in November 2023 who organized a sit-in for Gaza](#), and refused to drop the charges.

Though Pingree is adamantly opposed to ICE, she has not called for abolition of the agency. She has however proposed, and supported, amendments to DHS funding bills which would withhold taxpayer funds until significant changes and accountability happened. She recently visited the Dilley Detention Center in Texas and advocated for the successful release of 19-year-old asylum seeker Olivia Andre.

Pingree serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the Committee on Agriculture. She is a huge supporter of the Farm Bill, and advocates for expanding small-scale organic farming, climate change defense and protections (including net-zero agriculture), and food waste prevention programs.

While she is not always as left as we would like her to be, she has a consistent record of advocating for progressive policies, and (for the most part) has shown she is willing to change her mind and adapt her beliefs to the current political climate.

**Because this race is non-competitive, we ARE NOT making a recommendation, but we wanted to highlight where Representative Pingree has stood on important issues to our members and organization.**

## Congressional District 2

**RCV: Paige Loud #1, Matt Dunlap #2, and DO NOT rank any others**

The race for Maine's second congressional district became a wide-open contest when the incumbent, Democrat Jared Golden, announced he would not seek another term in congress out of frustration with the increasing levels of [hyper-partisanship](#) (aka he's tired of being held accountable for breaking party lines and joining Republicans on votes). Golden had a primary challenger in former Maine Secretary of State Matt Dunlap, who had already been in the race to take on Golden, but now other challengers have emerged – progressive social worker Paige Loud, State Senator Joe Baldacci, and perennial candidate Jordan Wood, who abandoned his run for the Democratic nomination for US Senate when the second district seat opened up.

The second district is by far the more conservative and rural of Maine's two congressional districts, consisting of the vast majority of the state's land outside the southern, coastal cities. Trump has won CD2 three times, but the district has been represented by conservative Democrat Golden since 2018 as he's been able to narrowly hold onto the seat each election. The Democratic nominee in 2026 will likely face the far-right former Governor, and [Florida resident](#), Paul LePage, in November.

From the Democratic candidates, Paige Loud is easily the most left-wing, and a DSA member. Loud is a recent social work master's graduate and a member of the Cherokee Nation from a working class background. Her platform is clear and strong in her support for Medicare for All, universal childcare, ending imperial wars, guaranteeing housing, all of the good stuff. Even more impressively, she brings the platform local by supporting the struggle for indigenous sovereignty in Maine as a high priority. When she speaks, it's with sharp clarity about the issues. Paige's campaign can hopefully bring a leftist platform

more into the mainstream conversation, and we think she deserves your first-place ranking.

**We RECOMMEND you rank Paige Loud #1 on your ballot.**

Where Loud represents the activist left in the race, Matt Dunlap occupies a more mainstream progressive lane, having launched his run as a liberal challenger to Rep. Golden. Dunlap has been active in Maine politics since 1996, when he served four terms in the Maine House of Representatives, five non-consecutive terms as Secretary of State from 2006 through 2020, and as state auditor from 2022 to 2024. Dunlap has done well for fundraising with almost \$630k, but faces an uphill battle against Joe Baldacci (more on him next) in the polls. He has been endorsed by the National Nurses United union and has received sizable spending in support from the Free and Fair Democracy PAC, a fairly progressive PAC. Dunlap supports Medicare for All and is running on a pro-worker, pro-democracy, anti-Trump platform, and would likely be a reliable ally to the center-left side of congress. Though Dunlap lags behind Joe Baldacci in polling, he could pull off an upset if he's ranked highly on, and Baldacci is left off of, enough ballots.

**We RECOMMEND you rank Matt Dunlap #2 on your ballot.**

State Senator Joe Baldacci, brother of former Governor John Baldacci, is the establishment Democratic candidate in the race. He has the support of national Democrats in the form of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which has been a [subject of controversy with the Democrats](#) throwing their support behind a candidate that has not yet won his party's primary. Given the make up of the district, the Democratic establishment can only see a moderate challenging LePage in November and seem to have put their finger on the scale so the district doesn't flip far-right. This could be a compelling argument in any other year, but we're in an election season where MAGA is predicted to struggle in Maine as the country is mired in an affordability crisis, and voters are looking for champions for the working class to uplift their frustrations. Baldacci is anything but this. During his time as a State Senator, he voted against taxing the wealthy and corporations, against capping rent hikes for mobile home renters, and is supported by JStreet, a liberal Zionist PAC. Baldacci's on the side of the corporations and landowners, and we expect the same if he's in congress. Leave him off your ballot to help elevate Dunlap and Loud.

**We recommend that you DO NOT rank Joe Baldacci.**

We saved the best for last as Jordan Wood rounds out the race. Wood is running with a message to get big money out of politics, and boldly touts how he "spearheaded the No Corporate PAC Pledge" against the wishes of the establishment Democrats, and then went on to be the Vice President of End Citizens United, a PAC that was designed to spend money in elections... in order to keep PACs from spending money in elections... To no one's

surprise, that approach [didn't work out so great for them](#) and they've since shifted their focus to lobbying. But it's ok! Wood is committed to banning corporate and wealthy donors from buying our elections with dark money. In fact, it's so important to him that it's the first plank of his platform!

That said, it's a little strange for someone to run on a platform to end big money and PACs in elections and then also take fundraising from big money and PACs – in some cases, both at the same time! Like with the Tax PAC, which has [no information on its website](#), nor does it readily disclose who's funding it. If you're willing to go down the rabbit hole on the Federal Election Commission website, there's a lot of crossover with the Patriotic Millionaires group, which also supports Wood's campaign, and is headed by a former BlackRock managing director. It's nice that there are millionaires and billionaires who recognize the economy is rigged for the wealthy and they should pay more taxes, but sometimes we want to go, "maybe you're the problem?"

Wood was previously Rep. Katie Porter's (D-CA) chief of staff and has never held elected office, but his endorsements boast his connection to Washington's liberal Zionist bloc in the House. It's hard to take the rest of Wood's progressive platform seriously.

**We recommend that you DO NOT rank Jordan Wood.**

## Statewide Races

### Governor

**RCV: Troy Jackson #1, Shenna Bellows #2, Hannah Pingree #3, and DO NOT rank any others.**

While not getting as much of the attention compared to the Senate race from Mainers, the Governor's race this year still carries a lot of weight as the candidate that emerges from the Democratic primary will likely be our next governor. There are five candidates: Troy Jackson, Shenna Bellows, Hannah Pingree, Nirav Shah, and Angus King III.

Troy Jackson is a 5th-generation logger from Alligash, a union member, and the former Maine Senate President. Troy is a progressive fighter who has spent his entire political career standing up for working people. On May 6th, after a lengthy consideration from our members, **Maine DSA voted to endorse Troy Jackson for Governor**, joining 40 labor unions and Bernie Sanders among his list of campaign partners.

Troy Jackson has a long history of fighting for union and worker rights, higher wages, the

right to an abortion, free school meals, childcare affordability, publicly funded elections, and much more. If elected, Troy has promised an expansive platform which includes universal childcare, doubling the millionaire's tax to 4%, and rolling back LePage's destructive tax cuts to the wealthy that Mills' administration refused to roll back. He also promises to hold ICE agents accountable and is the only candidate who has called for the abolishment of ICE and the prosecution of ICE agents. To see a more comprehensive list of his plans for Maine, see his website [here](#).

**Maine DSA ENDORSED Troy Jackson, rank him #1 on your ballot.**

Shenna Bellows is the current Secretary of State of Maine. She is a former ACLU advocate and director. She was an early supporter of LGBTQ rights (in the context of the Maine State Government) and has fought for higher wages for workers, abortion access, and generally has a progressive record. We also commend her for her fight against fascism. She tried to kick Trump off the ballot due to the Jan 6th attempted coup, blocked ICE from getting undercover Maine license plates, is currently standing up against Trump's corrupt DOJ and has been an extremely important part of public funding for candidates in Maine.

If elected, Shenna Bellows has also promised Universal Childcare, higher taxes on the wealthy, and what she calls a "New Deal for Maine," more details [here](#). It's also worth noting that Bellows has been a consistent ally to labor, earning perfect voting scores from the Maine AFL-CIO, and MSEA-SEIU 1989 has encouraged their members to highly rank Bellows at #2 on the ballot.

**We RECOMMEND you rank Shenna Bellows #2 on your ballot.**

Our last recommendation for a ranked candidate is Hannah Pingree. Hannah is the daughter of Chellie Pingree, CD1's congressional representative. She is the former speaker of the Maine House and a cabinet member in the Mills Administration.

