

## Race & 23 is enough

In his June 16 letter "Tribal money grab," Attorney Bruce Courtade says he's "tired of being labeled racist" because he opposes the Gun Lake Casino.

Well, if he doesn't like the accusations, he should quit associating himself with a group who's purpose is to infringe upon the rights of our sovereign tribal nation. The letter attempts to cast aspersions on the Tribe for "insisting" that a past lawsuit be brought in tribal court rather than Michigan courts.

Why does he imply that tribal courts are inferior to state courts?

He asks why it is unfair to limit the number of liquor licenses in the state, but not the number of tribal casinos. He also complains of an "unfair advantage" that tribes have over non-Indian businesses because tribes do not pay state and local taxes. For an attorney, his ignorance of the law is alarming. Mr. Courtade should know that tribes are governments, not private businesses.

Governments do not apply for licenses, they issue them; governments do not pay taxes, they collect them. In fact tribal gaming revenues are 100 percent taxed by the tribal government.

He claims that the Gun Lake Tribe's efforts to establish a casino is a "money grab," but he is the treasurer for an organization whose sole purpose is to protect a few Grand Rapids millionaires from a competing entertainment venue. His efforts are denying jobs for thousands of people in West Michigan that are unemployed.

Contrary to his letter, it is him and "23 is Enough" that are "plotting to make millions from those in our society who can afford it least."

**JOHN SHAGONABY**

Gun Lake Tribe Treasurer

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