

## Labor

### Throughout

his public service, Mike has continuously been a strong advocate for the rights of hard working families and communities. After high school graduation, Mike followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, gaining employment at the Great Northern Paper Company. He is a 29 year employee of GNP and is a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USW). Mike continues to champion labor causes to ensure that Maine's many hard working families receive the respect, recognition and just compensation that they deserve.

### In this section:

- Protecting Unions
- Ensuring Safety in the Workplace
- Fair Compensation

### Additional resources:

- U.S. Department of Labor
- Maine Department of Labor

### Protecting Unions

As a card-carrying union member, Mike believes in protecting a workers right to organize. Workers in Maine and throughout the country see unions as defenders of their rights, counting on labor unions for support, job stability, and security.

Mike has supported legislation in the 110th Congress that would better enable unions to represent their members. He is an original co-sponsor of H.R. 800, the "Employee Free Choice Act," which passed the house with bi-partisan support. This bill, which is part of Congress's overall goal of strengthening America's middle class, more freely allows an employee to establish a union, and enables workers to bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Despite misleading claims, it does not take away the secret ballot.

#### Representative

Michaud also cosponsored H.R. 980, the Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007, which passed the House with overwhelming support. This legislation guarantees the rights of firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical service workers in all 50 states to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions and to establish and join recognized unions.

[Return to top](#)

#### Ensuring Safety in the Workplace

One of the most crucial keys to having a productive workplace and satisfied workers is ensuring the highest possible level of workplace safety possible to protect the workers and the products produced. Mike has worked to ensure the health of the American workforce through his support of H.R. 1542, the Healthy Families Act, which would require certain employers to provide minimum paid sick leave.

Mike has also worked to promote legislation that increases safety standards for a variety of workplaces. He has voted in favor of H.R. 2768, the Supplementary Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act (S-MINER), which, among many other safety measures, mandates that better emergency response plans and means of communications be developed for miners to use in case of an emergency. Mike also supported H.R. 2693, the Popcorn Workers Lung Disease Prevention Act, which protects workers at food processing plants from exposure to diacetyl, an artificial food flavoring chemical commonly used in microwave popcorn that has been linked to the diagnosis of lung disease in many workers. He also voted for H.R. 5522, The Worker Protection Against Combustible Dust Explosion and Fire Act, which requires that the federal government issue rules regulating combustible industrial dusts that can build up to hazardous levels and create a major explosion hazard.

A safe and healthy workplace is not solely the right of the American workforce, but is an absolute necessity all across the world. To ensure universal worker safety measures are established, Mike joined with Republican Congressman Chris Smith in authoring H.R. 1992, the Decent Worker's Condition

Act. This bipartisan legislation stops the widespread violation of universal labor standards in substandard workplaces such as sweatshops. The Decent Worker's Condition Act would ban the importation or exportation of any product produced in a sweatshop or in a forced labor camp.

[Return to top](#)

## Fair Compensation

Mike has been a strong supporter of several pieces of legislation that aim to ensure that all Americans receive fair and just pay. At the onset of the 110th Congress, Mike joined 220 of his colleagues in co-sponsoring H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. Until 2007, hard-working Americans earning minimum wage had not received a pay raise in a decade. Since the bill became public law, the federal minimum wage has been raised from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.25 an hour giving many of our nations hardest workers the pay raise that they deserve, and additional income that they need to provide for their families.

Mike has also supported legislation that seeks to eliminate discrimination and inequality between the salaries of men and women. Mike supported H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which would overturn a Supreme Court ruling that makes it harder for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. The bill stipulates that every paycheck resulting from an earlier discriminatory pay decision constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act. The legislation provides employees who are victims of discrimination of up to two years of back pay.

In order to ensure that women receive equal pay, Mike also supported H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act. H.R. 1338, closes the loopholes that have allowed employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay, holds businesses responsible for discriminatory practices, and establishes a new grant program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women.

[Return to top](#)