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## Cain says governor must stop scapegoating teachers

Good morning, I'm Rep. Emily Ann Cain of Orono, the House Democratic Leader.

Thank you for tuning in.

Over the past few weeks, Governor LePage has continued his unwarranted attacks on the working people of the State of Maine. Now, Maine's teachers are his latest target.

One week ago he said Maine has third grade teachers who are unable to pass a basic, elementary math test. The Governor offered no proof of this claim. No evidence, whatsoever.

Gov. LePage has a track record of dividing and scapegoating the people of Maine. Instead of proposing solutions for job creation, he has blamed workers, the unemployed, the poor, and the middle class, and now teachers.

In past weeks, the Governor has said our teachers are not prepared in their content areas and lack the basic skills to effectively do their jobs. Again, these claims were completely unsubstantiated and made without evidence and without any supporting data.

The truth is Maine teachers are well-trained, hard-working, and dedicated to their students. They are doing more with less in the classroom every single day. I bet you, like me, know a teacher or two who spend their own money on classroom supplies. That just isn't right.

Let's focus on providing more tools for Maine teachers in our classrooms.

While there is always room for improvement, as any good teacher would tell you, Maine students are making progress in math and reading scores.

Maine recently received our scores from a standardized test called the National Assessment of Educational Progress. I'm proud to say our students showed progress on this gold standard test.

Maine's 8th graders made significant improvements in our statewide math scores. In fact, Maine was one of a handful of states that showed meaningful progress in improving math scores for our 8th graders. In addition, Maine remains above the national average for our reading scores for 8th graders, as well as the scores among 4th graders.

Progress doesn't happen by accident. Our teachers helped make that possible.

While we all agree we can do better, these improvements show us making progress, despite the fact that we have been forced to put pressure on limited state funding for public education over the past few years.

Instead of belittling teachers, the governor should be praising the students and the people that helped them make gains. Scapegoating and belittling teachers won't improve reading or math scores.

Teachers are not the enemy. Teachers are part of the solutions.

Instead of attacking teachers and the working people of our public schools, it is time for our Governor to offer solutions. Attacking teachers does nothing to improve our schools. Attacking teachers does nothing to improve our economy. Attacking teachers does nothing to create jobs for Maine people. Attacking teachers does nothing to provide our kids with the skills they will need to be successful.

Teachers must be able and willing partners in the discussions surrounding our schools – not scapegoats. I hope the Governor will focus on getting Maine on the right track working collaboratively with our educators to improve our public schools. Our students deserve no less.

Thank you for listening. I'm Rep. Emily Cain of Orono.