



When you work hard in Maine, you should be able to care for yourself and your family. That’s why women want to know, “How will you affect my pocketbook?”

Please answer the questions below and return in the envelope provided by August 26. You can also respond online at www.shedecides.org/candidate. We will be sharing your answers with our members and the public.

Candidate Name _____

Please Check: Maine House _____ Maine Senate _____ District number: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Raise the Wage

For minimum wage earners, a full-time job does not guarantee a living wage. For decades, the real value of Maine’s minimum wage has been shrinking due to inflation. Today, a family of four relying on one minimum wage income—or \$1,300 a month—lives nearly 30% below the federal poverty line.¹ Policies to increase the minimum wage and index it to inflation can help working people maintain a basic standard of living.

- Yes, I would support increasing the minimum wage and indexing it to inflation.
- I’m unsure. Please contact me with more information.
- No, I would not support increasing the minimum wage and indexing it to inflation.

Comments:

Paid sick days

About 214,400 Maine workers lack paid sick days, or about 36 percent of Maine non-farm workers.² According to recent research, sick employees are less productive and cost businesses approximately \$255 dollars per employee per year.³ **A minimum protection of paid sick days** provides job security and financial stability ... important because a healthy and stable workforce is critical to Maine’s economy.

- Yes, I would support a minimum protection of paid sick days for Maine workers.
- I’m unsure. Please contact me with more information.
- No, I would not support a minimum protection of paid sick days for Maine workers.

Comments:

Family friendly workplaces

Less than half of employed mothers receive any pay during maternity leave.⁴ **Family leave insurance** enables workers to maintain their jobs through the birth or adoption of a child, as well as during serious illness. In fact, the birth of a new child is one of the most common causes of bankruptcy.⁵ Such a program can shift the burden of providing wage replacement from individual businesses to a pooled fund to which everyone contributes—just like any other insurance mechanism.

- Yes, I would support a family leave insurance system.
 - I'm unsure. Please contact me with more information.
 - No, I would not support a family leave insurance system.
- Comments:

Paycheck Fairness

Maine's Equal Pay Law has been on the books for decades, but still women in Maine bring home just 79 cents to a man's dollar.⁶ This wage gap saps families of hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of a lifetime⁷ and weakens women's retirement security down the road.

- Yes, I would support increasing enforcement of Maine's existing Equal Pay law.
 - I'm unsure. Please contact me with more information.
 - No, I would not support increasing enforcement of Maine's existing Equal Pay law.
- Comments:

Access to good jobs through education and training

To succeed in today's changing economy, workers need advanced skills and credentials. For women—who hold the majority of low-wage jobs—moving into degree programs targeted to Maine's high-demand industries is a critical need. Programs like Parents as Scholars and the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program provide **access to education and training for low-income Mainers. Additionally, these programs** help meet the demands of companies increasingly demanding a skilled workforce.

- Yes, I would support expanding existing programs that provide access for low-income workers, especially women, to education and training.
 - I'm unsure. Please contact me with more information.
 - No, I would not support expanding existing programs that provide access to low-income workers, especially women, to education and training.
- Comments:

Thank you for sharing your views with us.

For more information or questions, please contact Laura H. Harper, Director of Public Policy at the Maine Women's Lobby, 207.622.0851, ext. 21, or lharper@mainewomen.org.

¹ Calculated using Maine's current minimum wage of \$7.50 and current federal poverty rates (100% of the poverty level for a family of four is a monthly income of \$1,838).

² Analysis done by the Institute for Women's Policy Research using March 2006 National Compensation Survey microdata for the New England region and data on the number of workers in Maine by industry (including local government) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (QCEW).

³ Ron Goetzal, et al. "Health Absence, Disability, and Presenteeism Cost Estimates of Certain Physical and Mental Health Conditions Affecting U.S. Employers." *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (2004).

⁴ Boushey, Heather, *Family Friendly Policies: Boosting Mothers' Wages*, Center for Economic and Policy Research, April 2005.

⁵ 7 to 10 percent of individuals filing for personal bankruptcy report "birth of a child" as one of the causes for financial distress. Elizabeth Warren's "Medical Bankruptcy: Middle Class Families at Risk" testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, July 17, 2007.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey: Maine Economic Growth Council and Maine Development Foundation. *Measures of Growth in Focus 2010*.

⁷ The typical woman loses about \$431,000 over a 40-year career according to Heather Boushey, Jessica Arons and Lauren Smith in their April 2010 report, "Families Can't Afford the Gender Wage Gap." Center for American Progress. Available at: http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/pdf/equal_pay_day.pdf.