

# The Journal News

## Cross party lines to save the Big 3

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The effort to secure billions in loans to help out ailing domestic automakers has produced some strange bedfellows.

One might expect a mayor like Wayne's Al Haidous—a Democrat in a Democratic town heavily reliant on Ford Motor Co.—to travel to Washington to make a pitch for the beleaguered automaker.

Legislators like State Sen. Bruce Patterson and U.S. Congressman Thaddeus McCotter—whose reelection campaigns are beset with opposition supported by the United Auto Workers (UAW) union—are a different matter entirely.

Yet both have done their part. McCotter has been a constant source of support for the Big 3, speaking eloquently in their defense, pointing out the hypocrisy of a government willing to hand out billions to bail out the banking industry with virtually no strings attached or governmental oversight, while at the same time making unreasonable demands in order for car makers to get a loan—which was ultimately rejected.

Patterson has sponsored resolutions in support of the Big 3, commending the unions for doing their part—as they have during the past several years—to keep the automakers afloat.

Both should be congratulated for their effort.

As this newspaper headed to print on Tuesday, the help these automakers need was still in limbo. A proposal to lend \$14 billion to them stalled in the U.S. Senate, due in large part to the efforts of U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby, whose state of Alabama houses several foreign owned auto plants who received large tax abatement incentives to locate there.

Such a short-sighted approach is alarming in a federal official. This is not just about the ongoing viability of the Big 3—it is the automotive industry in general. The companies that supply parts to the automakers rely on crossover business, too. Take one or two out of the picture and it spells trouble for everyone.

Now, if this loan—and it is a loan, not a handout, or a bailout, or anything else, it is money that will come back—is to happen, the automakers have to turn to the unlikeliest ally of them all, President George W. Bush.

We hope, for once, he sees the light of reason. This is something that is not only vital to Detroit and Michigan, but the country as well.

McCotter and Patterson should be recognized for remembering that, all along.