



National Commission on Hunger Public Hearing
July 30, 2015 ♦ 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

University of Southern Maine, Lee Community Hall
34 Bedford Street
Wishcamper Center
Portland, Maine 04104

Invited Speaker Biographies (alphabetical order)



Justin Alfond

State Senator, 8th District
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Justin Alfond is serving his fourth term in the Maine State Senate, currently as the Democratic Leader. In the previous legislature, Senator Alfond was elected the 115th President of the Maine State Senate. He has prioritized student hunger, higher education success, and economic and workforce development. Senator Alfond has passed multiple bills addressing student hunger, including a bill that established the task force to end student hunger, which created a 5-year plan to end hunger in Maine.

Senator Alfond is a Mainer with roots in Dexter and Waterville. He attended Tulane University and earned a degree in business administration. In 2004, he moved to Portland and founded the Maine chapter of The League of Young Voters. He served 4 years as the Maine State Director, leading initiatives such as Opportunity Maine, the Maine Energy Efficiency Disclosure Form, and Portland's inclusionary zoning ordinance. Senator Alfond is also an active member of several civic, political, and philanthropic organizations. In addition, he serves on several boards of directors in Portland, Maine, and New England, including Avesta Housing, Opportunity Maine, and the New England Secondary School Consortium.

Outside of the legislature, Senator Alfond has worked on several housing and business projects, including 135 Sheridan Street, 645 Congress Street, and his latest venture, Bayside Bowl. He lives with his wife Rachael, their two young children, and dog in Portland.



Michael Brennan, MA, MSW, LCSW

City of Portland Mayor

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Michael Brennan was elected mayor of Portland on November 8, 2011, and was inaugurated for a 4-year term December 5, 2011. Having received more than 55% of the vote following the elimination of 13 candidates through ranked choice voting, Mayor Brennan became the first full-time mayor for the city following changes to the City Charter approved by the voters in November 2010.

As the city's top elected official, Mayor Brennan has implemented several initiatives designed to encourage economic development and job creation, promote greater educational opportunities, and support buy-local efforts especially related to food. The Mayor's Initiative for Healthy and Sustainable Food Systems has been a catalyst for several programs in Portland, including an effort to have 50% of the food in the school system be locally grown.

Prior to his election as mayor, he served as a Policy Associate with the Cutler Institute of Child and Family Policy at the Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, specializing in education, health, and food policy issues. Before joining the Cutler Institute, Mayor Brennan worked as the Director of Community Initiatives at United Way of Greater Portland, as well as for the Coastal Economic Development Corporation, and as the Executive Director of the Cumberland County Affordable Housing Venture. Mayor Brennan has also been an adjunct faculty member at the University of New England and is a licensed clinical social worker in the State of Maine.

In addition to working at the Muskie School, Mayor Brennan served as a State Senator in the Maine Legislature representing Portland, Falmouth, and Westbrook. Mayor Brennan was first elected to the Senate in 2002 and was elected Senate Majority Leader in 2004. Prior to being a State Senator, he was elected to the House of Representatives for four terms between 1992 and 2000 representing Portland. During his tenure, he was involved with several groundbreaking pieces of legislation including the laptop program to provide every Maine student with a computer, efforts to reduce the negative impacts of No Child Left Behind, and programs to expand health care access to all Mainers, a model used by other states and the nation in adopting universal health care. Mayor Brennan has been a proud and active resident of the City of Portland for more than four decades.

dee Clarke

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Christy Daggett

Policy Analyst, Maine Center for Economic Policy

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Christy Daggett is a policy analyst at the Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP). She previously served as project coordinator/health educator at the Maine Center for Disease Control Colorectal Cancer Control Program and as a data analyst with Maine Health's Maine Childhood Immunization Data Project. Ms. Daggett is a native of Aroostook County. She has a master's degree in public policy and management from the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine and a BA from the University of Maine.



Sue Gabrielson

Executive Director, Maine Council of Churches

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The Rev. Sue Gabrielson, the minister for the Sanford Unitarian Universalist Church, is the part-time Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches (MCC). With extensive experience working on grassroots social and environmental justice efforts, Rev. Gabrielson was hired in the fall of 2014 as the MCC's sole staff member. She has been the minister at the Sanford church since 2003. She is particularly proud of the church's nonfood pantry, efforts to become a "Green Sanctuary," and facilitating a tri-church collaboration project with three other congregations.

