



The Bobby Charles Plan: Property Tax Relief for Maine

The Core Message: "For too long, Augusta has been passing the buck to our towns and counties, forcing your property taxes through the roof to pay for their radical mandates. My plan stops the bleeding, drains the overhead, and leaves your money in your pocket."

Step 1: Stop the Unfunded Mandate Shakedown

"A primary driver of your high property taxes is the hundreds of **unfunded mandates** the state dumps on our towns, counties, and schools. Augusta makes the rules; you pay the bill. My administration will roll back these mandates immediately. When we stop forcing local authorities to spend money they don't have, we create the immediate room for **direct property relief**."

Step 2: Administrative Efficiency in Schools

"Maine families already contribute 55% of the state's budget to local education. We are going to use that 55% contribution as a lever, not a blank check. We will incentivize **administrative cuts** and slash the bloated 'woke' bureaucracy in our school systems that take money away from teachers. What we do spend needs to prioritize great teachers and great outcomes for our students. By lowering the cost of local education overhead, we lower the burden on the local taxpayer."

On average, Maine's local school districts spend just 60% of their budgets on classroom teaching. The rest goes to administrative costs. That's more than a BILLION dollars per year in state and local money spent outside the classroom. We should encourage schools to reduce these costs by partnering with other districts on back-office functions like HR and payroll, for example, and by combining contracts for transportation, heating oil, and electricity together where possible to gain volume discounts.

Since a great deal of the growth in education costs each year has to do with special education, we need to work with federal officials to reduce the administrative burden and let teachers teach

rather than spend their day doing paperwork. We must also work to eliminate unfunded mandates from Washington that place an undue burden on teachers and administrators.

Step 3: Increase the Homestead Exemption

"We are going to make the **Homestead Exemption** relevant for every single citizen in this state. While we expand it for all property owners, we are going to greatly **increase** that exemption for those who need it most: our seniors on fixed incomes, our veterans who have served this country, and our first-time homebuyers who are being priced out of the American Dream. Unlike some exemptions in the past, these will be fully funded at the state level, not adding additional burdens to municipalities."

Step 4: Lower Overhead Through Energy & Safety

"Lowering taxes isn't just about the math; it's about the environment in which our towns operate.

- **Energy:** By slashing energy costs across the board, we reduce the massive utility overhead for municipal buildings and schools.
- **Crime:** Despite increasing spending on public safety by 66%, Maine's crime rate has DOUBLED since Democrats took control of state government in 2018. By getting tough on crime and ending the fentanyl crisis, we will reduce the strain and the cost on our county jails and local law enforcement. When the cost of keeping our communities safe goes down, your tax bill goes down with it."

Step 5: Protect the American Dream of Homeownership

"Mainers currently suffer from some of the **worst property tax burdens in the entire country**. It's not just a math problem; it's pricing the middle class right out of their own homes and preventing young families from achieving the American Dream of homeownership.

Right now, Augusta's 'revenue sharing' system is fundamentally broken. It gives more money to towns with the highest taxes. Think about that: **The state is actually incentivizing local governments to keep your taxes high**. It kills accountability and fuels irresponsible spending.

My administration will fundamentally reform this formula. We are going to start **rewarding fiscal discipline**. We will shift the incentive to favor municipalities that actually lower their property tax rates and manage their budgets responsibly."