

MY LADY PARTS WILL BE VOTING THIS YEAR

A funny thing happened when I wrote that I was excited that Trevor Thomas might run for the 3rd Congressional District because he was involved in one of the most exciting underdog victories progressives have had in recent years.

A local Democratic activist (he's known me for years but apparently hasn't followed what I've been up to) left a comment telling me I had to have the humanity to talk to some people in West Michigan before I spoke about the race. He followed that with a comment claiming I've just lived in Grand Rapids for 16 days so I "simply do[] not have a well-informed take on West Michigan." (This, at a time when I've got a post up reminding Pete Hoekstra about the Laotian-Americans in his own town.)

Now, for any other Democrats who don't want to bother reading my posts or consulting the voter rolls or lists of MDP members with West Michigan addresses, let me correct the mistaken impression that I've lived here just 16 days: I've lived in West Michigan for 18 months. I moved to Holland in August 2010, then moved to Grand Rapids last April because I liked its mix of artsy culture and Midwestern grit. As I walk every day through some of the most Democratic neighborhoods in the city, I've learned to love the city.

Sure, I haven't lived in Grand Rapids long, but I'm the kind of person who has been moving to this city of late. I'm the kind of person who has begun to make the city more Democratic. I'm one of many kinds of people local Dems need to understand if they want to understand how their city is changing and how we can win the 3rd CD in November.

I probably shouldn't have used the word "bigot" in my original post and I apologize that I did. But let me explain why I was upset by the

impression that the local party doesn't want a pro-choice candidate on the Democratic ticket here in Grand Rapids. I've lived in MI a long time now. I'm very familiar with the argument that says there's a particular kind of Midwestern Democrat that is great on economic issues but may be anti-choice, the argument that says women just have to suck it up and accept that.

But then, in 2009, one of those otherwise great Dems, Bart Stupak, decided to risk blowing up the Health Insurance Reform Bill to make sure he got to dictate to women in every congressional district in this country what kind of medical care they could get. One of those otherwise great Dems made it the law in this country that there should be medical insurance, and then separate medical insurance for the lady parts.

Since that time, women have been told more and more they just have to suck it up, sacrifice autonomy over their own medical care because other issues are more important. Our Democratic President ignored the science on Plan B. Planned Parenthood has become the new ACORN. And Republicans have pursued the latter effort even at the expense of cancer patients.

So I apologize I used the word bigot. But let me make one thing clear: I will not take kindly to the Democratic party telling me paternalistically I just have to suck it up, it knows what's best for Grand Rapids and me and my lady parts. There are far too many women in this country who are losing medical care for things that go far beyond abortion and contraception for that to be acceptable this year.

My lady parts will be voting this year.