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Kentwood mayor says state lawmakers sold out local governments with change in contract negotiations

Published: Friday, June 25, 2010, 4:37 AM



Monica Scott The Grand Rapids Press

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Kentwood Mayor Richard Root

GRAND RAPIDS -- Kentwood Mayor Richard Root said state lawmakers Thursday sold out local governments by passing costly changes to the police and fire bargaining law known as Public Act 312.

Cities and townships opposed the changes primarily because they said it adds groups of employees to the law and increases the number of workers subject to contract negotiations. They also said it lacked a definition of ability to pay.

"I am totally frustrated with Lansing's inability to show governance and leadership," Root said. "I think it was a sellout to the very thing Republicans and Democrats have been given lip service to -- helping local governments contain costs."

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All Republican representatives in Kent and Ottawa counties voted against the bill, which passed 62 to 42.

Grand Rapids Democrats Roy Schmidt and Robert Dean didn't think it was an expansion and supported the measure.

"I think it is reform because it shortens the time of arbitration and requires arbitrator training," Schmidt said. "I want to bring as much revenue as I can to the cities, but on this we can agree to disagree. I think it is a fair system."

Dean said cities will benefit in the long run.

"This legislation will expand binding arbitration to people who don't currently qualify, and as a result, local governments will be able to afford fewer police and fire officials to protect our families," said Rep. Justin Amash, R-Cascade Township.

Rep. Dave Hildenbrand, R-Lowell, said the bill wrongly broadens a law that was put in place for the narrow purpose of avoiding police and firefighter strikes.

E-mail Monica Scott: mscott@grpress.com

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uallwinealot

June 25, 2010 at 8:26AM

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Mr Amash, Mr. Root and Mr. Hildenbrand,

What it does is prevent people such as yourself, people who think that only a select few should earn a decent fair wage, (those select few come from your mouth or gene pool) from walking over the blue collar worker, people who also deserve a fair decent wage for the type of work they do.

What it does is prevent corrupt politicians from lying and cheating which they all do, and you are one of them. It prevents people such as yourself and the Mayor of Kentwood and Grand Rapids and all of West Michigan Republicans from adding language such as fire authority or police authority which wasn't covered by P.A. 312.

Each of you have lied about P.A.312 saying that "ability to pay" isn't considered, people should know that that is not a valid statement and again is a lie brought forth from people such as you.

The reason that you say municipalities won't be able to afford more firemen and policemen is not because of P.A. 312 it is because of you and everyone else in government. Now you want to carry your legacy to Lansing for Congress, You and your cronies will keep Michigan underwater for the working class and give your fellow suit and ties yacht's to float above us.

It is good to know that at least Democrats (which I am not one of) are at least looking out for the working people. Makes one think why ALL the Republicans in West Michigan voted against this amendment, see above paragraph for the answer.

I know far too many rich people who would steal a dollar to put into their own pocket instead of letting a hard working American earn it. You get what you deserve.

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ben

June 25, 2010 at 9:43AM

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Bob Overbeek continues to look better and better in his bid for Congress. Amash, Heacock, Hardiman are all incumbants ... let's set them on the sidelines, it's time to "bench" the "high brow" types that have forgotten the struggles of small business and working class families. These and other incumbants have only one record ... that of chasing more contributions and chasing endorsements for the gain of the few at the expense of the many.

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billsanford

June 25, 2010 at 10:06AM

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uallwineallot...

You make some pretty broad, vague, unsubstantiated accusations. Specifically, you say:

"You and your cronies will keep Michigan underwater for the working class and give your fellow suit and ties yacht's to float above us."

Exactly ' How ' are these conservatives conspiring to keep 'the Michigan working class' underwater? Have you ever heard of union shop laws that drive away business? Have you ever heard of excessive Big Government costs that drive up taxes? Have you ever heard of Higher Education costs that go to provide an 'elite' job environment for a select few? Have you ever heard of a welfare environment that discourages work, rewards indolence, and keeps taxes high?

These gentlemen that you target are Conservative; Their philosophy is against the above.

Based on your prattle... I am not sure just 'what' you are against, other than conservatives.

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