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PONTIAC ABSORPTION

James Boomer - Secretary



After months of speculation amid the rollercoaster ride of state and local politics, it appears that the absorption of the Pontiac Police Department is actually moving ahead towards completion. This is due in large part to events of the past week. Exercising powers granted to emergency managers by legislation signed into law by Governor Rick Snyder in March, Michael Stampfler cancelled the labor contract protecting the dispatchers working at the Pontiac Police Department. Stampfler had been awaiting the green light from Lansing, which came down on June 6 via the State Treasurer's Office. With this seemingly final hurdle out of the way, the absorption is now being fast-tracked to take place by July 1. This is a less-than-desirable timeline for a variety of reasons and it remains to be seen whether or not the date will move further out as background checks, the hiring process, and other preparations are made.

While the immediate local impact will be felt by both the Oakland County Sheriff's

Office and the Pontiac Police Department, the global significance of the cancellation of the dispatcher's contract deserves some consideration, as well. Many people on the side of organized labor are gravely concerned about the precedence this has set. Ron Palmquist, a labor relations specialist from the Michigan Association of Police, was quoted in the Detroit News (06/07/11) as saying, "Although not as blatant as taking away public employee's right to organize, it is a little sneakier. Michigan is going about it piecemeal with bits and pieces of legislation. The emergency financial manager law was one step in the process."

There is no doubt that Governor Rick Snyder and his cohorts are systematically attacking organized labor in Michigan, dutifully following like-minded assaults by the Republican Party in Wisconsin and Indiana. It began with HB4172, HB4060, and HB 4205 in late February whereby the legislators went after public employee health benefits, retirement benefits and sought to repeal PA 312

altogether. Additionally, HB4059 seeks to prohibit union officials from conducting union business on the public payroll while HB 4152 seeks to disallow the payment of retroactive wages once a contract expires while at the same time forcing the members of any union operating under an expired contract to pay any increases in health benefits that are levied while the new contract is being negotiated or is being arbitrated.

Each of these bills moving through the legislature towards the governor's desk further weakens the collective bargaining process, especially on the labor side. However, the sweeping power granted to emergency managers via SB153 truly trumps them all. The governor now has the legal right to declare any community as either being in dire financial straits or headed there and can thereby send his hand-picked emergency manager in to cancel negotiated contracts, remove elected officials from office and overturn local ordinances. Snyder claims that these powers will rarely be used and yet he

PONTIAC (cont'd)...

has dozens of emergency managers in training.

According to Zenobia Jefferies of the Michigan Citizen, there are currently 70 communities and 50 school districts that meet the criteria for an emergency manager.

VP of Road Patrol Rami Abi-Adal has spoken to and met with several governmental leaders and has been outspoken about the need for our members to get involved on any level that they can in the fight to preserve our rights as public safety employees. The situation in Lansing is fast-moving and each member of this Association should seek to preserve our rights, whether that is through direct involvement or by simply writing a letter to your Senator or Representative expressing your concerns. Links have been posted on the front page of the website that will assist you in determining who to direct your letters or phone calls to.

As a reminder, there are no general membership meetings in June, July or August. The absorption of Pontiac and the situation in Lansing will likely necessitate at least one special meeting during the summer break. Also, remember that the Summer Picnic will be held on July 16 on the island at Groveland Oaks. This event is always a good time and I encourage everyone to be there. Have a great summer!



The OCDSA Family Picnic will be held on July 16 from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Paradise Island in Groveland Oaks County Park. Food and refreshments will be provided all day long. The food is being catered by O'Malley's.

Camp sites at the Group Campground have been reserved but must be paid for by the member using them. Admission to the park is free and you need only to tell the person at the gate that you are an employee of the Sheriff's office.

Use of the park's waterslide and 4-wheeled bikes is also free of charge once you obtain a bracelet. There will be a face painter on site, raffles, and other entertainment.

Bring your family and stay all day!!



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Michigan: Ground zero for assault on democracy

Source: *People's Tribune*
<http://www.peoplestribune.org/PT.2011.05/PT.2011.05.03.shtml>

State governments across the country are simultaneously carrying out a frontal attack on the working class of America. The epicenter of this coordinated attack is the Rust Belt region, those states of America's once thriving industrial heartland, now decimated with shutdown plants and boarded-up homes. The state governments of Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan have moved in unison to eliminate public employee collective bargaining rights, destroy public employee unions and cut human service programs. Ground zero for organized worker resistance has been in Wisconsin. Ground zero for the most far reaching attack by corporate government on American democracy has been in Michigan.

In March, martial law was enacted in Michigan with the passage of the Local Government and School District Financial Responsibility Act. This law gives the governor of Michigan absolute power to suspend or remove elected officials and school boards from city and town governments and replace them with an appointed Emergency Financial Manager (EFM), if he determines a municipality and/or a school district faces financial difficulties. Once in place, the



EFM (which can be a corporation) has the authority to fire elected municipal government officials, terminate contracts - including union contracts - dissolve school districts, sell assets, privatize public functions and services and disincorporate towns and cities.

The first application of this new law happened in Benton Harbor, Michigan on April 14, 2011, when Emergency Financial Manager Joseph Harris essentially fired all elected officials when he ordered the removal of all decision making powers from Benton Harbor's elected officials. In part the order reads, "Absent prior express written authorization and approval by the Emergency Manager, no City Board, Commission or Authority shall take any action for or on behalf of the City whatsoever" (see full text of the order on this page). This attack on the people of Benton Harbor is significant, because a struggle against corporate control has gone on there for years. (The EFM law is also at work in Detroit, where the EFM of the Detroit Public Schools recently used his authority to fire all 5,466 members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers as part of a plan to modify their contract with the school district.)

UNITED WE STAND

People across Michigan have responded to the new EFM law with protests and demonstrations.

This new law advances a corporate dictatorship and provides a legal framework for fascism in America. It codifies the actual merger of corporations and government, while it provides a vehicle for testing new methods to control the people.



*People from communities across Michigan rally in Benton Harbor, Michigan against the takeover of the city by an Emergency Financial Manager (read dictatorship).
PHOTO/Brett Jelinek*

The current attacks on our working class began nearly 40 years ago. In the 1970s, different capitalists began using robots and computers to replace workers and thus eliminate wages. This digital revolution birthed the fully integrated, capitalist global economy we have today. The exponential growth in the quality and application of digital technology to production (and communication) is creating and growing an unemployed and underemployed section of the working class around the world.

This section of the working class is a threat to the capitalist system itself, and democracy is under attack to contain this threat.

The current attacks are not temporary. What has happened in Michigan is a harbinger of what is to come across the country. Our working class needs a program and strategy that represents its common interests. Our public domain is being nationalized in the interests of the corporations. We need to nationalize the corporations in the interests of the working class. The first step along that road is the demand that the corporations and the rich be taxed to pay for the crisis.

Our battle cry for now must be "Tax the Rich" and "Tax the Corporations."

This article originated in the People's Tribune
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