



Letters: The game is up on the Reed and DeMaio plan

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Re: “Pension double-cross” [Opinion, Aug. 24]: In Orange County, we are used to hearing about villains. Disneyland brings to life good and evil; we are all too familiar with diabolical acts portrayed onscreen by mischief-makers with underhanded intentions. Had I not known the facts, I might have seen your portrayal of California Attorney General Kamala Harris as a similar villainous tale. “Sabotage” and “bias” and “dismaying,” oh my. Harris must be out for blood with her title and summary of the so-called “Voter Empowerment Act.”

Your editorial blasted Harris for her biased approach to the title and summary of the initiative brought forth by former San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed and former San Diego Councilman Carl DeMaio. With statements backed up by none other than Reed and DeMaio themselves, your paper lambasted Harris for kowtowing to unions with her words. However, the facts show otherwise. I read the initiative and the Harris title and summary. I absolutely believe that in 100 words the Attorney General analyzed an accurate summation of the initiative. And I’m not alone in those beliefs.

Even one of the most recognized public employee pension critics, Daniel Borenstein of the Contra Costa Times, questioned the measure. “Obviously it’s misleading,” he wrote recently, continuing on to explain that no retirement experts have defended Reed and DeMaio’s opinion, and that they should be honest about the measure. So let’s stop with the finger pointing and start telling the truth. The “Voter Empowerment Act” is anything but empowering for the 1.64 million public employees currently enrolled in our state’s pension system.

I’ve been protecting the streets of Anaheim for decades. My community matters to me, and I pride myself on keeping our city a safe place to live and raise a family. I began my career because I wanted to provide for my family and have confidence that I would be able to retire comfortably after a long and rewarding career. Now, two career politicians with a bone to pick and blame to place want to attack the retirement bargained for by those of us in law enforcement, firefighting, teaching and other areas of professional public service.



Pitched as a measure to save money on pension costs of future employees, the act would eliminate defined benefit plans and create financial uncertainty. The promises made to employees regarding their retirement will be broken under this initiative.

I'm tired of the rhetoric. Even the most conservative voters want fairness and honesty. Let's be square about what we are talking about. Not only do Reed and DeMaio ascribe blame to peace officers and other public employees for California's financial crisis, but now we somehow have so much power of persuasion that we can pressure our state's attorney general into writing the title and summary for the primary purpose of pleasing her supporters in the public sector? Enough is enough.

This initiative is absolutely a maneuver to strip public employees of constitutionally vested and promised retirement and health care security. Thanks to a thoughtful and accurate summation, the jig is up on Reed and DeMaio's plan. They can pretend all they want that this initiative won't affect current employees, but the truth can't be ignored and voters deserve to have the full story.

Special Notes:

The article was originally posted in the Orange County Register on August 30, 2015.
<http://www.ocregister.com/articles/public-679966-employees-initiative.html>

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