

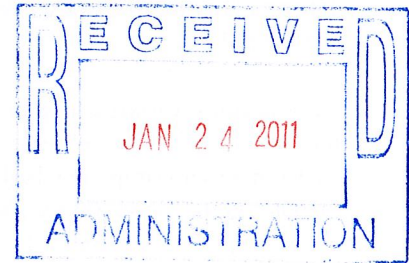
SUSAN M. COLLINS
MAINE

413 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904
(202) 224-2523
(202) 224-2693 (FAX)

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

COMMITTEES:
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
RANKING MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

January 14, 2011



Town of Waterville
One Common Street
Waterville, ME 04901

Dear Town of Waterville:

As the new session of Congress began, I was honored to become the longest, currently serving member of the U.S. Senate to have never missed a roll call vote. As the 111th Congress ended, I cast my 4,563rd consecutive vote. It is a privilege to represent you in Washington, D.C. and I appreciate this opportunity to share some of my recent work as we look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in the 112th Congress.

Creating jobs and strengthening our economy remain our nation's most pressing challenges. Far too many families and individuals throughout Maine and our nation are still suffering from a sluggish economy and high unemployment. That is why it was so vital for Congress to extend the 2001 and 2003 tax relief laws. I strongly supported a two-year extension because allowing these laws to expire would have resulted in one of the largest tax increases in our nation's history, and job killing tax hikes could well have plunged our economy deeper into recession.

Last year, I spoke to small business owners throughout Maine who told me that a tax increase could result in a loss of jobs and threaten the viability of their businesses. It is good news that Congress passed the two-year extension of these tax relief laws before 2010 came to a close, providing more certainty to businesses and relief for all taxpayers.

After years of repeated but unsuccessful attempts by the Maine delegation to address the federal truck weights law, I authored a successful truck weights pilot program in 2009 that was in effect for one year. The pilot program permitted trucks weighing up to 100,000 pounds to travel on Maine's federal interstates, where these trucks belong, rather than being diverted to secondary roads, through small communities, downtown areas, and school zones. The benefits have been evident: improved safety, lower costs, reduced energy use, and reduced emissions. I was disappointed that the U.S. House of Representatives failed to take action either to extend the pilot program or to make it permanent. Making the truck weights program permanent will be one of my top priorities this year and will be the first bill I introduce in the new Congress.

The President signed into law a number of bills that I authored or coauthored. I was proud to join Senator Joe Lieberman in leading the effort to repeal the so-called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law that applied to our armed forces. This long-overdue repeal enables the U.S. to join 35 of our closest allies in welcoming the military service of any qualified individual who is willing and capable of serving our country.

My efforts to counter the smuggling of illegal drugs across the Canadian border into Maine, and vice versa, were advanced when the President signed the "Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy Act." I was the lead Republican sponsor of this law, which requires the Office of National Drug Control Policy to develop a counternarcotics strategy similar to that of the Southwestern border in collaboration with our Canadian partners. The Senate Homeland Security Committee also conducted an extensive investigation into the Fort Hood terrorist attack. We will soon release a report with recommendations on how to reduce the possibility of such an attack in the future.

Former Senator Evan Bayh and I authored a new law that establishes a new Advisory Council to develop a national plan for combating Alzheimer's disease. For the first time, this law charges federal agencies to develop a strategy to advance efforts to fight this devastating disease, at no additional cost to taxpayers.

As far too many people know, Alzheimer's disease inflicts pain and hardship on families, and costs Medicare and Medicaid billions, yet our nation has been lacking a national strategy to focus on this disease.

Maine's natural resource industries are essential to our prosperity. Last October, along with other Delegation members, I testified at an International Trade Commission hearing that resulted in a ruling that Chinese and Indonesian paper companies had been engaging in illegal trade that is unfair to our domestic industry. During the debate on the Food Safety Modernization Act, I successfully advocated for an amendment, backed by Maine's small and organic farmers, to protect our small farms from excessive regulation.

In my ongoing efforts to save jobs in Maine, I succeeded in convincing the EPA to rework regulations known as "boiler MACT" in a manner that protects the environment and public health without jeopardizing jobs in the forest products industry. I also authored successful legislation to provide small contractors more time to comply with EPA lead-based paint regulations. The high fines for non-compliance would have put many small contractors in Maine out of business.

Working with the University of Maine, I helped advance the development of deep water, off-shore wind energy. Last summer, Energy Secretary Steven Chu visited UMaine at my request, which resulted in an announcement that the Department would dedicate \$20 million to develop and test deepwater offshore wind technologies. UMaine remains on the cutting edge of this work, which has the potential to create 15,000 jobs.

I secured funding for a number of important transportation projects in 2010. For example, following my request, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that the Department would award \$10.5 million for Maine's effort to save freight railroad service in Northern Maine, and \$20 million for the rehabilitation of the Memorial Bridge between Kittery and Portsmouth.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I worked to ensure that our men and women in uniform have the resources and support they need to protect our freedom. In 2010, I supported efforts to improve health care and other services for our military personnel and veterans, and authored key provisions to strengthen our national defense by supporting the vital work at Bath Iron Works, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Pratt & Whitney, the Maine Military Authority, and other Maine industries. Following my letter last year to the President's top budget official urging him to include increased funding for the DDG-51 program in next year's budget, Defense Secretary Gates recently announced that the Pentagon would seek an additional DDG-51 in its five-year budget.

The 112th Congress will bring extraordinary challenges as we work to improve the economy, lower the unemployment rate, seek ways to reduce federal spending to bring the federal debt under control, and debate a host of other important issues. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Waterville and Maine in the United States Senate. If ever I can be of assistance to you, please contact my Augusta Office at (207) 622-8414, or visit my website at <http://collins.senate.gov>. May 2011 be a good year for your family, your community, our state and our nation.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator