But did Governor John Kasich stand by his minions being accused of campaign material piracy?

By IKE MGBATOGU

Contributing Writer

COLUMBUS – State Representative Tracy Maxwell Heard is a frontline foe of Senate Bill 5. Being one of the harshest opponents of the measure, she is always ready to do whatever is required of her to help derail the anti-union legislation that dismantled collective bargaining laws protecting more than 350,000 public sector workers in the state.

The law stripped these workers of their collective bargaining rights, including the right to strike against government, among others.

Heard has attended several community forums, decrying SB 5 as a draconian measure. She was part of the 'Million Signature March' in June involving thousands of SB 5 opponents who helped deliver 1.3 million signed petitions to the Ohio Secretary of State Office. That rally and March was part of the effort to submit 231,000 valid signatures required to place the controversial issue on the November ballot.

In short, if the clambake was about repealing SB 5, Heard showed up.

So, when backers of SB 5 tried to pull a fast one by glibly taking a message of opposition to the measure expressed by Great-Grandmother Marlene Quinn out of context, presenting it as though she was supporting the legislation, it was no surprise that Heard was one of the first to fiercely push back.

"I cannot write this off as ignorant or careless because they have willfully and deliberately decided to perpetrate a hoax on the voters of this state," said Heard. "That is why I will be introducing the 'Zoey Protection Act.'"

And that bill, Heard is hoping, would help prevent this kind of deceptive campaign shenanigan from happening again.

"This bill would prohibit campaign materials for a candidate or ballot issue from using an image, audio clip, or video that was originally used by another candidate or issue campaign without crediting the original source of the material," said Heard.

It was a case of unscrupulous misrepresentation of Grandma Quinn's message, she said.

The brouhaha began after Mrs. Quinn appeared in a commercial ad sponsored by 'We Are

Ohio,' a group opposing issue 2. In that ad, her touching story of how her granddaughter Zoey was saved from a burning home was meant to promote a "no" vote on Issue 2.

But 'Building a Better Ohio," a rival group campaigning in favor of SB 5 had a different plan for the ad. The group used it also to promote their cause after slickly lifting Mrs. Quinn's voice and the video and made a commercial urging a "yes" vote on the same issue then playing it on TV across the state.

Heard called it reprehensible.

"Building a Better Ohio took Mrs. Quinn's message and twisted her words into an ad supporting a Yes vote on Issue 2. Mrs. Quinn and many of us across Ohio watched in shock at their deceitful actions," said Heard. Mrs. Quinn, noted Heard, "pleaded that they stop the ad and TV stations across the state pulled the ad but, instead of admitting a mistake, the campaign stood by their shameful actions, claiming they followed 'the letter of the law."

But did Governor John Kasich stand by his minions being accused of campaign material piracy? Heard noted a Columbus Dispatch report about the governor having no issue with the ad, saying it was "fine."

And what's Mrs. Quinn saying about it?

She feels "violated," for one thing.

"I think it's dishonest and downright deceitful that they would use footage of me to try to play tricks and fool voters," said Quinn, whose missive was meant to convey the view that SB 5 would hurt firefighters and detrimentally affect the security of Ohioans. She said, "It's insulting to the brave firefighters that saved the lives of my grandson and my great-granddaughter Zoey."

The 78-year old grandma is especially angry that 'Building a Better Ohio' did not seek

permission from her before using her image and voice to promote a position on Issue 2 she opposes.

"I'm outraged. They did not ask my permission," she kvetched.

Mgbatogu is a freelance writer and editor of Onumba.com based in Columbus. He can be reached by email at Onumbamedia@yahoo.com