

Beltway Confidential

DNC and Granholm agree: Disabled kids' Medicaid money is for Democratic candidates



By Joel Gehrke
Commentary Writer
The Washington Examiner

Democrats rallied around an attempt by the Service Employees International Union to have money taken from Medicaid payments that support disabled people this week. Instead, the SEIU wants to spend the money on Democratic candidates.

The SEIU is trying to amend the Michigan state constitution to protect a gift from former Gov. Jennifer Granholm, D-Mich., who helped the SEIU unionize in-home health care workers by deciding that the recipients of Medicaid funding count as public employees.

Marge Faville, head of the SEIU's Michigan Health Care chapter, claimed that Republicans were opposing the process in an attempt to "strike down" the SEIU.

"Why do they want to do it?" Faville asked rhetorically at the Democratic National Convention, per MLive. "[B]ecause unions are effective, we make sure Democrats get (into office) and we're going to make sure Obama gets in."

The public employee tag even applies to parents who accept Medicaid funding in order to help support their kids.

"We're not even home health care workers. We're just parents taking care of our kids," as Robert Haynes, a retired police officer, put it to the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Haynes and his wife lose money every month to the SEIU, which managed to incorporate them into a union without their realizing it, because Granholm decided to treat Medicaid recipients as public employees. Accordingly, the state government deducts money from their Medicaid check every month and sends it to the SEIU.

"Our daughter is 34 and our son is 30," Haynes said at the time. "They have cerebral palsy. They are basically like 6-month-olds in adult bodies. They need to be fed and they wear diapers. We could sure use that \$30 a month that's being sent to the union."

The state legislature intervened to halt the automatic deductions, but SEIU attorney John Kronland convinced a judge to block that law for the time being, on the grounds that it would cause them irreparable damage if it went into effect as the lawmakers planned.

"The union, a First Amendment advocacy organization, will suffer irreparable damage," Kronland said in court this summer, per Capitol Confidential (Mich.). "Among the damages the SEIU would suffer, Kronland said, was being denied use of the money (about \$3 million) during the upcoming election."

The SEIU has gotten about \$6 million annually in dues drawn from the Medicaid funding.