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By IKE MGBATOGU
Contributing Writer

COLUMBUS –The bruising battle over Senate Bill 5 ended months ago after a resounding collective victory for the opponents of the contentious proposal that sought to dismantle the collective bargaining rights of public workers.

But one of the key political figures in Ohio who opposed the measure recently scored a very big personal triumph.

Last week, the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) endorsed U.S. Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown in his re-election bid, uncharacteristically favoring the one-term senator over his

Republican challenger Josh Mandel. Brown was not expecting the support, but he gladly pocketed the kind reward from a totally unexpected source.

Apparently, the FOP, whose members are a big part of the union, didn't forget who had its back in the brutal fight over SB 5. Brown corralled the backing of the group because of his ferocious effort that helped repeal SB 5, a hugely controversial anti-union agenda signed into law by Governor John Kasich.

It was the first time in nearly 24 years that the FOP, a cabal of more than 25,000 retired and active police officers, has officially supported a Democratic candidate in an election for the United States Senate.

The last Democratic candidate to receive the support of FOP for the U.S. Senate election was Howard Metzenbaum. Since then, the group has backed a steady relay of Republican candidates, including the current U.S. Senator Rob Portman who defeated former Ohio Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher for the seat.

Brown, who is currently involved in a bruising battle against Ohio Treasurer of State Mandel to retain his seat, accepted the rare endorsement and thanked the FOP for it, saying, he "was proud to stand with the FOP last year as we fought against Senate Bill 5, an egregious attack on our courageous police officers that Ohioans roundly rejected."

As Brown noted, the controversial SB 5 was decisively defeated by a vote of 61 percent to 39 percent in the legislature, handing Kasich his first major shellacking as governor. It was eventually rejected by Ohio voters at the referendum polls, unleashing a final waft against a measure that bifurcated Ohioans along a partisan divide.

SB 5 severely blunted the 28-year old collective bargaining laws that protect 350,000 public sector workers. Kasich had rabidly argued that it would help local governments control cost.

But Ohioans said 'no' it won't.

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