



2026 Candidate Survey

Candidate Name: Richard A. "Rick" Bennett

Office Running For: Governor

District: Statewide

Campaign Website: www.bennettforgovernor.com

Please describe your personal and professional experience with nonprofit organizations

Karen and I raised our family in Oxford, where we go to church and volunteer in our community. I have served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations, including Hebron Academy, the First Congregational Church of South Paris, Portland Conservatory of Music, among others. In business, I ran The Corporate Library and GMI Ratings, a Portland firm that rated how well boards do their jobs. I know what good governance takes, and I know how hard it is to do on a tight budget.

As a legislator, I have worked alongside nonprofits on nearly every issue I care about: recovery, housing, child care, hunger, public health, and environmental protection. When behavioral health and housing providers told me they were borrowing money to make payroll because the State paid them late, I sponsored LD 2082 in 2024 to make DHHS cover the interest. Those loans had cost Maine providers upwards of \$1 million over five years. The department's own follow-up report showed nearly 1 in 5 providers still waiting more than a month to get paid, so I came back with LD 1443 in 2025. I also helped secure the votes to dedicate ongoing state funding to recovery community centers, and I supported extending the sales tax exemption to all 501(c)(3) nonprofits. In 2025, the Maine Public Health Association named me a Public Health Policy Champion.

MANP does not endorse candidates or promote or endorse any political party. MANP's goal is to educate nonprofits and legal and effective advocacy and election season activity, to educate candidates about the impact and potential of the nonprofit sector, and to educate voters by soliciting information directly from candidates on how they would strengthen and partner with the sector if elected.

www.NonprofitMaine.org



Please describe your top three policy goals.

My top three policy goals are to:

1) Make life affordable. Nearly half of Maine households struggle to cover the basics. I will double the pace of home building and make it possible for families to enter the housing market, cut utility profits to lower electric bills, deliver property tax relief to the people who need it most, fix child care so parents can afford to work, and put Maine on a path to universal health care;

2) Grow our economy. Maine's workforce is aging and shrinking. I will align schools, colleges, and employers so every student has a path to a good job here. I will back the small businesses and heritage industries that employ most Mainers, build modern infrastructure in every corner of the state, and protect the clean water, forests, and working lands that make people want to live here; and

3) Restore trust in government. Mainers deserve a state government that is honest, effective, and accountable. That means agencies that run well and pay their bills on time, policymaking that is open to the people it affects, stronger disclosure laws that pull dark money into the daylight, and the same rights for the Wabanaki Nations that every other federally recognized tribe has. As an independent, I answer to Maine voters and nobody else.

Please provide specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with the nonprofit sector to achieve the goals of your campaign.

Nonprofits deliver much of what the state government promises: child care, housing, recovery, elder care, food, conservation, the arts. I will treat our nonprofits as partners. Here is how:

MANP does not endorse candidates or promote or endorse any political party. MANP's goal is to educate nonprofits and legal and effective advocacy and election season activity, to educate candidates about the impact and potential of the nonprofit sector, and to educate voters by soliciting information directly from candidates on how they would strengthen and partner with the sector if elected.



1) Pay them on time. That means contracts signed before the work starts and invoices paid within 30 days. I will publish every department's record so Mainers can see who is meeting it. A nonprofit that borrows to cover the State's late payment is subsidizing the state government. That ends with me.

2) Fix grants and contracting. MANP and state officials have been working on how to modernize state grants, contracts, and procurement. I want those recommendations on my desk on day one, and I want MANP at the table as we carry them out.

3) Put nonprofit leaders where decisions get made. I will appoint people with real experience to state boards and commissions, including people who run nonprofits. I will bring providers into policy design at the start, before the rules are written.

4) Build my agenda with nonprofit leaders. My plans for housing, child care, recovery, and prevention-first health care all run through nonprofit partners. With federal funding at risk, I will work with the sector to identify the services Mainers can least afford to lose and protect them first.

MANP does not endorse candidates or promote or endorse any political party. MANP's goal is to educate nonprofits and legal and effective advocacy and election season activity, to educate candidates about the impact and potential of the nonprofit sector, and to educate voters by soliciting information directly from candidates on how they would strengthen and partner with the sector if elected.

www.NonprofitMaine.org