

2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT CARD



MAINE LEGISLATURE BILLS

Affected Issues	Legislation	Summary	UWSM Action	Final Status
Homelessness / Housing / ALICE	LD 641: An Act to Support Diversion Efforts to Prevent Homelessness in Maine	This bill seeks to expand Maine's Housing Problem Solving (HPS) program by doubling its funding to \$1.5 million. The HPS program is designed to prevent homelessness before it starts by providing targeted financial assistance and support to individuals and families facing a housing crisis. Currently, HPS operates with a budget of \$750,000 and successfully helped 519 Mainers stay housed in 2024 alone.	UWSM introduced bill with Rep. Marc Malon. UWSM submitted testimony in support.	● The bill was carried over into the next session.
Housing & Zoning	LD 128: An Act to Support Permitting of Certain Multifamily Housing Developments Under the Site Location of Development Laws	This bill amends the definition of "subdivision" for purposes of the site location of development laws to allow lots that include detached residential housing designed to accommodate up to 4 families, including accessory dwelling units, instead of just single-family housing. This bill also specifies that rules made by the Board of Environmental Protection to permit, by rule, any class of activities that would otherwise require individual issuance of a permit or approval by the board are routine technical rules.	UWSM supported the bill.	● This bill has been Tabled.
Youth Opportunity & ALICE	LD 193: An Act to Fund Students in Maine Schools Who Are Experiencing Homelessness	This bill amends the school funding formula to add an additional weight of 0.50 per student experiencing homelessness. This additional weight is applied to the per-pupil count in both kindergarten to grade 8 and grades 9 to 12 funding calculations, aiming to increase financial support for schools with homeless students.	UWSM supported the bill.	● This bill did not move forward this session.
Mental Health & Substance Use	LD 219: An Act to Limit Hypodermic Apparatus Exchange Programs to a One-for-one Exchange	This bill proposes changing Maine's Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) from the current 1:100 exchange model to a 1:1 exchange policy. Under the existing system, individuals can receive up to 100 clean syringes per visit, which aligns with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the transmission of blood-borne diseases.	UWSM submitted testimony neither for nor against.	● This bill did not move forward this session.

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Housing/Child care	LD 483: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Secure Prosperity for Maine Families and Businesses	The bill proposes a \$300 million bond to support four core areas: affordable housing construction and tax credits, rural rental and first-time homebuyer programs, public-private partnerships to expand child care access, and critical water and sewer infrastructure needed to enable development.	UWSM supported the bill.	● The bill was carried over to the next session.
Mental Health & Substance Use	LD 514: Resolve to Raise MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Detoxification Services	This bill directs the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to raise the MaineCare reimbursement rate for non-hospital-based detox services from \$403 to \$594.38 per day by January 1, 2026. This adjustment aligns Maine's rate with New Hampshire's and helps keep detox facilities financially viable, preventing the closure of critical treatment beds for individuals in substance use recovery. The current reimbursement falls far below the nearly \$700 per day cost of operating a detox bed, putting Maine's limited detox capacity at risk.	UWSM supported the bill.	● This bill did not move forward this session.
Housing	LD 690: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Provide Funding for Affordable and Low-income Housing Programs	The bill allocates \$100 million in bond funding to the Maine State Housing Authority for use in multiple programs: rural rental housing, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), affordable homeownership, and home repair assistance.	UWSM supported the bill.	● The bill was carried over into the next session.
Homelessness / Housing / ALICE	LD 698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine	This bill provides \$5 million in each of the next two years to support emergency homeless shelters in the State.	UWSM supported the bill.	● This bill was enacted and signed into law by Governor Mills.
Legal Services	LD 1022: An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes	LD 1022 addresses the growing gap in access to civil legal aid by establishing a sustained funding mechanism: \$6.4 million in FY26 and \$9.5 million in FY27, administered through the Civil Legal Services Fund Commission. The funding replaces expiring one-time allocations and establishes a permanent base for legal aid to serve Mainers under 200% of the federal poverty level. The bill also mandates biennial legislative review to adjust future funding based on need and provider capacity. UWSM has previously supported adequate funding for Civil Legal Services in previous Legislatures.	UWSM supported the bill.	● The bill was carried over into the next session.

