



Name: Justin Chenette

Running For: State Senator

District: 31

Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to reflect on your experience with Maine's nonprofit sector. Once we receive your response, your answers will be posted on our website at www.nonprofitmaine.org/2016candidates. Please respond no later than Friday, September 30, 2016.

Did you know nonprofits:

- **Employ 1 in 7 workers** in Maine.
- **Contribute \$10 billion per year** to the economy through wages paid, retail and wholesale sales, and professional services contracted.
- **Pay \$3.6 billion annually in wages**, which translates to approximately **\$206 million in personal income tax revenue**.
- **Mobilize 350,000 volunteers each year** to improve communities.

1. Please describe your personal and professional experiences with nonprofit organizations.

As the founder and current President/CEO of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit service organization, I am a firm believer in the impact nonprofits have in our state. Running the Saco Bay Center for Civic Engagement has been one of the most important experiences of my life. Every day I get empower people to get more involved in their community by increasing our local capacity for volunteerism and active citizenship. The organization is also a proud member of the Maine Association of Nonprofits. Aside from that, I'm also on the board of directors for Saco Main Street, Saco's officially accredited downtown development organization, member of the Saco Bay Rotary Club, Buxton-Hollis Historical Society, Old Orchard Beach Chamber of Commerce, Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce, and many other volunteer nonprofit groups improving people's lives. As someone who is personally involved in a variety of nonprofits and see up close its value to the Maine economy, I will continue to be a strong advocate for the nonprofit sector at the State House.

2. Please provide specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with the nonprofit sector to advance policies that strengthen Maine.

We must encourage donations to nonprofits by way of tax credits. One way the Legislature can do that is through the charitable giving deduction. Lifting the itemized deduction limit. While it might not seem important to do, nonprofits provide a vital resource and service that government isn't providing. The cap on itemized deductions hurt nonprofits like Thornton Academy and the Saco Museum.

3. What is your position on property tax exemption for Maine nonprofit property owners?

I think it's important for places like nursing homes for our seniors, public town academies for our students, museums for our cultural and historic preservation, libraries for our literacy, and religious institutions to continue receiving a tax exemption from paying property taxes. That being said, property taxes in many communities are far too high for residents. I would be interested in looking at a barometer for the size of a nonprofit to see if there was a way making a sliding scale for larger nonprofits. Having some buy in, even a smaller amount to the typical rate, to the services being provided by local municipalities does have an important value to the residents being footed the bill year after year.

4. Do you have any specific questions or need further information on any particular issue regarding Maine's nonprofit sector that we can help you with?

Thank you for all your advocacy efforts in Augusta. Your constant presence is helpful in determining the impact to nonprofits in our local communities based on the decisions we make at the State House.

You may submit your responses as follows:

Via email to: mecasale@nonprofitmaine.org

Online: www.nonprofitmaine.org/2016candidates

Via mail to:

Mary Erin Casale
Maine Association of Nonprofits
565 Congress Street, Suite 301
Portland, ME 04101

MANP is a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation under IRS code 501(c)(3) and therefore cannot endorse candidates for elected office. Our goal is to promote an educated and enthusiastic nonprofit community that votes.

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