

Missouri Association for Social Welfare

July 2, 2010

Today we get this take on the current Special Session of the Missouri Legislature from long-time social justice advocate Rep. Jeanette Mott Oxford.

“The Missouri House of Representatives has voted to continue playing in the “Rob Your Neighbor” game that has proven so disastrous for our state and nation. Legislators passed the Manufacturing Jobs Act (HCS HB 2) as a desperate “Hail Mary” play, frantic to retain 4,000 jobs at the Claycomo Ford plant near Kansas City. What will become of the bill is still a question mark, as the Governor and Senate leaders have signaled disapproval of some amendments added on the House side.



Rep. Oxford

“Repeatedly we have allowed wealthy special interests to intimidate us with the threat of moving jobs to another state if we do not cough up the taxpayers’ money. Even when we come through with the dough, companies who benefit often feel no obligation to stay in Missouri, moving from one sweetheart deal to the next, leaving behind a swath of economic disaster. I offered an amendment calling on federal legislators to pass a strong anti-piracy act to stop this losing game, but unfortunately the amendment failed.

“As Stewart Acuff and Richard A. Levins point out in their short but powerful book **Getting America Back to Work** (Tasora Books, 2010), such legislative actions do not happen in a vacuum. They are the result of “intentional, sustained, strategic public policy – bad public policy cooked up by the Financial Elite and their henchmen.” The outcome is that the USA has stopped working for ordinary Americans, favoring only a handful of unbelievably rich and powerful individuals.

“Acuff and Levins call us to return to our nation’s highest values, affirming that people come before profits and every worker deserves dignity and respect. We must organize a movement large enough and strong enough to challenge those who push the lie that “greed is good” and that short-term profits justify harm to the environment and to our neighbors. In doing so, we can grow the middle class and end three decades of stagnant wages. We all do better when we all do better.”

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