

Random Notes

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Black Eyes for the Bullies

"If you even dream of beating me you'd better wake up and apologize."

-Muhammad Ali
The Greatest Heavyweight Boxer Ever

It was late August when the opening bell sounded the beginning of the prize fight in Ohio over the rights of public employees to bargain collectively. For ten weeks, thousands of teachers, police officers, firefighters and other public employees and organized labor—collectively known as We Are Ohio—answered the bell each round with a relentless campaign to win public support to repeal SB5. Every phone call, every knock on voters' doors and every sign stuck in someone's front yard amounted to a stinging left jab to the chin of the opposition. For its part in the brawl, Building a Better Ohio had little to answer with: virtually no yard signs, no canvassing, no phone banks and *no people*. They countered with television spots and mailers that in many cases were misleading, half (if that much) true, and in some cases flat out lies. We Are Ohio absorbed the attacks in an Ali-like Rope-A-Dope fashion, deflecting them and going on the offensive once they'd run their course.

Tuesday, while the entire nation watched, Ohio voters joined forces with We Are Ohio to deliver the knock-out blow, a devastating over hand right that left the Governor, his allies, and the centerpiece of his administration sprawled on the canvass. By a 61% to 39% margin, voters rejected the mean-spirited attack against the state's public servants. Not just a TKO in our opinion, but a landslide by any measure.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

Last spring, the political savants were predicting—and understandably had us believing—that Building A Better Ohio would double our fund raising efforts. Turns out, at least for now, the group's effort in that regard was nearly as pathetic as their ability to rally public support and campaign workers. At the last reporting deadline, We Are Ohio had raised \$19 million to defeat Issue 2. Our opponents reported collecting \$7.6 million. They speak about our fund raising success with disdain, attributing it to greedy, power-mongering "union bosses" putting the squeeze on their members. That mentality punctuates their gross miscalculation about just how many Ohioans they infuriated with their bullying tactics in ramming the bill through the legislature. The name of and amount given by every We Are Ohio donor is required by law to be recorded as public record. Building a Better Ohio used a little trickery (just as they did during the campaign) in col-
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Sen. Frank LaRose
December, 2014
\$67,336



Rep. Kristina Roegner
December, 2012
\$60,584



Rep. Lynn Slaby
December, 2012
\$66,851



Rep. Todd McKenney
December 2012
\$65,405

Pictured at the left are the members of the Summit County legislative delegation who voted for Senate Bill 5. In so doing, they sought to take away your workplace rights, your livelihood, your future and your dignity. They supported the pro-Issue 2 campaign. That campaign attempted to pit public workers against other workers by constantly referring to our wages as grossly excessive when compared to those of private sector workers.

Each of these legislators is serving his or her first term in Columbus. We've printed their salaries for this year as reported on the Treasurer of Ohio website. They enjoy the same fringe benefits as all other state workers. We don't have to point out to you that it would take twelve years for an Akron teacher with a MA to match their salaries. We don't begrudge them their earnings, even though they generally work three day weeks and have more "time off" than teachers (to date, the Senate has been in session only 27 days, the lion's share of which fell in March when they were real busy passing SB5). We understand there are committee meetings now and then and meetings with constituents back home.

By the same token, we must label these lawmakers hypocrites for daring to complain to taxpayers about our wages. We've included their term expiration dates under their photos. That's when we can send them a message about just how hypocritical we think they are.