Before joining the Maine Council of Churches, Rev. Gabrielson worked as the Executive Director for the Religious Coalition Against Discrimination and was the Faith Director for Mainer's Unite for Marriage. Before attending seminary, Rev. Gabrielson worked as a police officer for 5 years in New Hampshire. She also served as an administrator and a faculty member in higher education. She has traveled extensively around the world by ship to more than 25, primarily Third World, countries and spent 5 months through-hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Rev. Gabrielson earned her undergraduate degree in religion and sociology from the University of Vermont, a master's degree in adult development from Vermont College, and

a master's in divinity from Andover Newton Theological School. She is currently pursuing her PhD in multi-disciplinary human services and public policy. She is married to Rudy Gabrielson and between them have four children and two grandchildren.

John Hennessy

Interim Canon Missioner for Communication and Advocacy, Episcopal Diocese of Maine
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John Hennessy is an independent public policy and nonprofit consultant based in Portland, Maine. He works with the Episcopal Diocese of Maine and Frannie Peabody Center, the state's largest HIV/AIDS service organization. He is the former Associate State Director—Advocacy for AARP Maine. Before that assignment, he worked with clients including Maine Community Action Association, Behavioral Health Community Collaborative, Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Disability Rights Center, Maine AIDS Alliance, Equality Maine, and the Maine Primary Care Association. Mr. Hennessy provided lobbying and advocacy services; managed complex advocacy initiatives; and developed community outreach, engagement, and education programs working with diverse coalitions and membership organizations.

Prior to his work in government affairs and public policy, Mr. Hennessy worked in the footwear and apparel industry. His employers included G. H. Bass & Company, then a division of the Philips Van Heusen Corporation in New York City and C. & J. Clark, America, maker of Clark, Hanover and Bostonian shoes in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. He is the cofounder of the Maine Council on Aging and serves as the Board Chair of Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) Maine.



Rich Livingston

State President, AARP Maine
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Maine State President of AARP, Rich Livingston is a retired business consultant. Early in his career he worked in Washington, DC, in the broadcasting industry. Mr. Livingston also worked as a strategic planning and communications consultant to a cross-section of New England-based ventures. Mr. Livingston brings a diverse background to his role, including experience in the fields of public affairs, public and media relations, legislative affairs, advocacy, philanthropic consultation, and strategic planning. He has served as a member of numerous boards of directors and as a four-term city councilor in Auburn, where he was also a member of the Maine Municipal Association Legislative Policy Committee and a delegate to the National League of Cities. In April 2013, Mr. Livingston was chosen to be

President of AARP Maine, following a statewide search. As AARP Maine's volunteer State President, Mr. Livingston works in collaboration with the State Director to advance the Association's vision, mission, and strategic priorities in the state. He serves as a leader and spokesman for hundreds of volunteers and more than 230,000 AARP members in Maine. He also serves as Chair of the AARP Maine Executive Council. The Council, in partnership with the State Director and staff, provides strategic guidance and implements state plan activities in the areas of economic security, health and long-term care, and livable/age-friendly communities.



Mary Mayhew

Commissioner, Maine Department of Health and Human Services
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Commissioner Mayhew provides leadership, guidance, and policy direction to the largest agency in state government, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which has an annual budget of over \$3.4 billion and more than 3,400 employees. She has served as Commissioner since 2011. Commissioner Mayhew has led the LePage Administration's mission to reform the Department to control spending, transition welfare recipients to self-sufficiency through employment, and reprioritize services for the most vulnerable elderly and disabled Mainers.

Before being appointed Commissioner by Governor Paul LePage, Ms. Mayhew served as the Senior Health Policy Advisor for the Administration. Prior to joining state government, Ms. Mayhew served as Vice President of the Maine Hospital Association for 11 years. She was responsible for state and federal government relations as well as policy development and advocacy. The Commissioner also managed State Government Relations for the Equifax Corporation in Atlanta, GA, and served as a legislative assistant in Washington, DC, for Congressman William Alexander. She holds a B.A. in political science.



Robyn Merrill

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Robyn Merrill, Esq., Executive Director of Maine Equal Justice Partners (MEJP), began her tenure at MEJP in 2009 as a policy analyst and then served as senior policy analyst. She received her Master of Social Work from the University of New England in 2003 and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Maine, School of Law in 2008. During law school, she worked at the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic representing clients with low income in family matters

and volunteered on the Volunteer Lawyers Project's Family Law Helpline. After law school, Ms. Merrill worked as a judicial law clerk in the Maine Superior Court.



Kristen Miale

President, Good Shepherd Food Bank

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Kristen Miale is the President of Good Shepherd Food Bank, Maine's largest hunger relief organization. Before her role as President, she was the founder and program director of Cooking Matters for Maine, a local chapter of Share Our Strength's nationally recognized cooking and nutrition education program for low-income families. Prior to her work with food security, she worked for over a decade in the private equity and business consulting fields. After volunteering for hunger relief organizations, she decided to make her passion for ending hunger her occupation. She received her undergraduate degree from Boston College and her Master of Business Administration from Boston University where she studied both entrepreneurship and nonprofit management. She served as a board member and treasurer of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Maine and on the board of the Cumberland County Extension Association.