Hannah has a history of supporting public financing laws for political offices and has been a reliable vote for climate-focused legislation. As governor, she promises to continue her work on supporting clean energy for Maine. She is a strong supporter of Tribal sovereignty, and she also promises to tax the wealthy, but with her wealthy donors, it is unclear whether she really intends to follow through with that promise.

We believe that if elected governor, she would govern slightly to the left of Mills despite her endorsement. Additionally, we believe she would be a better alternative to Nirav Shah or Angus King III due to her having a relatively progressive legislative record.

**We RECOMMEND you rank Hannah Pingree #3 on your ballot.**

You might be wondering, why are you not recommending a ranking for Nirav Shah or Angus King III? That is a good question, and we will happily give you the short versions.

Nirav Shah is the former CDC director of Maine. A large portion of his donors are wealthy and out of state, and he also takes money for 314 PAC, which is known to hide AIPAC money. Additionally, he has said he believes in “the economics of the Chicago School,” which is shorthand for the radical libertarian view of economics that, as socialists, we strongly condemn and critique. The last thing Maine needs after the failures of the Mills and LePage administrations is a more wishy-washy view of the “free market” being our savior. While we do appreciate his term as CDC director during the COVID pandemic (in which Maine’s response was better than the national average), he has fashioned himself to be progressive, but because he has no legislative record, the only thing we can judge him on is his financial backers and statements to the contrary.

**We recommend that you DO NOT rank Nirav Shah.**

Noted [Zamboni driver](#) and [cow poop aficionado](#), Angus King III is the son of incumbent Senator Angus King Jr. He is one of the founders of Peaks Renewables. He has never held any elected or public office. Throughout debates and forums, he uses the leadership of his company to justify his run for public office. As socialists, we strongly condemn the idea that running a business or being the son of a sitting Senator means you can properly represent the state and working people. History shows it is often the opposite. He is running an extremely boring pro-status quo centrist campaign. He is opposed to taxes on the wealthy, indifferent to a state-funded or subsidized childcare system, or really any progressive change Maine desperately needs. Also, we hate nepotism and the whole idea of political dynasties.

**We recommend that you DO NOT rank Angus King III.**

## State Senate Races

We are not issuing any recommendations for State Senate District 1-20, 22-29, or 31-34 due to these races having uncontested Democratic primaries.

### State Senate District 21

(covering Lewiston)

The seat for State Senate District 21 is up for grabs this cycle with the announcement that the longtime state legislator, Margaret “Peggy” Rotundo, would not seek re-election.

In a district where Democrats have held onto the seat safely since 2014, in fact no Republican has registered to run in their primary this year, this election is shaping up to finish this June. Running for the open seat, we have the current House District representative (HD 95), Mana Abdi, facing off against the head of the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce, Shanna Cox.

In addition to heading up the Chamber of Commerce in Lewiston, Cox has also served on the Lewiston Planning Board and has previously voiced support for [allowing AirBnb to have a greater footprint in the city](#). Her campaign website has a lot of very nice platform points that read progressive-ish, though sometimes veer into platitudes, and she even co-authored an OpEd in the Portland Press Herald about why ICE is bad for business in Maine. Therein lies the rub – her perspective is always through the lens of commerce and what’s good for business. While we have no doubt that she’s well-intentioned, Cox is pro-business minded and that historically comes at the expense of workers.

Mana Abdi, on the other hand, is a young progressive who has consistently been a strong ally to workers and immigrants during her time in the House. From voting to extend basic labor rights to agricultural workers (vetoed by Mills), taxing the rich, protecting trans students in sports, and holding predatory mobile home landlords accountable, Abdi has been unshakable and she would be a fantastic addition to the State Senate to maintain the Democratic majority and bolster the left flank.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Mana Abdi for State Senate District 21.**

## State Senate District 30

**(covering Gorham and part of Scarborough)**

State Senate District 30 covers Gorham and part of Scarborough, which has been represented by Senator Stacy Brenner. The race is between two excellent progressive candidates, Eleanor Sato and Sophia Warren (not to be confused with the cartoonist, Sofia Warren, who created the amazing graphic memoir, [Radical: My Year With a Socialist Senator](#)). Both candidates have been effective legislators by standing up for workers, fighting against data centers, and standing against ICE.