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Financial Security & ALICE	LD 1029: An Act to Ensure General Assistance for Housing Does Not Reduce Assistance for Other Basic Necessities and to Increase Presumptive Eligibility and State Reimbursement for General Assistance	This bill proposes several key updates to Maine's General Assistance (GA) program. It requires municipalities to calculate maximum GA levels in a way that accounts for both housing and other basic needs such as food, prescriptions, and hygiene products. The bill also extends the presumptive eligibility period for individuals staying in emergency shelters from 30 to 180 days, giving recipients more time to access support without delay. Finally, it increases the state's reimbursement rate for GA from 70% to 90% and guarantees 100% reimbursement for direct costs associated with emergency shelter provision.	UWSM had a chance to speak with the sponsors of the bill prior to the work session.	● This bill did not move forward this session.
Public Safety/ Public Health	LD 1738: An Act to Establish the Biohazard Waste Disposal Grant Program to Support Public Health Efforts in the State	The bill establishes the Biohazard Waste Disposal Grant Program within the Department of Health and Human Services. This program would disseminate grant funds to community organizations seeking to develop or enhance community hypodermic apparatus (syringe) mitigation and disposal efforts. Community-based organizations, syringe service providers (SSPs), municipalities, and municipal public health departments can apply for funding. Grants could be used for a range of syringe disposal infrastructure needs, including but not limited to installing indoor and outdoor syringe disposal drop boxes, hiring and training staff to properly collect syringes from disposal sites, or implementing other locally determined solutions. The program is intentionally designed to be flexible, allowing applicants to propose approaches that fit the specific needs of their communities. Drop boxes and staff hiring/training are among the concrete examples identified by the bill sponsor.	UWSM had a chance to speak with the sponsors of the bill prior to the work session.	● The bill was enacted and is awaiting action by the Governor.
Child care	LD 1955: An Act to Increase Child Care Affordability and Early Childhood Educator Stability	The bill establishes a Salary Sustainability Program with tiered wage supplements, scholarships, and apprenticeships for early educators. It makes the Child Care Employment Award permanent and supports long-term funding and workforce development strategies.	UWSM supported the bill.	● The bill was enacted and is awaiting action by the Governor.

BIENNIAL BUDGET INITIATIVES

Initiative	Summary	UWSM Action	Final Status
Youth Opportunity	\$6 million to fully fund universal free meals in Maine's schools, maintaining the program at an annual cost of \$64 million.	UWSM advocated for this to be included in the biennial budget.	● Funding was included in the final Supplemental Budget and signed into law.
HOME Fund Reduction	Redirects \$10 million from the HOME Fund to the General Fund over the biennium.	UWSM opposed this proposal's inclusion in the biennial budget.	● Funding was not included in the final Supplemental Budget
MaineCare Stability	Invests \$118 million annually to stabilize MaineCare, covering increased enrollment and rising health care costs.	UWSM submitted testimony in support.	● Funding was included in the final Supplemental Budget and signed into law.
Child Care Educator Salary Supplement	Originally slated for elimination, this program provides \$15 million annually for tiered wage supplements to early childhood educators. It was fully restored in the final budget, maintaining essential support for workforce retention and stability.	UWSM advocated for this to be included in the biennial budget. Liz Cotter Schlax and Quincy Hentzel published an op-ed in the PPH opposing this proposal.	● Funding was included in the final Supplemental Budget and signed into law.
Child Care Employment Award	Provides \$2.5 million annually to help child care workers afford care for their own children. Despite early plans to cut the program, its strong uptake and clear impact led to its reinstatement in the final biennial budget.	UWSM advocated for this to be included in the biennial budget.	● Funding was included in the final Supplemental Budget and signed into law.
Head Start Funding	Provides \$3.6 million annually in state funding to support Head Start access for low-income Maine families. Initially targeted for reduction, it was fully restored, preserving access for children and families statewide.	UWSM advocated for this to be included in the biennial budget.	● Funding was included in the final Supplemental Budget and signed into law.

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET INITIATIVES

Initiative	Summary	UWSM Action	Final Status
Amendments to the Maine Child Care Affordability Program (Part N)	Amends the Maine Child Care Affordability Program, allowing General Funds and Other Special Revenue Funds to support any eligible family, without income restrictions	UWSM submitted testimony in support.	● Funding was included in the final Supplemental Budget and signed into law.
Maine Community College System Free Community College – 2 Enrollment Years Program (Part Q)	Funding was extended for the next two years from the General Fund, but it was not made permanent.	UWSM submitted testimony in support. UWSM previously supported this initiative in past legislative sessions.	● Funding was extended, but it was not made permanent.
Limitations on Housing Assistance under the General Assistance Program (Part S)	Modifies housing assistance under the General Assistance Program, capping it to a maximum of 3 months in a 12-month period per household for regular assistance. It limits municipal aid for lodging to no more than 30 days per year.	UWSM submitted testimony in opposition..	● Funding was not included in the final Supplemental Budget.