

American Friends Service Committee

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8 REASONS TO HATE 8

Third in a series

<http://www.afsc.net/ctsosaw.html>

Leasing the sewer system is the wrong way to fund education

Increasing educational opportunities is a noble purpose. Increasing resources for educational scholarships is a goal almost everyone shares. Leasing the Akron sewer system, however, is the wrong way to accomplish these objectives.

Why were no other alternatives explored to fund the Mayor's scholarship concept? This has been a major perplexity ever since the Mayor first announced his proposal.

Issue 8 is modeled on a scholarship program in Kalamazoo, MI. The website in support of the proposal, www.akronscholarshipplan.com <<http://www.akronscholarshipplan.com>> , lists five "success stories" where communities provide some level of financial support to students.

None of the five communities; Kalamazoo, Denver, Pittsburgh, Peoria, or El Dorado, Arkansas, however, use proceeds from the sale or lease of any public utility for their respective scholarship program.

So where's the model for leasing the Akron sewers to provide funding? There is none.

Issue 8 proponents state Akron is different than Kalamazoo, which established their fund from anonymous philanthropists in 2005. Each of the other communities developed their own funding formula.

Issue 8 proponents have only suggested vague anecdotal notions other funding alternatives are not possible. Where's the proof?

No evidence has been offered that other funding sources are not feasible. There have been no reports, no documentation. There was no blue, red, yellow, or any other ribbon-colored committee set up of prominent community heavy weights to explore and report on the feasibility of other choices. There were no public hearings, no inquiries before city council.

It was simply announced from the start that the sewers were to be sold (later changed to leased) and that was that. It was put on the table right from the beginning. Unless and until other options are thoroughly examined, leasing the sewers is not a credible proposal.

The decision to fund education by leasing Akron's sewers makes no sense -- unless, of course, the goal all along was to privatize the sewers to a business corporation.

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