

THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE

Tim Walberg is a really awful wingnuttty Congressman whose district begins just spitting distance (emphasis on spitting) from my house. One of the local reporters, Susan Demas, had the balls to report that he refused to fire a campaign worker who pled guilty to child abuse, so the Congressman has basically frozen the newspaper out since then. Via the watchblog Walberg Watch, here is what Demas has to say about Walberg now.

U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg doesn't like me and I don't give a damn.

Neither should you.

Journalists and politicians often enjoy a testy, if not combative relationship; that's nothing new.

They're in the business of making themselves look good, raising cash and getting re-elected.

The press is in the business of reporting the truth about officials' voting records, platforms, finances and campaign ads.

Naturally, these goals often clash. As a result, Walberg and his staff refuse to answer my questions, provide information on his votes and inform me of his public events.

As an editor, I can't even assign a reporter to cover something as simple as the Tipton Republican's earmarks in the federal budget – as was the case last week – because I'm not privy to his press releases.

In short, I can't do my job to inform the public – and you lose.

What you should care about is that the

congressman doesn't much care for you, either, because he is actively squelching your right to know.

[snip]

Yes, people of all political persuasions pile on the press, but it's also true that the shrillest voices in the last decades have come from the far right.

It's a surefire way for pols to play to the base -which is how Walberg squeaked into his seat in the first place.

And it's something journalists often shy away from saying, lest we prompt conservatives to belt out another chorus against us.

Well, bring it on.

With all the time Walberg spends stonewalling the press, you have to wonder what he's doing to earn \$165,200 of your money each year and why he's so tight-lipped about it.

But we journalists will keep asking questions, because we owe it to you, the public. As your employee, Rep. Walberg owes you answers. Which is something he might want to consider, since he's up for a big job evaluation next fall.

Exactly. When politicians—including the President—freeze out journalists as punishment for critical coverage, the correct response is to turn around and turn it into a political liability. The Gang of 400 hasn't learned that lesson, apparently. They ought to take a lesson from Ms. Demas.