Warren was a staffer on the 2020 Bernie Campaign, and during her time in the Maine House, she has worked on clean energy legislation, consumer protections, and justice reform. Her biggest achievement was being a key supporter of LD 1777, which closed loopholes that corporations were using to keep energy prices artificially high, and could [save Mainers over \\$1.2 billion](#) over 16 years.

Sato is a former professional dancer and bartender, and is currently a freshman representative in the Maine House. In her campaign for the House, she was endorsed by

the Maine People's Alliance and Maine AFL-CIO, and has since been an ally on worker rights, with immigrants against ICE, and wants to take on skyrocketing housing costs. However there's little information about her State Senate campaign, which leaves us in a difficult position about recommendations.

Given that Warren has a longer tenure in the House, her work on Bernie's campaign, and endorsement of Troy Jackson, we feel more inclined to lean towards her campaign. That said, Sato would be another great addition to the Senate.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Sophia Warren for State Senate District 30.**

## State Senate District 35

**(covering Eliot, Kittery, Ogunquit, South Berwick, and York)**

State Senate District 35 covers York County towns Eliot, Kittery, Ogunquit, South Berwick, and York. Democrat Mark Lawrence has represented this seat in the Maine State Senate since 2018 and is not allowed to run again due to Maine's term limit laws. This district has a long history of being represented by Democrats, with many Democratic candidates winning over their Republican opponents by landslides for the last decade. Two candidates are running for this seat in the Democratic Primary: Deane Rykerson and Michele Meyer.

Rykerson is an Architect and former Maine House Representative. He served as the Representative for House District 1 from 2012-2020, which covers much of Southern York County near Kittery. Rykerson's record in the State House is fairly progressive, and we like what we see on his campaign website. He has supported bills that support labor protections like LD402 (which failed in 2020), backs Universal Healthcare, and on his campaign website states that he has supported farm workers since the 1960's. He is a strong supporter of a Maine Climate Superfund, which would fund renewable energy projects across the state, and believes that public transportation must be improved for environmental reasons. He also interestingly states on his website that the President should be elected by the people, not the Electoral college - we agree. Rykerson is a true Berniecrat, and has been endorsed by former Maine Senate President and current Maine DSA endorsed candidate for governor, Troy Jackson, and current Maine Senate President, Mattie Daughtry, for this Senate race.

Meyer is a Nurse and owner and operator of a family farm in Eliot. She is currently serving in her fourth term in the Maine State House of Representatives serving District 151 for two terms and District 2 for the other 2 terms. She has served as the Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee where she has advocated for bills which expand access to child welfare programs, healthcare, and services for disabled and elderly residents by addressing food and housing needs. Like Rykerson, Meyer has supported

many progressive bills, mainly focusing on increased funding for education and environmental protections. She is a Clean Elections candidate - which we love. However, we *don't* love that her platform is not listed anywhere on her website.

Meyer is endorsed by current Senate District 35 Senator Mark Lawrence, Planned Parenthood, and received a 100% on the 2025 AFL-CIO scorecard. Finally, over on her Instagram, Meyer publicly stated her disappointment with Janet Mills' veto of the AI data center memorandum and vowed to overturn her veto, applauded Mills' decision to drop out of the Senate Race, and frequently posted about her opposition to ICE's Operation "Catch of the Day" and murder of Reneé Good.

We believe that both of these candidates are strong options for Senate District 35, but ultimately lean towards Rykerson based on his alignment with our other aligned and endorsed candidates.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Deane Rykerson for State Senate District 35.**

## State House Races

For any races that are not listed here, you can assume that we are not issuing a recommendation for it. There's a lot of them.

### State House District 23

**(covering part of Bangor)**

The seat for House District 23 is up for grabs this cycle as the incumbent, Amy Roeder, is stepping down to run an uncontested race for State Senate District 9. The winner of the Democratic primary in June will go on to face the Republican candidate and [anti-mask](#) weirdo, Brian Ames. Democrats represent a large majority of the district, so it's likely that the winner of the Democratic primary will go on to Augusta. Running to replace Roeder is Bangor School Board Vice Chair Katie Brydon, Former State Rep Victoria Kornfield, and Joschka Winterling.

During her time in the State House, Kornfield was solidly moderate. She would vote well on most issues, but there were others such as her voting against allowing public school teachers to negotiate planning and preparation periods in their contracts and against making public sector arbitration wages binding. These anti-union votes are enough to give us some pause.

