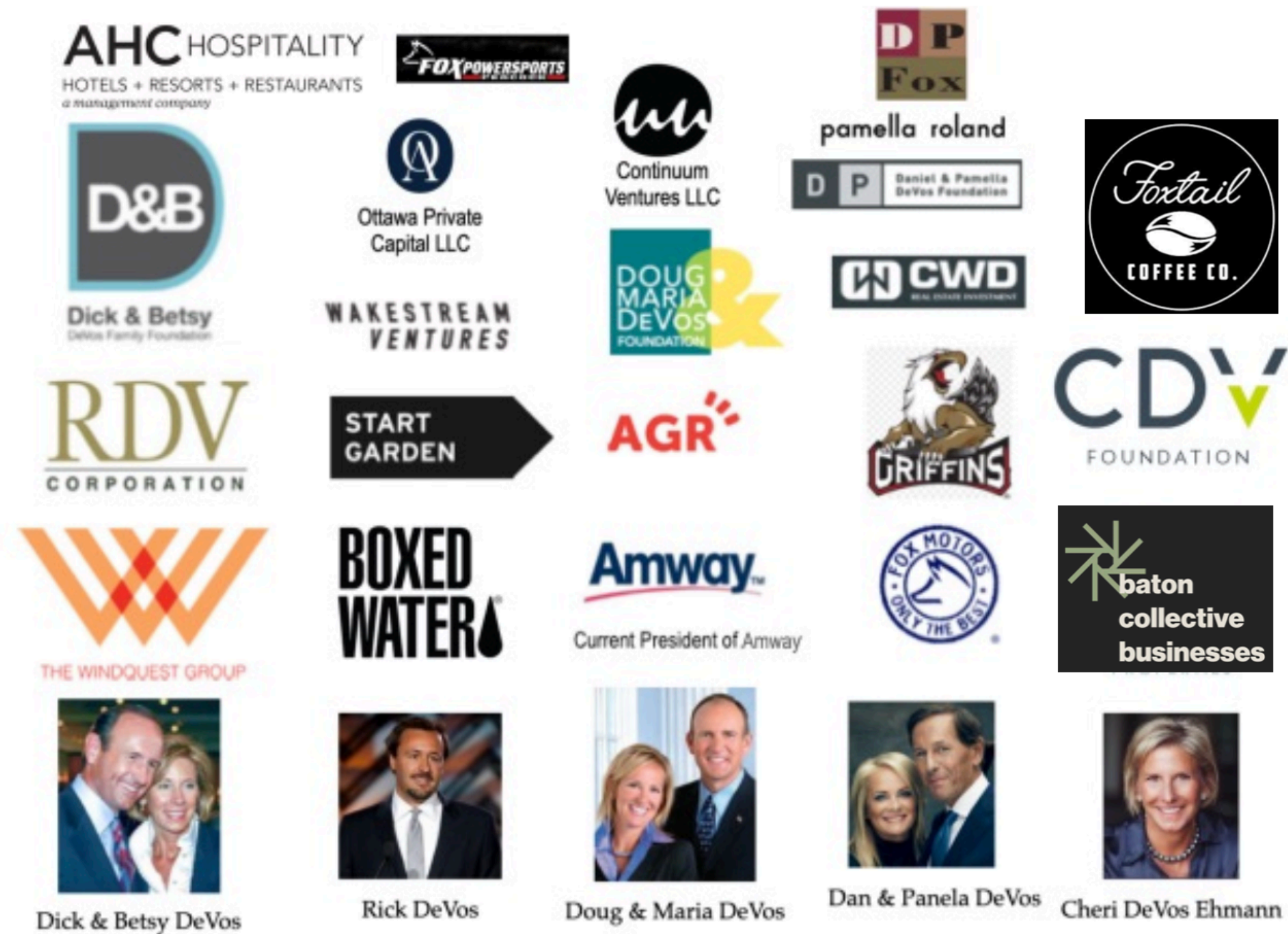
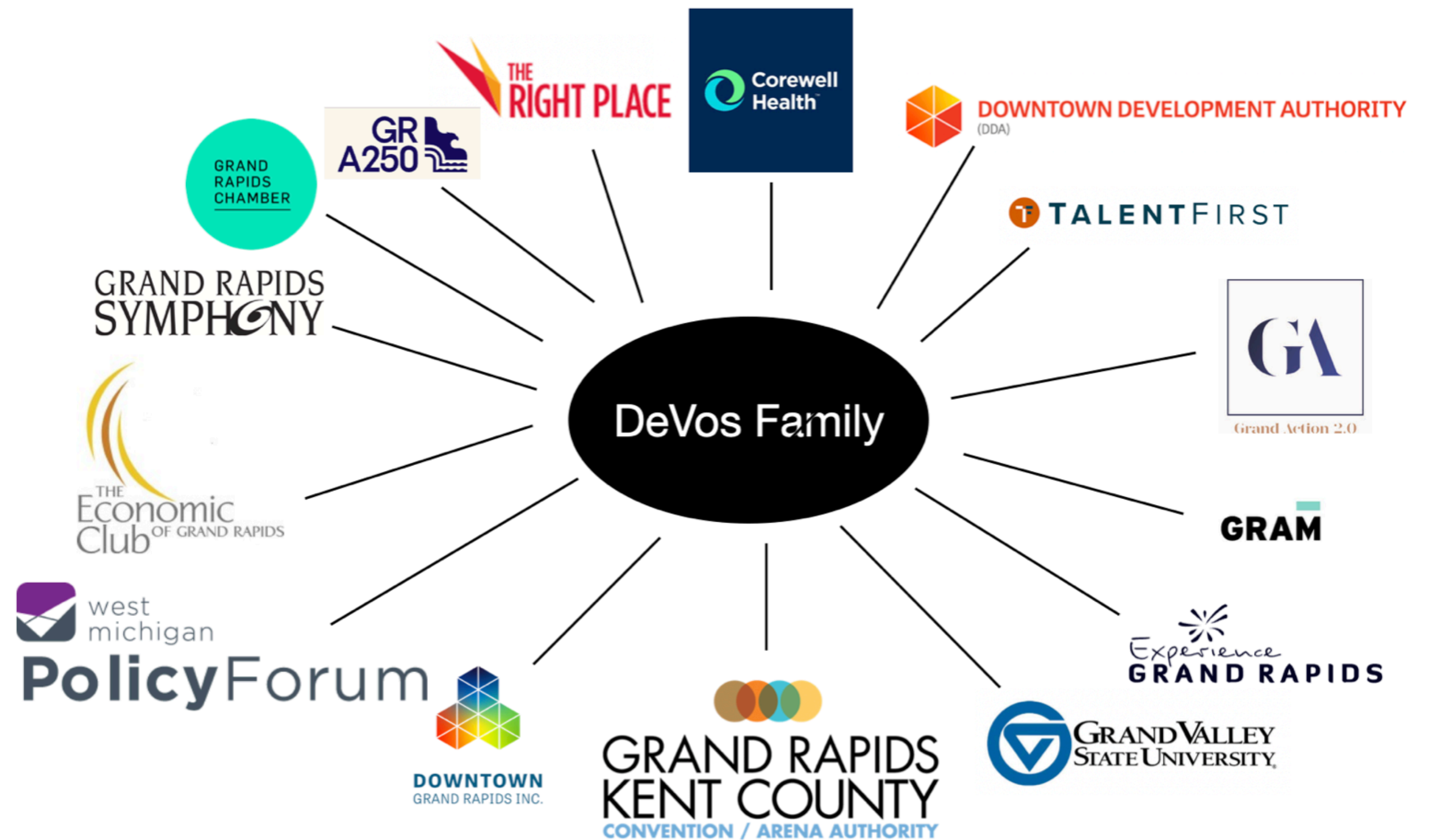


