

**Testimony before the New Economy & QOL Committee regarding  
HB6454**

**on allowing 'for benefit' corporations**

Sep 22, 2010

Hello ..my name is Robert Leonard Thank you, for taking this matter up and for letting me speak today in favor of this bill. Given the nature of this bill and the mission of this group this seems the PERFECT committee ....for this matter to come before. When all is said and done here ...I ask you to consider how many matters that have come before you, have aligned so well with both the concepts of .. The New Economy... and ....Quality of Life.

Who I am and how I got here:

I'm a business owner, I've been running our family's (auto supplier) manufacturing business in Redford for the past 20 years. My liberal arts degree included a concentration in economics ...but that was a long time ago, and little in the study of economics then or now prepares one for the 'new normal' in which we now find ourselves. There are no guidebooks to the new economy. In fact economists themselves are struggling.

In economics the (so called) 'quants' (with their much vaunted econometric models... that blew up and failed to predict) are discredited now and the current debate among economists--- is about whether the best new center of gravity for economics... rests with those pushing 'behavioral economics' or the 'economy *as an eco-system*' view of the field. I'm not an economist but then I'm not sure that is what is called for either.

Mainly what qualifies me (or at least got me elected) to address this subject I think is that I'm a generalist. I see the value in so called 'intersectional'\* and 'integrative'\*\* thinking and in looking across disciplines. When the innovation requires connecting lots of dots there are few thought leaders or subject experts. This bill seems to fit that category of breakthrough.

I'm a lifelong Republican but I mention that only because it was a Dem (Rep Barnett) that was the first person to recognize the merits of this 'for benefit' concept. The key is not party affiliation but an open mind.

I'm a sort of missionary for 'benefit corps' and an evangelist for innovative Econ Dev initiatives. When it comes to Econ Dev and fixing Michigan, I've come to the conclusion that two heads are better than one.

Well, since this bill was only introduced just days ago I figure there is much to explain.