

Michigan Chamber Says: Will Alan Cropsey be the Trojan Horse Trial Lawyers Wheel Inside the Senate Republican Caucus?

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce asks this question: What do Jennifer Granholm and Alan Cropsey have in common? The answer: They are both the darlings of trial lawyers across Michigan.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20000320/DEM039>)

A recent Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch (M-LAW) analysis of campaign finance filings indicates that over 86% of all contributions made for Governor last year by trial lawyers were made to Jennifer Granholm.

Alan Cropsey earlier this year received from the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association Political Action Committee the legal maximum contribution of \$10,000 (max out) in his bid to receive the Republican nomination for the State Senate in the 33rd District (Clinton, Ionia, Montcalm and Isabella counties).

Why would the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association PAC, an organization whose membership includes Geoffrey Fieger, Lee Steinberg (Call Lee Free) and Sam Bernstein (1-800-Call Sam), choose to "max out" to Alan Cropsey, a Republican in a conservative mid-Michigan district?

The answer is Cropsey's long-standing record in opposition to tort liability reform during his stint in the State House of Representatives (1993 - 1998). During that time period, Cropsey, a lawyer himself, was one of less than a handful of Republicans to vote with Democrats in their unsuccessful attempt to block tort reform legislation in 1995. That 1995 legislation attempted to control frivolous lawsuits. These meaningful reforms have resulted in 10,000 fewer lawsuits each year.

"The trial lawyers are working out of the same playbook employed this session by the MEA and AFL-CIO. Those groups helped to elect a few sympathetic legislators from safe Republican districts that will then vote, not with the bulk of the Republican caucus, but with legislative Democrats to pass or block legislation of concern to that interest group," said Robert S. LaBrant, Senior Vice President of Political Affairs and General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "The MEA has used that strategy in blocking Charter School expansion. The AFL-CIO used that strategy to block preemption of local minimum wage ordinances and prevent the establishment of a waiting week for unemployment benefits."

"Alan Cropsey needs to explain why he, as a conservative Republican, has taken \$10,000 from an organization that bitterly opposed Governor Engler's civil justice reform agenda and led the campaign trying to defeat Justices Taylor, Markman and Young in the 2000 Supreme Court elections," added LaBrant.

"Alan Cropsey, who claims to be a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, also needs to explain to such groups as the National Rifle Association and other gun ownership groups why he was 'maxed out' by an organization whose trial lawyer membership supports product liability lawsuits against gun manufacturers and lawsuits by cities like Detroit against gun manufacturers," concluded LaBrant.

The Michigan Chamber is a statewide business organization representing approximately 7,000 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

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