

Governor closing secretive NERD fund without disclosing donors as questions remain about Vets Home privatization

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Oct. 24, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today former employees of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans sent a letter to Gov.

Rick Snyder

asking him to disclose whether or not the Home's new for-profit management company, J2S Group Healthforce, has ever contributed to the Governor's secretive NERD Fund. The letter was also submitted to the NERD Fund's Chairman,

Charlie Secchia

, of

Grand Rapids

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"Taxpayers deserve openness and transparency from our Governor," said Mark Williams, a former employee of the Grand Rapids Veterans Home. "We deserve to know whether or not Gov. Snyder's decision to privatize the Home for Veterans was influenced by any contribution to his secretive fund. Closing the fund without disclosing the donors just raises more questions about conflicts of interest in administration's decision-making process. It's time for Gov. Snyder to clear the air and live up to his campaign transparency pledge."

Since its inception in 2011, the NERD Fund has paid Snyder's top aide, Rich Baird, \$100,000 per year from the Fund's secret donors to conduct official state business in the Governor's Executive Office. To date, Snyder has refused to disclose the donors to the NERD Fund. Earlier this week, the Governor announced he was closing the Fund without disclosure.

SOURCE Michigan AFSCME Council 25, AFL-CIO