

GRAND RAPIDS PRESS: A POX ON ALL THEIR HOUSES, BUT NOT OUR OWN

The local rag posted an editorial “reflect[ing] the views of The Grand Rapids Press editorial board,” blaming almost everyone involved in the so-called “right to work” fight for the ugly way things went down Tuesday.

Right-to-work laws may or may not end up helping Michigan, but no one should be pleased with what happened in Lansing this week.

The whole process that led to the bills prohibiting workers from having to pay dues or fees to unions as a condition of employment has a patina of ick that unnecessarily divides and casts the state and its lawmakers in the national spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

[snip]

We’re disappointed in the whole lot.

The issue deserved the sunlight of the traditional legislative process, not moved through a lame duck session at breakneck speed amid threats and raucous protests, all played out in the national spotlight.

That’s not the Pure Michigan image we’re hoping to project as we rebuild the state’s economy and attract new businesses.

We all deserved better.

It blames Rick Snyder for betraying his “relentlessly positive” promises and flipflopping on an issue he had said wasn’t on

his agenda.

It blames union leaders for all the violent images (some—perhaps most—not the unions' fault), including the disputed tent collapse, the riot gear clad cops, and Jimmy Hoffa's promise of a "civil war."

It blames legislative leaders, calling out Doug Geiss and Dave Agema for their violent language and Lisa Posthumus Lyon for her hypocritical attempt to exempt her husband's profession from the law.

Yet oddly (or maybe not so oddly), the Grand Rapids Press placed no blame on the man who, perhaps more than anyone else, bears responsibility both that this went down, and for the nasty way it was jammed through.

As (the umbrella that owns the Press) MLive's own senior political columnist Tim Skubick explained, this went down in the way it did in significant part because of Grand Rapids' most prominent citizen, Dick DeVos.

Surely you remember the GOP candidate for governor and former CEO of Amway. Well he's back on the political field and he worked tirelessly behind Gov. Rick Snyder's back to push Right to Work.

[snip]

Having performed the 180, Mr. DeVos ramped it up. He told senators that if they don't vote for this thing, he would launch a petition drive to place this before the voters.

Recall that Mr. DeVos spent \$35 million of his own money to beat Gov. Jennifer Granholm, (money wasted). Legislators on the other end of his phone calls knew he has the deep pockets to not only gather the required signatures, but also to find a way to sell it to the voters.

Other press outlets (and presumably Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville) were less polite, calling what DeVos and his anti-labor friends did “threats” and “arm-twisting.”

Precisely the kind of implicit violence the Press found so distasteful when union leaders or legislators did it.

It’s all very nice for the Press to blame people on the other side of the state for the ugliness in Lansing on Tuesday. But they’re utterly irresponsible if they don’t also blame the ugliness here at home.

They’re right: We all deserved better. And the place to start demanding better is from Dick DeVos.