Brydon's time on Bangor School Board has positioned her as a progressive with a strong record on protecting trans students and championing accessibility in the classroom. Though her legislative history isn't as long as Kornfield, we have no doubt that Brydon will bring a much needed perspective and proponent of public education to the State House.

Joschka Winterling has previously ran for Bangor City Council twice and lost, and seems like a very nice person. He talks about fighting for the working class in Bangor and his perspective growing up with the consequences of LePage's disastrous Medicaid policies. But there's so little about his platform or campaign that it's hard for us to feel confident making a recommendation for him.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Katie Brydon for State House District 23.**

## State House District 38

**(covering Brooks, part of Frankfort, Jackson, Knox, Monroe, Swanville, Thorndike, Unity and Waldo)**

District 38 is currently represented by Republican Benjamin Hynes, who will be the opponent for one of these Democratic candidates in November, and has held onto the seat with relative comfort since redistricting in 2022. The district is a pretty narrow split in terms of party preference with registered Republicans just outnumbering registered Democrats, so this will not be a slam dunk district for either candidate. We have a cyber security specialist and gubernatorial dropout, Jason Cherry, and Unitarian Universalist, Cayla Miller.

Jason Cherry had originally been seeking the governor's seat in the Democratic primary, but had to drop out after he was unable to reach the 2,000 required signatures to get on the ballot. So now he's pivoting to running for House District 38 and says that he has "received a great deal of [support from independent and conservative voters](#)" and hopes to "fulfill their expectations for fairness, common sense, and reasonable debate" in the House. The "fairness" and "common sense" buzzwords have become a [dogwhistle within MAGA](#) and for those on the right, and Cherry's background in the FBI is extremely "sus" as the kids say. His platform is filled with crank voting reforms that oscillate between nice (expanding rank choice voting) and insane (a Reddit-style online government forum that costs users \$5).

Cayla Miller, on the other hand, is leading with a real platform that's rooted in the material conditions of working people in Maine. Given her time in the Unitarian Universalist church, we have no doubt that Miller will stick to her ethical compass and provide a voice to support medicare for all, tribal sovereignty, and basic rights for all people. Having a real platform that regular folks can see themselves in is a huge leap

compared to her opponent in this election, and represents the best chance at potentially flipping this seat.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Cayla Miller for State House District 38.**

## State House District 41

**(covering Camden and Rockport)**

House District 41 is up for grabs this election as the current representative, Victoria Doudera, is termed out. In a district that leans strongly Democrat, it's a pretty good chance that the winner of the Democratic primary will carry onto a win in November. This primary sees two progressive candidates in Joshua Gerritsen and Marcus Mrowka competing for this seat.

Both candidates here expressly support medicare for all, universal childcare, creating a public electric utility company, and taxing the wealthy, and it seems like the question comes down to whose background you support the most.

Gerritsen is a documentary filmmaker and has served on the Lincolnville Select Board for six, the Waldo County Budget Committee for six years, and the Mid-coast Solid Waste Board of Directors and the Broadband Committee as chair. Mrowka has served on the Five Town CSD School Board and comes from a union background as a communications director for the national SEIU and American Federation of Teachers.

If we have to make a recommendation in this race, Mrowka's labor background would be the thing that tips the scales in his favor. But we could also see Gerritsen being a solid presence in the House. We don't think you can go wrong with either candidate here.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Marcus Mrowka for State House District 41.**

## State House District 43

**(covering Cushing, part of Owls Head, South Thomaston, St. George and Thomaston)**

House District 43 is another seat that's up for grabs after the incumbent, Ann Matlack, decided to run for the open District 12 State Senate seat. Registered Democrats hold a fairly sizable lead over Republicans here, so it should be a safe bet that the winner of the primary will go on to win in November.

Rhiannon Hampson is the former Maine State Director of the USDA, appointed under Biden, and briefly worked in Chellie Pingree's office as the District Representative for Agricultural and Environmental issues where she helped set up economic programs for

farming, forestry, and fishing industries. Her platform is more set up in the liberal, small business direction and doesn't include taxing the wealthy or pushing for medicare for all.

Peter Jenks, a former Episcopal priest and former candidate, [dropped out of the race on May 17th](#). We had already started writing this section before he dropped out, so we're keeping it.

Because this race is non-competitive, **we ARE NOT making a recommendation.**

## State House District 59

**(covering part of Augusta)**

The current representative of House District 59, David Rollins, is not seeking re-election this year after winning 2024, so now we've got a competitive election. This district is pretty strong for Democrats and the winner of this primary will face the Republican candidate, John Reny (no, not *that* John Reny).

