

**By BRIAN ACKLEY**  
**WIN Columnist**

Here's a vote against any recall effort aimed at Buffalo mayor Tony Masiello, but not for the reasons you might think.

Unless you're a subscriber to the where-there's-smoke-there's-fire theory of politics, it's actually hard to imagine anyone bothering to mount a serious campaign to oust someone who's already been busted down to the military equivalent of private, first class.

Still, rumors persist that everyone from Bozo the Clown to Buster T. Bison are involved in at least dipping a toe in the recall waters to see how it feels.

Pretty lukewarm, let's hope.

Of course, while Arnold Schwarzenegger's win in the delicious California recall election sparked national debate on the issue, the notion locally was actually preceded by an ill-fated Masiello recall attempt by soon-to-be councilman Jimmy Griffin. Dead signers of the petitions notwithstanding, who knew Griffin had such a good idea at the time?

What's perversely pathetic is the notion of a recall election – gasp, something that actually returns power to the people on more occasions than every four or six years – is the only topic which seems to unanimously unite politicians of any and every ilk.

There wasn't a politician going who, seeing one of their kind actually threatened with losing a seat on the public gravy train, didn't jump before a microphone to decry the despicable notion of having their position and power somehow challenged by the electorate.

What's particularly galling, and garishly shallow – imagine that from a politician – was the near unanimous defense of their largely indefensible position that the California recall was somehow not to be taken seriously because the effort was largely financed and organized by a rich yet disgruntled fellow office holder.

And, exactly, how did 99 percent of those voicing the loudest criticism actually get into office in the first place? Of course, big money from a few well connected cronies and confidants who paid for an organized effort and campaign to win their election. Oh, yeah, sounds familiar when you put it that way.

When national media magnates George Will and Molly Ivins – on virtually the same day – both authored opinion pieces about the travesty of it all, recall elections were officially stamped as a good idea in my book.

Will and Ivins are as politically polarized as Hillary Clinton and George Bush. They would argue against each other whether or not the sun comes up in the east. But, on the matter of the California recall, both conveniently ignored the 1.3 million different voters who asked for such a vote. Undoubtedly, yet to be penned by the dysfunctional and disconnected duo is how discouraging it is no one in America takes part in the political process, despite the fact that Arnold Schwarzenegger's win came on record voter turn out. Will categorized it as the “awfulness of the California recall.” Ivins equated it to political folly. Of course, as media celebrities who make six and seven figure salaries, they are certainly well connected to the mores of everyday life in suburbia, right?

Having said that, a recall effort against Masiello would be both pointless and pointlessly painful. He has no power left, his damage has already been done, unless he were to stoop to a new low and hire – as has now been rumored – two city councilpersons who are losing their jobs January 1. Even just the notion such idea would be floated begs the question: how many more slaps in the face can voters take?

Simply put, any recall effort would needlessly open wounds and inflict damage that is counter to what Buffalo needs right about now.

Some politicians might not think so, but trust us: even voters know that.

*(Brian Ackley is a columnist for the Weekly Independent Newspapers (WIN) of Western New York. WIN is a consortium of 19 community newspapers in Erie and Niagara counties with a paid weekly circulation of 75,000 homes, providing collaborative advertising and editorial support for member publications. For more information on WIN, or to provide feedback on this column, visit our website at [www.wnynewspapers.com](http://www.wnynewspapers.com). Opinions expressed here are those of the author.)*