

HVJ Fall 2024 Voting Guide

State Legislature – House 113

Every election season, Homeless Voices for Justice (HVJ) creates educational voter material and visits several community locations to register people to vote. This year, we sent all candidates a series of questions and have published all of their answers, here.

HVJ is a grassroots organization that works for social change with, and on behalf of, people experiencing homelessness and poverty. HVJ is led by organizers who have all experienced homelessness. The founding group in Portland has existed since 1995, and we network in other locations across Maine. Our goal is to build a coalition for, and of, people experiencing homelessness and poverty throughout Maine. We seek to empower people experiencing homelessness and poverty whose perspectives are often excluded from the development of policies and programs that impact their social and economic wellbeing. Disenfranchisement, oppression, and marginalization creates this absence. Therefore, we hope to assert ourselves and our interests in Maine politics through protest, education, positive policy change and reform.

HVJ meets every Monday morning from 9:30-11:30am and is welcoming of everyone who has experienced, or is currently experiencing, homelessness.

For more information, email HVJ@preblestreet.org or call 207-899-6042 with questions.

Are you registered
to vote?

Visit vote.org to
register and see
what's on your ballot



State Legislature – House 113



Grayson Lookner
Democrat

Grayson Lookner is running unopposed for Maine House of Representatives – District 113.



Grayson Lookner (Democrat)

(he/him)



- Current Position:
 - Theater tech at Merrill Auditorium
 - Seasonal kayaking guide in Casco Bay
 - Representative of District 113
- Issues and Priorities:
 - Housing
 - Homelessness
 - Environment and climate change
 - Health and safety
 - Transportation
 - Schools
 - City staff
 - Working waterfront



In your opinion, what are the most urgent issues facing the state of Maine?

Grayson Lookner:

"The lack of affordable housing for low and middle income earners, need for more support services for people experiencing homelessness, climate mitigation strategies, and having a tax structure so the rich pay their fair share."



If you were to distinguish yourself from your opponent(s) for voters, what would you highlight as three critical differences?

Grayson Lookner:

"Well the major one is that I exist, so that sets me apart from my opponents in this house race ;-)"



What is your plan to address the root causes of homelessness and help people experiencing homelessness in Maine find safe and stable housing?

Grayson Lookner:

"To implement a social housing program to create mixed-income housing that remains affordable in perpetuity. Using a bond, we can go into partnership with other non-profit developers to create the type of housing we need. This will also create a source of revenue for services if necessary. This is another source of housing development that does not compete with existing forms of low income and subsidized housing."



Would you support government funding for emergency shelters in Maine?

Grayson Lookner:

"Yes. I'm glad we allocated \$13 million for emergency shelters last session. We need to do more."



Would you support the use of General Assistance to fund shelter beds in Maine?

Grayson Lookner:

"Yes, but the GA formula needs to be fixed so that towns like Portland, which rely on GA to provide services, aren't overly burdened."



How do you plan to address the problem of food insecurity in the state of Maine and ensure that Mainers have enough food to achieve an active, healthy lifestyle?

Grayson Lookner:

"I support fully investing in whatever programs Maine has created has to deliver food to people, and to support the non-profits that are doing this work. We need to ensure that the entire city is state is able to access recreation, and we need more walkable towns so that people can be active in their daily lives."



What is your opinion on Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030? Do you agree with the governor's office's approach to this issue?

Grayson Lookner:

"Food insecurity, like housing insecurity, has a very simple solution: feed people and give them housing. Since food insecurity is so closely related to economics, like the cost of living, by creating avenues for more affordable housing, we can also address hunger. I support the roadmap, and read the report, but it's an awful lot of words to explain a very simple concept: give people access to food. There is nuance when it comes to race and disability, and people of color and those with disabilities are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, and those factors must be at the center of all the conversations."



The opioid epidemic is one of the biggest public health crises in the state of Maine. What programs or initiatives would you support to address this issue within your district?

Grayson Lookner:

"Maine has taken some hopeful steps in recent years, and there are some reasons to be cautiously optimistic about the direction that we're heading. Overdose deaths have dropped, but we continue to lose 1-2 Mainers a day to overdose deaths, which is far too many. We cannot lose sight of how urgent this issue is, and how it affects everyone regardless of their political affiliation, social class, or any other factors."



How do you plan to incorporate the perspectives of people with lived experience of homelessness and poverty into your policymaking?

Grayson Lookner:

"In addition to my work with youth and adults experiencing homelessness and Substance Use Disorder in the past – which has informed all my work in my time in public service, there was also a period in my life in which I experienced housing instability for a period of several years. This was due to rampant real estate commodification, which has affected everyone who does not own property. Owning property should not be the only avenue to having stability in one's home."

