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Campaign takes aim at levy increase for Duluth school district

A conservative activist from Duluth on Wednesday announced a "Vote No, No" campaign in opposition to the levy questions on November ballots for the Duluth school district.

By: [Mike Creger](#), Duluth News Tribune

A conservative activist from Duluth on Wednesday announced a "Vote No, No" campaign in opposition to the levy questions on November ballots for the Duluth school district.

Paul King said fiscal mismanagement of the Red Plan — which consolidated, improved and built new schools — was the main reason voters should not renew the expiring levy and refuse any increase. He said many of the aspects of the improvements were "vanity items," such as athletic facilities.

"This is not the time to ask for more," King said as he stood in front of a handful of people at City Hall.

If voters vote "no" twice, the district would see its operating funding go down. Voting "yes" on extending the current levy would not increase taxes. Voting to increase the levy, a second ballot question, would raise taxes.

King said the economic realities of today make any increase in taxes a burden on the most vulnerable. He said Duluth's aging population would be the hardest hit, along with young professionals looking for affordable housing.

King drew some attention in March when he confronted Gov. Mark Dayton at a forum in Duluth to discuss the state budget.

King told Dayton that he disagreed that the rich should pay the same percentage of income in taxes.

"Maybe we paid our fair share," King said in a packed room. "The wealthy are doing all the work."

Dayton later said he was surprised at the level of disrespect he encountered at the meeting, one of many he had across the state.

"If you ever had a real job, you'd understand," King said to Dayton.

King said teachers should take a pay cut or a pay freeze to help the district's finances. He also said college students should be brought in to help teachers.

He also suggested that the district identify its best teachers and give them more students to shift class sizes.

He said the district should seek alternative revenue streams, mentioning one district that made money by selling advertising on its buses.

King in recent years has spoken at and helped organize rallies for the Northern Liberty Alliance, the Northland's chapter of the Tea Party.

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