

1954



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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Testimony in Support of
LD 1954, "An Act to Lower Household Costs by Expanding the Sales Tax Exemption for
Certain Grocery Staples Sold in Grocery Stores"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
May 14, 2025**

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, including Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth.

I'm proud to present LD 1954, which takes a practical step to lower grocery costs for Maine households by expanding our state's sales tax exemption to include more essential, everyday food items *when sold in grocery stores*.

Food inflation continues to outpace wages, and every dollar counts—especially for families, older Mainers on fixed incomes, and anyone living paycheck to paycheck. This bill acknowledges that some of the foods Mainers regularly rely on and put in their shopping carts—like rotisserie chickens, granola bars, pretzels, frozen meals—are currently taxed, even when purchased at the grocery store as part of a routine household shopping trip. LD 1954 would make those items tax-exempt when sold in a grocery setting, easing the burden on Mainers trying to keep their kid's lunch boxes packed.

Just as I introduced separate legislation to exempt over-the-counter medications from the sales tax, this bill reflects a broader goal: helping Mainers afford the essentials. We should not be taxing people for trying to put dinner on the table with basic, accessible foods.

Importantly, LD 1954 does not overhaul how Maine categorizes different types of food. We're not redefining or expanding what counts as a food category or creating new classifications. Instead, we're shifting certain commonly purchased items from "taxable" to "exempt"—a change we hope is straightforward to administer.

This bill also preserves the clear boundaries already in law. Candy, soda, alcohol, and cannabis products would continue to be taxed, regardless of where they're sold. What we're doing here is simply refining the treatment of grocery staples to better reflect what Mainers are actually buying and consuming at home.

I hope this bill is part of a broader conversation about what fairness looks like in our tax code. Maine's tax system should meet people where they are—and that means recognizing that everyday essentials should be within reach for everyone. If we want an economy that works for working

people, then our tax code should reflect that—by reducing burdens on the basics and making sure we're not balancing the budget on the backs of people just trying to get by. LD 1954 is one step toward that vision—and I hope we keep working toward changes that help working families.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1954 and take this smart, targeted action to help lower costs at the checkout line. Thank you for your time and consideration.

President of the Senate, Senate District 23

Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth