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Fake “Reform” and “Class Warfare”

Kevin Carson

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Ever notice that the people who complain the most about “class warfare” are actually engaging in it the most aggressively? And that they usually call it “reform”?

Here are a couple of cases in point, via Mark Monson’s *LVT News Digest*, a recurring feature on the Land Theory group.

First, a letter to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* from Harold Kyriazi takes issue with regressive property tax “reform” proposals to replace the property tax with higher sales taxes.

Better would be to employ Pittsburgh’s old, tried-and-true “split rate” property tax, in which site value is taxed at a 6-fold-higher rate than buildings.

But Pittsburg recently abandoned its split-rate system, which

greatly reduced the penalty for maintaining and improving one’s property, and partly deterred the obstruction of land speculators holding land out of

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present use in hope of future gain. It also mitigated the harmful incentive for absentee landlords to let their properties deteriorate so as to reduce their tax load.

Let's fix the county assessments quickly, and especially the location valuations, so Pittsburgh can return to its beneficial land value taxation system.

Meanwhile, in South Carolina, House Speaker Bobby Harrell, advocates a similar fake populist "reform" that entails replacing the property tax with a sales tax. Harrell expressed his disappointment that anyone

would pull class warfare into their effort to stop people from getting property tax relief...

By the way, this contamination of political discourse by the touchy-feely rhetorical style of motivational speaking and the fundamentalist pulpit ("disappointed"; "touched my heart"; "some things I'd like to share with you") really irritates me. Wonder how "disappointed" Harrell would be by a boot in his ass?

Cindi Ross Scoppe, the author of this op-ed piece, is probably numbered among the class warriors; she points out that eliminating the property tax will benefit the very richest, while the increased sales tax will fall disproportionately on the poor. Drawing attention to such unpleasant details, as Thurston Howell might drawl, "is in such *poor taste*, Lovey."