Thomas Keefe is a retired history professor who is running on a platform. We assume. He has no campaign materials, no history in elected office, and seemingly no base, though he did run for Lakewood City Council at least once in Colorado. His academic background is in genocide studies, which is cool. This is about all we have on Keefe.

Running against Keefe is Katrina Ray-Saulis, who [does have a platform](#), and it's really strong. She's an active union member with MSEA-SEIU 1989 and SOMSEA, and centers organizing at the core of her campaign. She's been endorsed by the Maine AFL-CIO and Maine People's Alliance, which is enough for us!

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Katrina Ray-Saulis for State House District 59.**

## State House District 95

**(covering part of Lewiston)**

The previous elected for House District 95, Mana Abdi (who we recommended above), is leaving her seat to run for State Senate. There's a theme with these open House races. So now we have a contested election for the Primary, and the winner will likely go on to win in November given that Democrats vastly outnumber Republicans here. But this is a tough race for us.

Matthew Kershaw is the Maine House Democratic Campaign Committee's recruited candidate and one could say that he's trying very hard to do the whole Graham Platner thing, but can't quite nail it. His platform even reads like Platner's, but it's also missing the

point. Though it brings a lot of very nice working person references and an “affordability” message, the actual policies within those are scant or don’t address the systemic issues that are affecting people. For example, workers are struggling to afford their housing, so Kershaw’s solution is “[Policies that actually help working people, not just look good on paper.](#)” No further elaboration. He also lists [education reform as a key priority](#), but doesn’t directly reference public education in his messaging. He instead uses language that runs close to “school choice,” which in the education space refers to privatized or anti-union education. This is the problem – he gives no explanation about what he’s referring to and it could mean anything. The lack of specificity is troubling given that he seems to walk the moderate line.

By all accounts, the other candidate in the race, Kiernan Majerus-Collins, an immigration and civil rights attorney, would be an easy recommendation here. He’s clear in his pro-worker policies to raise the minimum wage, strengthening tenants rights and establishing a right to housing, expanding public transit, and banning AI data centers. The list of his endorsements are also strong from Mana Abdi, Our Revolution, and Community Action Alliance. For better or for worse, Majerus-Collins’ reputation precedes him in Lewiston political circles. He’s been an active presence in the Somali community, and has served in local politics on the Lewiston School Committee and as the chair of the Lewiston City Democratic Committee.

It’s worth noting that he moved to the district to run for this open seat after missing out on the special election in District 94 (also covering Lewiston), where Scott Harriman ultimately won. It’s not necessarily carpet bagging, and not necessarily a bad thing either. Where things really get messy is when he raised over \$175K in 2018 through [questionable messaging](#), which made it seem like donations were going to support a candidate, but ultimately couldn’t because of Clean Election laws. Those funds ended up going into the Lewiston Democratic Committee, of which he was the chair. But the biggest red flag is in Majerus-Collins’ inter-personal disputes, most notably when he was recorded [harassing a candidate for Lewiston City Council at their door](#) in 2019 for running against another Democratic candidate. It’s like a scene out of *VEEP*, but instead of being sharp political humor, it’s kind of bad and not very funny.

If we can learn anything from Platner’s campaign, it’s that people are messy, but have the ability to better themselves. We can chalk these incidents up as growing experiences and hope that Majerus-Collins will lead by a better example going forward. The alternative in Kershaw is a decent candidate, but we don’t trust that he’s going to push pro-working class politics forward at the State level.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Kiernan Majerus-Collins for State House District 95.**

## State House District 135

**(covering part of Kennebunk)**

Guess what? The incumbent for this district is running for an open State Senate seat, so we have a competitive election for the now-vacant House seat. That's right! Running for the Democratic primary is Rachel Phipps and Lisa Joy Pratt, and the winner will cruise to Augusta in November as there's no Republican challenger.

Phipps is a retired social worker and Maine People's Alliance member, who has advocated for stronger insurance reform as a result of [living without health care due to the costs](#), and has called on Susan Collins to [reject Palantir money to fund immigrants rights programs and health care](#). In 2021, she also joined a group of community advocates to [oppose a right-wing recall](#) of an openly gay member on the Kennebunk School Board. She doesn't have a campaign website.

