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Payne: Snyder's bridge collapse

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The new Detroit-Canada bridge collapsed in the Michigan Senate this week because - contrary to the claims of the Snyder administration - it cost Michigan taxpayers money. Payoff money, that is.

So much for reinventing Michigan.

The span has long been in trouble among state Republicans who know that Canada cooked the books on traffic numbers needed to support a new bridge, but the media has portrayed this as an effort by Ambassador Bridge owner (and thorn in the side of the Canadian government) Matty Moroun to buy off GOP legislators.

In fact, what ultimately doomed the new bridge was Governor Snyder's payoffs to Detroit pols.

In the wee hours before the Senate Economic Development Committee was to vote on the so-called NITC bridge, Republicans were enraged when bridge supporters snuck language into the bill promising "community benefits." Translation: political loot to buy off Detroit legislators.

Let Jack McHugh, the Mackinac Center watchdog who has been barking for months, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:nDoninXx2cwJ:www.michigancapitolconfidential.com/15163+mchugh+and+community+benefits+and+bridge&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>>explain. Political patronage includes "a bag of boodle called 'community benefits,' which are often the political price of large construction projects in America's one-party rule 'urban core' cities," wrote McHugh way back in June. "Who pays for these political spoils? Ideally taxpayers who live someplace else."

He told you so.

"If he wants another bridge, he's going to have to come to the negotiating table with Democrats. If he thinks we're going to just blindly give him support, without some community benefits involved, he's got another thing coming," said Detroit Rep. Harvey Santana spelling out the graft for those who didn't get it.

But a blinkered MSM - obsessed with that evil One Percenter, Matty Moroun - ignored these under-the-table payoffs until the inevitable quarterback sneak this week. "The new bill brought forward Wednesday added language about 'community benefits' for Detroit's Delray neighborhood that 'may' include measures related to health, jobs, housing and the environment," reports The Detroit News.

So much for that bridge being free to taxpayers.

The new bill summarized "changes made pursuant to the Lt. Governor's office and their deal with Democrats in the Legislature." They think Senate GOPers just fell off the turnip truck?

"I've never seen anything like that before in all my tenure in the Legislature," said enraged GOP committeeman Sen. Mike Kowall.

Actually, this is the way business is done in good ol' corrupt Detroit. But it's not the re-invention that Snyder promised. If NITC bridge supporters want their bridge - and they have some good arguments - they should stop the demonization of Moroun and address the accounting and under-the-table demons in their own camp.

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