

LEVIN BROTHERS: RICK SNYDER DOESN'T UNDERSTAND HOW UNIONS WORK

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Michigan's Democratic Senators and Congressmen met with Governor Snyder this morning to urge him either to veto the so-called Right to Work bill, defer its passage until next term, or take the appropriations out that would make the law referendum-proof.

On a conference call describing their meeting, their chief message served to rebut Snyder's claimed reasons to pass RtW—that he wanted to “get beyond” this issue and that RtW would help jobs. Discussing this bill as a “right to work cliff,” Carl Levin said that if this passed, the Governor “will allow us to plunge into endless strife.” And it would do so, Senator Levin noted, after labor and corporations have achieved more cooperative relations of late (presumably a reference to the auto industry).

But the most interesting point that Senator Levin made—which his brother, Congressman Sander Levin elaborated on—is that Snyder doesn't understand how unions work. “The Governor in his statement [last week] said it incorrectly” Sandy said, when he suggested workers would lose their job if they didn't join a union. “And today I still don't think he understands.” Sandy continued. Congressman Levin went on to remind that the principle that workers could not be forced to join a union has been enshrined since he and then-Governor George Romney negotiated collective bargaining law back in 1965.

Now, in accusing Snyder of not understanding how unions work, I guess the Democrats wanted to do two things: treat his obviously false excuse for passing this as a good faith statement, and then to correct the lies that false excuse was based

on. But also to shift the blame for the labor unrest that will come as a result of this law onto the Governor; because he went along with what Carl Levin called a “parliamentary gimmick” that will push this through as referendum-proof, Snyder will be responsible for the negative effect this will have on Michigan’s economy.

I don’t know whether that will work or not. But one thing I didn’t hear is a criticism of Snyder’s vision for Michigan. Making MI a RtW state effectively embraces a vision of the state as Indiana or Mississippi or Bangladesh. Making MI a RtW state embraces the idea that we should be dumb labor, not innovative technology, just another entry in the race to be the cheapest, most desperate state.

I’m glad such key participants as Sandy Levin schooled Snyder on the last 50 years of MI history and what that history means for Snyder’s decision tomorrow. But ultimately we need to be calling Snyder out for his terrible vision for the future of MI.

Update: I’ve added an MSNBC appearance by State Rep Tim Greimel (from Auburn Hills, where Chrysler is located). It’s one of the better descriptions of what what RtW does I’ve seen.