

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

May 8, 2018

\$60,000 For Ten Minutes:  
Nice Work If You Can Get It

Last month I read an article about the cost of the Wisconsin gerrymandering lawsuit. I previously wrote a blog describing how Republicans redrew legislative districts in Wisconsin to guarantee that they would never again lose control of the state legislature.

A recent response to an open records request revealed that the Republicans defending their gerrymandering paid one law firm \$60,000 for a ten minute argument before the U.S. Supreme Court. There is no one on the face of the earth who is worth \$60,000 for a ten minute speech. There is absolutely nothing anyone can say in a ten minute argument that could justify a \$60,000 payout.

This is not a case where the facts or the law are unknown. The issues have already been extensively hashed and rehashed in the lower court. It is just a matter of the justices on the supreme court deciding whether they agree or disagree with the reasoning of the lower court. It appears to be an act of desperation - doing anything and everything they can to prevent a loss in court which will end their dominance in Wisconsin's state government.

The law firm which reaped the windfall at taxpayer's expense was Kirkland and Ellis. They have also been paid an additional \$175,000 of taxpayer money for other work on the gerrymander lawsuit. The Republicans have thus far spent \$362,414 just for legal work done in the U.S. Supreme Court. This is in addition to the \$2.1 million already spent by Republicans on the redistricting issue.

The Republicans have a minority of citizens willing to vote for them. It is the party of rich white people. As our society becomes more diverse and multicultural, their power wanes. The only way they can get power and keep it is by rigging elections - gerrymandering and suppressing the vote.

We have endured budget cuts to education, the gutting of our environmental regulations, the refusal to fund road repair and construction, needless imprisonment and warehousing of thousands of our citizens and a multibillion dollar giveaway to a foreign corporation. If not for the gerrymandering, none of this would have happened.

I'm praying for a blue wave in November to put an end to this right wing radical agenda.