Deborah Sanderson

State Representative, 88th District

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Deborah Sanderson is beginning her third term as a Maine State Representative for House District 88, which includes Chelsea, Whitefield, Jefferson, and part of Nobleboro. Rep. Sanderson works at Small Business Development Group in Rockland after spending 10 years at the Maine Veteran's Home central office in Augusta. Rep. Sanderson has served two terms on the Health and Human Services Committee and will be the House Republican lead on the committee for the 127th Legislature. She will also serve on the Government Oversight Committee during this session. She represents a pair of school districts—Regional School Unit 12 in Kennebec County and Maine School Administrative District 40 in Knox County.



Jason Turner

Executive Director, Secretaries' Innovation Group

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Jason A. Turner co-chairs with Secretary Eloise Anderson of Wisconsin the *Secretaries' Innovation Group (SIG)*, a network of 18 state human

service secretaries representing states making up 46% of the country. The member secretaries have a common interest in designing and implementing programs and policies that combine principles that advance work, economic self-sufficiency, and healthy families.

In 2013, SIG developed and proposed a national SNAP work demonstration to the U.S. Congress. The SIG proposal was taken up by the House during consideration of the Farm Bill and, after compromise with the Senate, was passed and signed into law by the President. The Demonstration is now active in 10 states.

Between 1998 and 2002, Mr. Turner served as Mayor Giuliani's Commissioner of New York City's Human Resources Administration for his entire second term. The agency has 17,000 employees and a budget of \$15 billion and is responsible for welfare, employment, Medicaid, and child care programs. During a 6-year period that includes Turner's 4-year service with Mayor Giuliani, the labor force participation rates of New York single mothers without high school rose from 14% to 44% (U.S. Census), while the city welfare caseload dropped by half.

Before New York, Mr. Turner worked for Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson (1993–1997). He was appointed by the Governor to lead the state team to develop a fully work-based alternative to welfare. This effort culminated in the passage and implementation of the well-known *Wisconsin Works* program, covered in two book treatments (see *American Dream*, Jason DeParle, 2004; and *Government Matters, Welfare Reform in Wisconsin*, Lawrence Mead, 2004).

Earlier, Mr. Turner served as the federal director of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) at Health and Human Services during the first Bush administration, between 1989 and 1993. Mr. Turner was responsible for national implementation of the then-newly enacted welfare-to-work program, the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills program, or JOBS program.



Ian Yaffe

Executive Director, Mano en Mano

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Ian Yaffe graduated from Bowdoin College in 2009 with a degree in Latin American studies and education. During that time, he spent a semester at the University of Havana studying Cuban history and philosophy. At Bowdoin, he founded Food Forward, a student organization that recycles food and educates the community about fighting hunger and its causes. He was also Executive Chef of Taste for Change, a nonprofit restaurant that is part of Food Forward and that offers advanced volunteer opportunities in the culinary arts, educational events, and financial support for its partners. For his work with Food Forward

and other community organizations, Mr. Yaffe was awarded Campus Compact's National Student Humanitarian Award and Bowdoin's senior award for leadership and character: the Captain Andrew Haldane Cup. He was also selected to speak at Bowdoin's 2009 commencement ceremony. Outside of Mano en Mano, Mr. Yaffe is a Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and was selected as the 2013 Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year for Coast Guard Sector Northern New England. Mr. Yaffe also serves on the Board of Visitors of the University of Maine at Machias and the Board of Directors of Coastal Enterprises, Inc.



Donna Yellen

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With a master's degree in social work from the University of New England, Donna Yellen has worked in social services for 30 years. At Preble Street, where she has worked for 20 years, she is responsible for all programming, including direct social services (e.g., shelters, case management, street outreach, permanent and transitional housing, food programs) and advocacy, which includes the Maine Hunger Initiative, Homeless Voices for Justice, and agency efforts to respond to socio-economic forces that affect our mission. Her experience and expertise cover social work management, community organizing and advocacy, administrative leadership, program grant writing and reporting, staff supervision, public speaking, and successful collaborations with people living in poverty and public and private, civic, and faith-based organizations seeking social justice as well as collaborating with statewide and national partners to effect systemic and policy change. Her awards include the Maine Initiatives Growers of Hope Watering Can Award, Maine Council of Churches Social Justice Award, Joe Kreisler Community Impact Award, Maine People's Alliance Rising Tide Award, and Dickinson Mental Health Community Service Award. She coauthored *Maine Policy Review*, Special Issue: Food, "Hunger in Maine."