

Michigan  
Council 25

**AFSCME**  
We Make Michigan Happen

**ALERT**

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employee, AFL-CIO

Albert Garrett, President

Lawrence A. Roehrig, Secretary-Treasurer

## A Message from President Albert Garrett:

# Fighting Back Against the Right-Wingers

I've just seen a copy of *The Oakland Press* for October 29, 2007, and I am indignant! This Pontiac-based newspaper has a long history of right-wing editorial positions, and has never been a friend of working families, but this time, their perfidy almost defies description.

On October 14, they published a "state budget worksheet" and invited readers to check off items for which they would cut state spending. The list, and the descriptions of the cuts suggested originated with the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, an arch-conservative think-tank known for perennial proposals to privatize public services, restrict bargaining, ban the agency shop, and generally bash public workers and Unions. No one else had any input on the "worksheet," so readers were only offered the most draconian list of cuts (all sugar-coated by the Mackinac Center's rhetoric, of course), without any options which would involve revenue enhancement - only cuts.

About 400 readers responded. People who care whether polls actually represent public opinion despise this type of "polling." It's called "self-selecting" polling. Only people who volunteer and act to respond are heard, and those tend to be the most motivated - in this case, those with an axe to grind. If these responses represent any segment of the population, it is only anti-tax readers of the *Oakland Press* who self-select to respond - a pretty small and esoteric segment of the populace.

One October 29, the *Oakland Press* published the results under a headline, "Making the cut: Readers prioritize state budget spending." This feature is credited to Roger Wingelaar, who should be ashamed of himself for perpetrating such sleaze. The putative poll found that more than half of those

responding wanted to cut every item on the list! At the top of the Mackinac Center's hit list were:

- State worker pay and benefits
- Public school health insurance
- Higher education funding
- 21st Century Jobs Fund
- Privately managed prisons
- Repeal prevailing wage law
- Cut transit funding in half
- Trim ISDs

Schools privatize non-core functions and onward, including proposals to cut the state police, libraries, scholarships, and Medicaid!

The *Oakland Press* is not alone in making this kind of attack on public services and the working families who provide them. They had to do little more than use the material provided by the Mackinac Center without question or further thought, as do many other reactionary media outlets.

As public workers, we need to fight back against these attacks. AFSCME International and Council 25 have committed to the Twenty-First Century Initiative, including a renewed and enhanced commitment to the PEOPLE Program and to voter registration and get out the vote efforts. We need your support in this effort. We are literally fighting for our working lives - for our jobs, our families, our communities, and our future.

If we allow the pundits and demagogues to attack and defame us without fighting back, we're all in really big trouble.

Together, we can fight back.

Together, we can defeat the right-wingers.

Together, we can do this.

## To write to your State Senator or State Representative:

### State Senator

The Honorable [insert name]  
State Senator  
Michigan State Capitol  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing MI 48909-7536

To telephone or e-mail your State Senator, check the "Citizen's Guide to State Government."

If you don't recall which State Senator is yours, check "Find Your State Senator."

Both resources are on links at

[http://www.miafscme.org/keep\\_informed.htm](http://www.miafscme.org/keep_informed.htm)

### State Representative

The Honorable [insert name]  
State Representative  
Michigan State Capitol  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing MI 48909-7514

To telephone or e-mail your State Representative, check the "Citizen's Guide to State Government."

If you don't recall which State Representative is yours, check "Find Your State Legislator."

Both resources are on links at

[http://www.miafscme.org/keep\\_informed.htm](http://www.miafscme.org/keep_informed.htm)