

October 12, 2012

Contact: Ericka Dodge [Patrick], 232-5892 (m)

DEMOCRATIC RADIO ADDRESS

Sen. Patrick says that under Republicans' watch promises were made, broken, and the middle-class forgotten

Good Morning. This is State Senator John Patrick of Rumford.

It caught my ear when I heard that Maine Republicans held a press conference this week. I wondered, “what more could they be saying about the failed policies of the last couple of years—under *their* watch?” Certainly, since they've been running Augusta, we've heard them make a lot of promises.

Like the time when Republicans promised that all Mainers would pay less for health insurance because of their “overhaul” bill. Well, that turned in to a promise broken.

Not only does their new law impose a \$22 million tax on every person who has health insurance, it raises rates so that Mainers are paying more for less. If you're a family of four, you will pay an extra \$400 to \$600.

Because of their law, insurance rates skyrocketed for all Mainers over the age of 60. And their law lets insurance companies charge middle age Mainers five-hundred *times* more than younger Mainers.

Small businesses didn't fare any better either—especially small businesses with older workers in rural areas. They were hit the hardest. In fact, nine out of ten businesses saw an increase.

It seems that the Republican “overhaul” law should change its name to the Republican Rate Hike Law.

There were also promises of putting Maine's students first. But that too was a promise broken.

The Republican-led legislature cut millions of dollars for HeadStart and other pre-K programs—critical programs that help children and parents.

They spearheaded policies that siphon tax payer dollars away from our community public schools to fund private, religious, virtual and even for profit schools. That's not going to make our students better—in fact, it will result in lost opportunities for our students and erode our community public schools.

But perhaps the biggest promise they made to Mainers was the promise of jobs. There was a lot of fanfare around this promise. In fact, they even put signs up saying Maine was “open for business”. I was hopeful. Frankly I didn't care—and I still don't care—which party, Democrat or Republican, gets Maine people back to work—as long as it happens. But that too turned out to be a promise broken.

While the rest of the country has figured out ways to emerge from the greatest recession of our lifetime, Maine lags behind—way behind.

There are still more than 50,000 Mainers out of work. We're dead last in personal income growth and our economy is the only state in New England whose economy actually shrank.

Are we moving forward or backwards under the leadership of the Republican Party?

And so to find out, I looked at the fancy booklet that the Republicans passed out at their press conference and this is what I saw: More of the same. They're not telling the whole story. They're forgetting to tell the part that impacts Maine families and working people.

For two years Republicans have been running Augusta and now they're running *from* their record.

The fact is that they have made it harder to live, work, and invest in Maine.

Because of their priorities and policies, health care is more expensive, costs have shifted and more people are working harder for less.

A fancy booklet or press conference won't change the fact that too many Mainers are still out of work and that Republicans have failed to get our economy moving again. They have left the middle class behind.

And so when the Republicans held their press conference and made no mention—during their thirty minutes behind the microphone—not one mention of jobs, not one mention of putting Mainers back to work, I have to wonder where are their priorities? Who are they working for?

I can tell you as a maintenance mechanic at a paper mill—for the last 32 years, I know what it means to earn a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. I know what it's like to want a better and brighter future for my children. I know what it's like to worry about how to pay your medical bills and also pay your mortgage. And I know that we can do better to get Maine back on track. We need to stop the rhetoric, put away the glossy booklet, knuckle down and roll up our sleeves to get results.

Thank you for listening. This is State Senator John Patrick of Rumford. Have a great weekend!

###