



Michael Brennan for Congress

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Equal Rights and Opportunity for Maine's Working People

"Opportunity, equity, the right to dignity in our working lives are core American and Maine values. Those who work hard, take risks, and play by the rules deserve equal opportunities, economic security, and fairness on the job."

Opportunity, equity, the right to dignity in our working lives are core American and Maine values. Those who work hard, take risks, and play by the rules deserve equal opportunities, economic security, and fairness on the job. In the last seven years, these values have been undermined in many ways. Tax breaks for the very wealthy along with stagnating wages and incomes for the working and middle classes have frayed the fabric of the workplace bargain. In turn, the U.S. has relied for too long on a curious system of delivering health insurance, saddling employers with a complex and costly burden of insuring employees. As a result, over the last seven years of double digit health care inflation, employers have turned away in increasing numbers from their sixty year commitment to insure health care for the gainfully employed.

In an evermore competitive environment, manufacturers have increasingly turned away from honoring pension commitments. New service employers such as "big box" retailers create most new jobs, but these jobs lack a path to the American dream as they offer low wages, little opportunity for advancement, and precious little in the way of health insurance or pensions.

Five years of an economic recovery with strong productivity growth, low unemployment, and a soaring stock market have produced few gains for working people. Employees seeking to redress issues of fair compensation and working conditions collectively have seen their rights to form a union and collectively bargain trampled on by corporate employers while federal regulators turned a blind eye.

And, as the recent Crandall Canyon Mine disaster in Utah reminds us, our nation's workplace safety and health laws—weakens by years of a Congress that invited corporate lobbyists to write laws affecting employees—must again become a focus of our elected leaders in Washington.

I have been proud to stand with the working people of Maine. As a leader in the Maine legislature—working in concert with my fellow Democrats—I helped raise the state's minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, supported small business with sensible regulatory reform, and supported workers' rights in the workplace. I led the effort to pass the Dirigo Health program that has extended health insurance to thousands of new Maine workers. . In Washington, I would continue to represent Maine working people, by bringing Maine values to the national stage, including tax equity, the rights of workers to choose fair representation, minimum wages that ensure dignity for all workers, and a sensible national system of health care coverage and pension reform.

To this end, I support:

The Employee Free Choice Act (S. 1041), which will again provide guarantees for workers rights to choose employee voice and collective representation at work by forming a union;

Changes in federal tax policy to make sure that the tax system is fair to working people and that everyone pays their fair share. The first step to this end would be to allow the Bush tax cuts to expire in 2010 without renewing them. Federal policies that support the ability of employees to balance work and home life, in order to support the strong families essential to health and welfare of the next generation.

Strengthening and seriously enforcing our nation's workplace safety and health laws. Federal policies to bring about economic security through universal health coverage, pension reform, and an on-going commitment to maintaining the strength of Social Security. Increased federal research and development funding for the state of Maine and other infrastructural

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