Hats Off to Our Republican Allies

We would be remiss by not sending thanks to the 23% of Republicans who planned to vote against Issue 2 (pre-election estimate; we wouldn't be surprised if the actual percentage was higher). Their ranks are led by syndicated Cincinnati talk show host **Bill Cunningham**. Cunningham is so far right on the political spectrum that while driving down the road his passenger tires are up on the curb. Yet he blasted Kasich, a personal friend, for railroading the bill through the legislature and completely leaving organized public employees out of the discussion. Cunningham's endorsement of a "no" vote on Issue 2 can be viewed at www.youtube.com by searching "**bill cunningham on issue 2**" at that site. Cunningham was also interviewed on MSNBC's Ed Show. The interview is also posted on You Tube. Search "**bill cunningham on the ed show**." We repeat our thanks from last spring when five senators (**Seitz, Hughes, Grendell, Patton and Oelslager**) and five representatives (**Johnson, McGregor, Gardner, Carey and Kozlowski**) bolted from the party's rank and file to vote against SB5. Finally, and most importantly, no words of appreciation are strong enough for our fellow teachers, police officers, firefighters, city, state and county workers and countless others from the R side who put justice and fairness where it belongs—ahead of party affiliation and politics.

While on the subject, we'd like to send a large dose of raspberries to the projected 18% of Democrats who were likely to vote yes on Issue 2 (pre-election estimate; we wouldn't be surprised if the actual percentage was lower). Leading the deserter pack was Cincinnati councilman **Jeff Berding**. If not for our friends in the Queen City, we'd be harboring feelings of chagrin over the Ohio River not cutting its bed about 30 miles further north.

Bullies

(Continued from front page)

lecting their contributions. They used a federal non-profit corporation of the same name to funnel funds to their PAC. Unlike PAC's, non-profits are not legally required to disclose contributor details. They had promised to do so, but when statements were filed several days ago, they broke their promise (no surprise here) by listing only donors and not amounts given. Only one Akron firm appears on the list so far, and that's A. Mittiga Construction on Evans Ave. This company is listed as a fencing (we assume of the legitimate type) company. Not that we're purchasing new fences or replacing old ones very often, but keep this company out of mind when you do decide to built your dream fence.

WHAT'S NEXT?

"I never think ahead." —Gov. John Kasich during a network television interview when asked if he has a back-up plan if Issue 2 fails.

We do. This fight is not over. We can revel in the aftermath of victory, but only for a short time. The Issue 2 beating may have knocked Kasich & Co. so senseless that they are incapable of understanding the meaning and magnitude of the People's Veto (not to be read that they acted sensibly before the fight). There are already rumors that the Governor is planning a piecemeal approach to continue his attack against public employees, particularly teachers. We must be prepared for such an attack. It will be interesting to see how many of the Governor's accomplices continue to support his strategy to use us as scapegoats for the mess big business, Wall Street, banks and mortgage companies got us into. It will be especially interesting to see whether or not those whose terms are up a year from now remain in the fold or begin avoiding Kasich like the plague. Our mission is clear: monitor the legislature and get ready for Election '12. It's a whole new ballgame with a much more vigilant electorate.

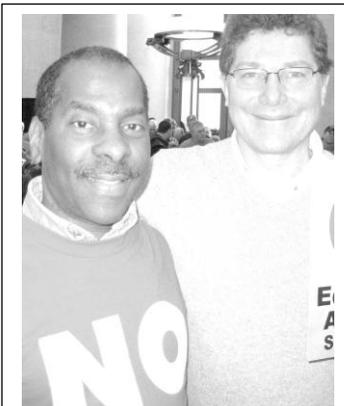
OUR VICTORY IN PICTURES



Sen. Tom Sawyer joined Akron teachers in a familiar spot last winter...on the steps of the Statehouse.



Chris Meneer, Jan Shipe, Pat Shipe and Diane May attend the People's Parade in Columbus last summer.



OFT Legislative Director Darold Johnson and Mike Rusnak chat during the hearings on SB5.



Bill Siegfert addresses an anti-SB5 rally in Columbus.



NO ONE collected more signatures in Summit County than our very own David "Mad Dog" Anthony.



Jeff Moats co-hosted a meeting with Frank LaRose at Mavis Winkles in Twinsburg.



Akron teachers made over 12,000 calls during the repeal SB5 campaign. Here they are joined by Rep. Zack Milkovich.