Lisa Joy Pratt is on the Kennebunk Select Board and is making climate projects her main focus. But apart from that, she really doesn't have anything else. No positions on wages, rent control, medicare, taxes, land rights. Just focusing on salt water and flooding preparation, as well as drought resilience. Both are very good things, but they feel too narrowly focused on a very specific slice of a much, much larger pie. They're especially out of place considering that key issues in housing and healthcare are going to be coming up very soon in the State.

Despite Phipps not having much of a campaign presence, we feel that she'll be more aligned with a pro-worker platform in Augusta.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote for Rachel Phipps for State House District 135.**

## Municipal/County Races

### Cumberland County

#### Cumberland County Commission District 3

**(covering Brunswick, Cumberland, Chebeague Island, Freeport, Long Island, Harpswell, North Yarmouth, Pownal, and Yarmouth)**

Fun fact – County Governments are Maine's oldest forms of electoral governments, dating back to the 1600s! They're also one of the less powerful and least competitive electoral races in the state. County Commissioners oversee a very limited scope of county functions, but the most notable ones are public health services, disbursement of grants and federal funds, and the sheriff and county jails. This is why the County

Commission was thrust into the spotlight around the fight to end the jail's contract with ICE in Cumberland County. But due to the narrow scope of responsibilities and limited power, these races are often filled with candidates running non-campaigns either unopposed or relying on their personal connections and luck to push them to a win. As such, it's often difficult to find much to go off of for recommendations.

Amy Leshure comes from the world of business finance and was elected as a write-in candidate to the Damariscotta Select Board in 2017, where [she introduced a ban on cannabis edibles](#) in the town. She resigned in 2019 when she moved out of town. Joel Mahaffey was the owner of Foundation Brewing Company, a local brewery in Portland, before exiting and transferring ownership. He seems like a nice guy with honest intentions, but admitted to [not knowing how the county government works](#), which doesn't look great honestly when it's the seat you're running for.

Neither of these candidates really pass the bar for us. We can't trust that Leshure is going to be an ally on abolition or even reforming the carceral system (one of the only reasons we'd even consider a County strategy as socialists), and Mahaffey could use a bit more time researching what county government actually does.

**We ARE NOT making a recommendation in this race.**

## Cumberland County Commission District 4

**(covering precinct 5-1 in Portland, Westbrook, South Portland, and Cape Elizabeth)**

In District 4, the incumbent Patricia (Patti) Smith is running against an assistant at the Maine Educational Research Institute, Sigrid Olson. Smith, the current seat holder, comes from local politics in South Portland, having previously served as a council member and mayor, and seems ok based on her past votes to ban a tar sands oil pipeline in South Portland as well as ending the county's contract with ICE. She has also expressed support for restorative justice over incarceration as the county's approach to public safety and jailing.

Olson doesn't have much in the way of a digital footprint, but she has written an opinion piece about the lack of transparency and engagement in the County Commission, as well as a letter to the editor expressing support for Platner in the Portland Press Herald. Her desire to make the County Commission more visible and communicative is admirable, but misses the target in terms of what an impactful platform could be.

Smith brings an abundance of knowledge in local politics, which is evident when you listen to her speak, and has been a good voice on the Commission. Based on her track record, we foresee her being more or less aligned with the things that are important to our members. That said, Olson seems fine as well.

**We RECOMMEND that you vote to re-elect Patti Smith to Cumberland County Commission District 4.**

## **Cumberland County Commission District 5**

**(covering the majority of Portland and Peaks Island)**

Though Marpheen Chann is running unopposed for County Commissioner in District 5, [his platform](#) to oppose ICE and reform the county's systemic approach to incarceration is one that we can get behind and believe it's worth adding a note to highlight it.

## **District Attorney**

The concept of a progressive district attorney is a bit of an oxymoron. By its nature, district attorneys are prosecutors that carry out the work of the US criminal legal system, which targets Black and Brown communities, and disadvantages the poor and working class by design. The system is inherently rotten, no matter how much police accountability is enforced or reform is pushed. This is why it's hard for a socialist organization to make a recommendation for these races unless a candidate is calling for the complete overhaul of the US criminal legal system. But we'll still break down the candidates running all the same.

Jackie Sartoris is the incumbent seeking re-election and promised to run her office with a "[more progressive approach](#)" during her first election in 2022, where the right-wing frothed at the mouth over the support of George Soros' PAC. Since then, she's taken a lot of flak from right-wing reactionaries for what they perceive as her progressivism.

