

House Democratic Office

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Rep. Berry: Maine needs strong economy – built from the middle out not from the top down.

Good morning, I'm State Rep. Seth Berry, the new Democratic Majority Leader for the Maine House. Thank you for listening on this Saturday morning before the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful for what we have -- and to remember to help those who may not be as fortunate.

Maine people have a tradition of generosity -- Many of us open our tables to our families, friends and neighbors. We donate food and supplies to local food drives. Over the past few weeks, Governor LePage and the First Lady opened the Blaine House and collected and donated more than 1,568 pounds of nonperishable food items to the Good Shepherd Food Banks.

That's something to be proud of. We can all do our part to help our neighbors.

In Maine, more and more families are struggling. We've seen the income gap between the poor and the wealthy grow, while the middle class shrinks. We are now dead last for personal income growth in the country and we are losing jobs, while other states around us are emerging from the recession.

Just this morning, I met with workers who are fighting for their jobs at the Hostess bakery in Biddeford, where they have been picketing for days. They are standing up for their jobs, their families, and the families everywhere who are facing the same struggle.

They simply want what we all want: A good day's pay and benefits for a hard day's work. During the last few months, Democratic candidates

knocked on hundreds of thousands of doors and spoke to Mainers across the state and the message was the same:

Maine people want a real chance to succeed, and to build from our state's strengths and from our middle class. They want a strong economy – built from the middle out not from the top down.

Maine people want good schools for our children, they want to be able to keep their house warm in the winter, and they want to be able to put food on the table and be able to afford to see their doctor when they are sick. This is the right thing to do both morally and economically.

Policies that support lower health care costs, stronger schools, and more energy efficiency help to create jobs and put more money in the pockets of middle class families.

It's a tall order but Maine lawmakers must work together to deliver.

We are up to the task. We are here to strengthen our economy.

After serving as a teacher for two-decades, I can tell you this is a group assignment, not an individual one; Wherever our Republican friends, colleagues and the Governor are willing to work with us, to seek common ground and common-sense solutions, we're ready to get to work with them. Because if it helps Maine people, then every party and every leader should want to help.

Thank you for listening. Happy Thanksgiving. I'm Rep. Seth Berry, D-Bowdoinham.