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Contact: Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition,
info@mainehousingcoalition.org, 207-852-0004 (mobile)

Maine Voters Send Clear Message to Candidates: Take Action on Housing

New statewide poll finds 90% want leaders to act on housing.

PORTLAND, Maine – Maine voters have a clear message for the candidates seeking to become Maine's next Governor: make housing a priority. New statewide polling commissioned by the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) and conducted by YouGov finds that the cost and availability of housing is the top issue facing Maine voters, ahead of healthcare costs, inflation, taxes, homelessness, and other concerns.

The poll of 425 Maine registered voters finds overwhelming support for legislative action::

- **90%** agree that Maine's next Governor should take action to address the state's housing shortage and the cost of housing.
- **80%** say Maine does not have enough homes affordable for average people to buy or rent, with **91%** saying the cost of renting or buying a home is a problem.
- **67%** say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who is working to solve housing affordability issues.

"Maine voters have spoken," said Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. "They are telling candidates for Governor, and the Legislature, that housing is the most important challenge facing our state, that they expect action, and that they support many of the practical solutions that can help us build more homes and make housing more affordable."

Housing is an economic issue affecting Maine families across the state

Polling makes clear that the state's housing challenges have a considerable financial impact on Mainers – a concern shared by Mainers regardless of where they live or how much they make. Nearly 80% of Mainer polled say housing costs have had a negative impact on their lives or the lives of their family, friends, or neighbors. Respondents noted that housing costs affect the ability to afford basic needs such as groceries or medications, the ability to afford to purchase a home, and the ability to save for retirement.

Maine's housing shortage is an increasingly urgent issue for employers and the state's economy. "Housing is foundational to Maine's economy," **said Quincy Hentzel of the Portland Region Chamber of Commerce.** "When workers can't afford to live where the jobs are, employers can't find and retain the people they need. Maine's housing shortage is an economic competitiveness issue, and this polling makes clear that Maine voters understand that."

Voters support practical solutions to Maine's housing shortage

The poll asked about a range of housing policies, finding broad support for reforms designed to increase housing production, reduce unnecessary barriers, and make the development process more predictable. Measures related to permitting, small apartment buildings and townhomes, smaller lot size requirements, and affordable housing all received broad support. That support extends across major political and demographic groups, including Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, as well as voters in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

For community lenders and housing developers, the challenges reflected in the polling are experienced every day through the difficulty of financing, permitting, and building homes. "Maine has made important progress in recent years, with new investments and tools that are helping communities build and preserve affordable homes. We hope the next Governor will build on that momentum and continue investing in the partnerships and resources that can turn good housing ideas into homes people can afford. And we can't lose sight of the housing that Maine people already call home. Preserving existing affordable housing is essential to protecting Maine people and communities as we work to address the housing shortage," **said Liza Fleming-Ives, executive director, Genesis Community Loan Fund.**

"Maine has the knowledge, talent, and commitment to build the homes our communities need. The opportunity now is to work together – developers, municipalities, policymakers, and communities – to make the path from a good idea to a completed home more predictable and achievable. Time and complexity have real impacts on housing costs and whether or not projects can move forward. By creating clearer processes, focusing on what matters most, and working collaboratively to solve challenges, we can build more homes while creating strong, lasting communities. Maine people recognize the need for housing, and we have an opportunity to turn that shared understanding into action," **said Laura Reading, Director of Affordable Housing at Developers Collaborative and the MAHC Board Chair.**

A clear agenda for the next Governor and Legislature with MAHC



The poll findings align closely with MAHC's priorities for the 2027 legislative session focused on making it easier and less expensive to build housing, increasing investment in affordable housing, and ensuring that Maine's housing policies keep pace with the state's needs. [You can read more about MAHC's priorities here.](#)

"The message from Maine voters is remarkably consistent with what we're hearing from people who are trying to build and preserve housing," Mitchell said. "Mainers want more homes, they want homes that people can afford, and they want a system that makes it possible to build them that is consistent and predictable. Our job now is to turn that public support into action."

Candidates asked to respond to Maine voters

The polling will be unveiled during MAHC's August 26th gubernatorial candidate forum, "*Maine Voters Have Spoken: A Governor's Forum on Housing*," featuring candidates Hannah Pingree and Rick Bennett. All candidates were asked to participate. The forum will give candidates an opportunity to respond to what Maine voters say they want and to discuss their plans for addressing Maine's housing shortage, affordability, production, permitting, and the role of state government.

"For years, we've known about Maine's housing shortage," said Mitchell. "But we hadn't heard from voters what they want to see happen. Maine voters shared that housing costs are hurting families, businesses, and communities. They want more homes, and they want their state leaders to lead. The next Governor and Legislature have an opportunity – and a responsibility – to turn that mandate into action."

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About the Poll: Conducted by YouGov on behalf of MAHC. It included 425 Maine registered voters online July 9–18, 2026. The sample was weighted to be representative of Maine registered voters based on demographic and political characteristics. The approximate margin of error is ± 5.3 percentage points. This does not account for potential non-sampling error.

About MAHC: The lead housing advocacy organization in Maine. MAHC is a statewide coalition dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing in Maine. MAHC brings together housing organizations, businesses, community leaders, advocates, and individuals to advance policies and investments that expand access to safe, stable, affordable homes across the state.