Sartoris ran on a progressive platform and promised to take a restorative approach to criminalization, rather than a pro-carceral one, but has backtracked into policies that "[leverage](#)" unhoused people into accepting services by moving them through the court system. The result of this approach has left the mental health docket trying to identify resources that don't exist for defendants that probably shouldn't be moved under this legal system, which is exactly what the previous DA, Jonathan Sahrbeck who Sartoris defeated, was doing. Under Sartoris, her use of the mental health docket and drug court has left the most vulnerable population stranded in an unforgiving legal system. Though she has supported prosecuting ICE agents that used illegal force during the big surge in Portland this past January, the lack of prosecutions signal this was not really a consideration from Sartoris.

In a "the call is coming from inside the house" moment, Sartoris' opponent, Valerie Adams, comes from her very own office and told her directly that she would challenge her if Sartoris decided to run for re-election. There's disagreement about whether a defense

attorney, who previously ran for DA before he [dropped out due to sexual assault allegations](#), was in the room with Adams during that conversation, but ultimately Sartoris fired Adams that day. Prior to her time as the Assistant District Attorney, Adams has worked as a criminal defense attorney, has done pro-bono work for the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, and was a town councilor in Cape Elizabeth. Her [platform](#) is almost entirely about taking jabs at Jackie Sartoris, but she does have a plank about expanding diversion opportunities to keep first-time and low-level offenders from getting caught up in the legal system. Which is also very anti-Sartoris coded. In the end, what she's promising is to make the DA's office run more efficiently in an office that some have alleged has been a black hole of mismanagement.

Also looming over this race is former Republican District Attorney Stephanie Anderson. While Anderson is backing Valerie Adams and has donated to her campaign, she has taken out papers to run as an independent candidate. At a meeting of the Cumberland County Republicans, Anderson stated that she will run in November if Adams doesn't win the primary in June.

The question comes down to – is the devil you know better than the devil you don't? Neither candidate here is offering a radical vision to transform the criminal legal system, or even to more progressively reform it. One promises continuation of good policies, and the other promises implementation of them. Go with your gut here, but keep fighting for a world where we go beyond restorative justice to reparative justice.

As a note: DSA's current Socialists in Office have split their endorsements in this race - Rep. Grayson Lookner and Portland Councilor Kate Sykes have endorsed Jackie Sartoris, whereas Portland Councilor Wes Pelletier has backed Valerie Adams.

**We ARE NOT making a recommendation in this race.**

## **Biddeford/Saco**

### **Charter Commission**

On November 4, 2025, voters in Biddeford approved creating a Charter Commission to revise the city's charter, so this is the first step of that process where one person from each of the 7 wards will be elected to serve as members of this commission. It turns out that exactly one person from each ward is running, which means there aren't any contested elections here. 7 people will win their 7 seats. This is a full year process for the commission, so we'll see you back here in 2027!

**We ARE NOT making a recommendation in any of these races.**

# York County

## York County Commission District 2

(covering Arundel, Biddeford, Kennebunk, and Kennebunkport)

York County Commission District 2 is finally having an open election now that Richard Dutremble is stepping down after holding the seat for 20+ years. Term limits, anyone? This brings us to the only competitive York County Commission election where two former Biddeford councilors will face off against each other.

On the one hand, we have Roch Angers, who is no stranger to Biddeford politics having been on Biddeford City Council for 4 non-consecutive terms, the Planning Board, and comes from a long family legacy of Biddeford politics. He also has the distinction of surviving attempted removal from the Planning Board in 2025 due to a Code of Ethics breach over a proposed research pier on the Saco river. We won't go into specifics because it's very "local-politics-inside-baseball" but suffice to say, it's not as exciting as it sounds. Angers is your typical "[self-described moderate and fiscal conservative](#)" who simply is unable to not be involved in all local politics at all times.

On the other hand, we have Doris Ortiz, who had to give up her At-Large Biddeford Council seat when she moved out of the city. Ortiz has been more or less aligned to progressive issues while on council and does seem to genuinely want to engage her constituents in work at the county level. We don't have much to go off of in terms of a platform, so for that reason it's hard for us to feel confident making a recommendation here. Ortiz will almost certainly be better than Angers, but that's about all we can say.

**We ARE NOT making a recommendation in this race.**