

## Maine Legislative Update

We are now more than a week out from the General Election and we continue to learn more about what the 132nd Maine Legislature will look like. However, some races have yet to be officially called, as votes continue to be counted and recounts begin. Here's what we know at this time.

**Eleven state legislative races are headed to recounts.** Maine's Secretary of State Shenna Bellows announced this week that [nine State House races and two State Senate races will be recounted](#). There are no required recounts in Maine, but candidates can request a recount in races that have a margin of 1.5% or less between the two candidates. If the margin is wider, candidates must put down a deposit with their request, which they are refunded if results come down in their favor. The recounts will begin today (Friday) and continue through November 25. The following races will be recounted:

- House District 44 - Rep. William Pluecker (I) and Ray Thombs (R)
- House District 52 - Rep. Sally Cluchey (D) and David Guilmette (R)
- House District 58 - Rep. Daniel Newman (R) and Sharon Frost (I)
- House District 75 - Stephan Bunker (D) and Randall Gauvin (R)
- House District 81 - Joan Beal (D) and Peter Wood (R)
- House District 96 - Rep. Michael Lajoie (D) and Kerryl Clement (R)
- House District 98 - Guy Lebida (R) and Kilton Webb (D)
- House District 141 - Rep. Lucas Lanigan (R) and Patricia Kidder (D)
- House District 142 - Rep. Anne-Marie Mastraccio (D) and Amy Bell (R)
- Senate District 8 - Sen. Michael Tipping (D) and Leo Kenney (R)
- Senate District 15 - Rep. Richard Bradstreet (R) and Rep. Raegan LaRochelle (D)

It's unusual for races to be overturned after recounts, so we expect the Democrats to maintain their 5-seat majority in the Senate and a slim majority in the House after all results are finalized.

**Legislative caucuses hold leadership elections.** Over the course of the past week, legislative caucuses on both sides of the aisle have met in Augusta to choose their leaders for the 132nd Maine Legislature starting next month and running for two years. Last week, [Senate Democrats voted to elect Sen. Mattie Daughtry \(D-Cumberland\) as Senate President](#), Sen. Teresa Pierce (D-Cumberland) as Majority Leader, and Sen. Jill Duson (D-Cumberland) as Assistant Majority Leader. [Senate Republicans chose to return Sen. Trey Stewart \(R-Aroostook\) to his position as Senate Minority Leader](#) and elected Sen. Matt Harrington (R-York) as Assistant Minority Leader. [House Republicans also reelected a leader](#), with Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham returning to his position of House Minority Leader. They chose Rep. Katrina Smith (R-Palermo) as Assistant Minority Leader. This week, the final leadership pieces fell into place as [House Democrats met and elected former Speaker Ryan Fecteau \(D-Biddeford\)](#), who served in the role from 2020-2022, to return to lead the House Chamber again. They elected Rep. Matt Moonen (D-Portland) as Majority Leader and Rep. Lori Gramlich (D-Old Orchard Beach) as Whip.

**Governor Mills announces leadership changes at Department of Professional and Financial Regulation.** Governor Mills announced today that [Commissioner Anne Head will retire, effective November 30, 2024](#). Commissioner Head has led the Maine Department of Professional & Financial Regulation (DPFR) for the past 16 years, having been appointed to the position by three different Governors (Baldacci, LePage, and Mills). Governor Mills also announced that she will nominate Joan Cohen of Portland, Deputy Commissioner of the Department, to assume the role of Commissioner. Cohen has served as Deputy Commissioner since 2019 and is a former Maine lawmaker with many years of experience in law and public policy. Governor Mills has also appointed Cohen to serve as Acting Commissioner upon Commissioner Head's retirement on November 30, 2024. Her nomination to serve as Commissioner will go before the Legislature in the coming weeks.

**What's next for the Maine Legislature.** The newly-elected Maine Legislature will be sworn-in on Wednesday, December 4 in Augusta. Members of leadership will spend the coming weeks determining committee assignments. We should learn of those by mid to late December. In addition, leaders will finalize the Joint Rules for the upcoming session, which will then

need to be voted on by members of each chamber. The Joint Rules govern the operations of the Legislature and govern procedures like committee hearings, public notice, and the process for submitting bills. There has been substantial discussion this fall over whether the Joint Rules should be amended to bring more transparency to the committee process, and possibly to impose limits on how many bills can be introduced by legislators. However, it is unclear whether any changes will be adopted, or when. Assuming that Joint Rules are adopted on swearing-in day, they can be amended later by majority vote of each chamber of the Legislature until the third Friday in January.

Another date we're eyeing in the Joint Rules is cloture - the date by which legislators must submit titles of legislation for consideration during the First Regular Session. Cloture has not yet been announced, though if past years give us any indication, we expect it will be in late December. The first official day of business for the upcoming session will be Wednesday, January 8, 2025.

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We will continue to send updates as there is news to share through the end of the year. Once session begins in January, we expect to resume weekly reporting. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the remainder of the fall and stay safe and well.