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Posted Mar 23, 2011 @ 04:40 AM
Holland, MI —

Are you an American employee? If so, today's column will likely offend you. If you'd rather not be offended, read no further. If you continue and then complain, I'm sorry, but that simply proves you're, well, stupid. But then again, stupidity plays a large role in today's topic.

Still reading? OK. You've had fair warning.

So you're an American employee. Maybe you make car parts. Maybe you're an engineer or designer. Maybe you're an accountant, store clerk or tradesman. Whatever you do, you're probably stupid or lazy. Yes, I wrote it, and I mean it. You are either stupid or lazy. Maybe both.

Now, I'm not referring to your work ethic or job performance. No, most of you are competent and devoted to your profession or vocation. I'm addressing the way you view economics and employment. I'm challenging your gumption to advocate for yourself and your fellow Americans. Here's what I mean.

Remember the Reagan standard? Are you better off today than you were a decade ago? Two decades? Three? Unless you make more than \$380,000 a year, the answer is no. In fact, your standard of living over the last quarter century has actually decreased while millionaires have added 30 percent to their net wealth. Why? Two reasons.

First, hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs went overseas while the politicians you elected did nothing to stop them. Yet you continue to elect leaders who offer nothing but tax cuts to the rich, as if that would stem the flow of disappearing jobs.

Did you demand your leaders address America's trade imbalance or continuous outsourcing of jobs? Did you demand your leaders require foreign countries to buy a dollar's worth of American goods for every dollar of goods they sell here?

No and no. You didn't bother. You simply crossed your fingers and prayed, "I hope my job's not next." You made concessions to your employer and hoped that would stem the exodus of jobs, or at least yours. How'd that work for you?

Second, you bought into the myth that unions are the cause of America's demise. You didn't bother to learn America became a world power when union membership was at its peak. You didn't bother to learn America became the envy of the world while 1 of every 3 Americans was a union member in the 1950's.

So, how are things going for you? How do your benefits compare to a quarter century ago? Are you paying a higher or lower percentage of your income for health insurance? Does your company offer a pension plan, or do you now fund your own 401(k)?

Maybe you're thinking, "I'm not a union worker, so this doesn't affect me."

Stop being stupid. Union benefits provide a standard other companies have to match, or at least come close to. When those benefits are cut, yours are, too. Or do you think you operate in your own little employment vacuum?

To make matters worse, you're again being played for a chump. The same puppets who did nothing while your standard of living decreased are now using the oldest gimmick in the book — jealousy — to continue their assault on American workers. Rather than protect Americans' jobs, they deflect your attention through jealousy.

"Cut the pay of government workers," they cry. "Increase their health premiums. Decrease their pensions. Break their unions. After all, you've suffered so they should suffer too." And in your misery, you buy their argument while more jobs head overseas. Pretty stupid, eh?

If their antics weren't so pathetic, if the consequences weren't so dire, if they didn't prey on your stupidity, and if you didn't buy into their convoluted reasoning, this whole situation would be laughable. But of course it's not.

I warned you I'd likely offend you, and I suspect I did. But once you overcome your anger, consider my analysis. Then, either wise up and do something about it, or resign yourself to a lower standard of living for the next decade.

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