

“WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF ANGRY OLD WHITE MEN IN THIS COUNTRY”

Last we heard from the top leadership of my local Democratic Party in this blog, it was telling women at a women’s political event that they had to support 61-year old (though not particularly angry) Steve Pestka because “he’s with us on everything else” but choice.

As we were waiting for the Senator to speak, a top county Democrat was sitting several rows behind me trying to convince some of the women not to support Trevor Thomas. “There is absolutely no way he can win,” the guy said (the polling says he’s wrong, and I suspect he knows that). In addition to saying a gay man can’t win, he also said a pro-choice person can’t win in the district (his listeners pointed out that Stabenow herself had won the district; so have at least two other pro-choice candidates). Then he described Steven Pestka, using the line Michigan Democrats used to defend Bart Stupak as he was rolling back access to choice for women across the country.

He’s with us on everything else.

But the really appalling comment, uttered by a man at a women’s event, was this:

I need to win this year.

If the guy were reasonably intelligent, he might have said, “we need to win the gavel back for Nancy Pelosi.” But he couldn’t even muster a “we need to win” this year. Nope. It was “I need to win this year,” and that’s why women have to

suck it up and vote for someone who has attacked their autonomy in the past.

Today, the head of the local party, Jim Rinck, is spinning yesterday's results by promising demographics will eventually make Grand Rapids more Democratic.

Kent County Democratic Party chairman Jim Rinck said several factors contributed to the final tally – and he sees a trend toward a growing number of Democratic voters in the GOP stronghold.

“Like it or not, reality comes even to Kent County,” he said. “We are running out of angry old white men in this country. And they're the constituents of the Kent County Republican Party.”

Sadly, Rinck was not asked why, then, the party pushed an older white man as their congressional candidate. That candidate lost to the rather young Justin Amash by almost 9 points.

That's particularly unfortunate given the explanation one woman offered in the article for why she even decided to vote this year: Republican attacks on women and gays.

Brianna Holben, 20, cast her vote for Barack Obama Tuesday. Despite being her first-time voting, Holben said she didn't have a real urge to participate until women's reproductive rights and the funding of organizations like Planned Parenthood became part of the campaign.

Holben, a student at Grand Rapids Community College, also said picked Obama because Democrats, in general, are more supportive of gay marriage than Republicans.

“I have a lot of friends in the gay community,” she said. “If we live in a free country, I don't believe a person's

religious beliefs should affect
someone's ability to pick who they
marry."

Holben might well agree with what Rinck says—the Republicans are the party of old white men. But not with what Rinck did—push an older white man rather than openly gay, women's rights champion, Trevor Thomas, they opposed.

That is, Rinck seems to understand, abstractly, what Democrats need to do to win. But he did the exact opposite this year.