# How we can resist the GR Power Structure



A sample of the DeVos Family Wealth/Assets



# Interlocking Systems of Power



**Local governments promote private sector power through tax breaks, private/public partnerships, development projects, commission board positions, and protect private sector power through white supremacy, gentrification, police departments and jails.**



The main function of the local news media is to serve and normalize the systems of oppression that are part of the Grand Rapids Power Structure.



## **To resist the GR Power Structure we have to:**

- **Recognize the interlocking systems of power**
- **See how local governments are influenced by the power structure and normalize oppression**
- **What role the commercial media plays by not questioning the power structure**
- **Always follow the money**
- **How the non-profit industrial complex takes hush money and doesn't question the root causes of any given injustice.**
- **Build grassroots, autonomous people power**

# Why resist the GR Power Structure?

They impose economic, social, political and cultural dynamics on the rest of us, often using public dollars without public input, and primarily for the goal of expanding their wealth and power.

They influence public policy through campaign contributions and sitting on government committees

They use their foundations to fund organizations that promote their ideological agenda and fund non-profits to keep them quiet.

They use their power to undermine efforts that support organized labor, public education, are anti-LGBTQ and aggressively anti-trans, oppose environmental justice practices, oppose real climate justice practices, perpetuate institutionalize white supremacy, oppose living wage policies and continue to create projects that will ultimately expand their own wealth.

# Always follow the \$\$\$\$\$



**We have to:**

**Publicize this information**

**Make connections to how campaign contributions influence public policy**

**Demand candidates refuse to take \$\$\$ from members of the GR Power Structure and PACS**

<https://kent.mi.campaignfinance.us/>

<https://www.transparencyusa.org/mi/>

<https://www.opensecrets.org/elections/michigan>

# Having a seat on Government Committees

## Board Members

## Grand Rapids DDA

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**Richard A. Winn, Chair**

*AHC Hospitality*

**Mayor David LaGrand**

*City of Grand Rapids*

**Rosalynn Bliss**

*Michigan State University*

**Luis Avila**

*Varnum*

**Kayem Dunn**

*Organizational Development  
Consultant*

**Greg McNeilly**

*The Windquest Group*

**Al Vanderberg**

*Kent County Administrator*

**Jen Schottke**

*West Michigan Construction  
Institute*

**Ryan Foley**

*Acrisure*

## Board Members

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## Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

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**Brian Harris, Chair**

*Independent*

**Stephanie Andrews**

*GR Public School Foundation*

**Rick Baker**

*GR Area Chamber of Commerce*

**Shaun Biel**

*Advantage Commercial Real Estate*

**Al Vanderberg**

*Kent County*

**Nikos Monoyios**

*The Rapid*

**Jorge Gonzalez**

*Start Garden*

**Kara Wood**

*Grand Action 2.0*

**Doug Small**

*Experience Grand Rapids*

**Monica Steimle-App**

*Rockford Construction*

**Eddie Tadlock**

*SMG*

**Randy Thelen**

*The Right Place*

**Mark Washington**

*City of Grand Rapids*

**Richard Winn**

*AHC Hospitality*

**Charles Burke**

*Fredrick Meijer Gardens &  
Sculpture Park*

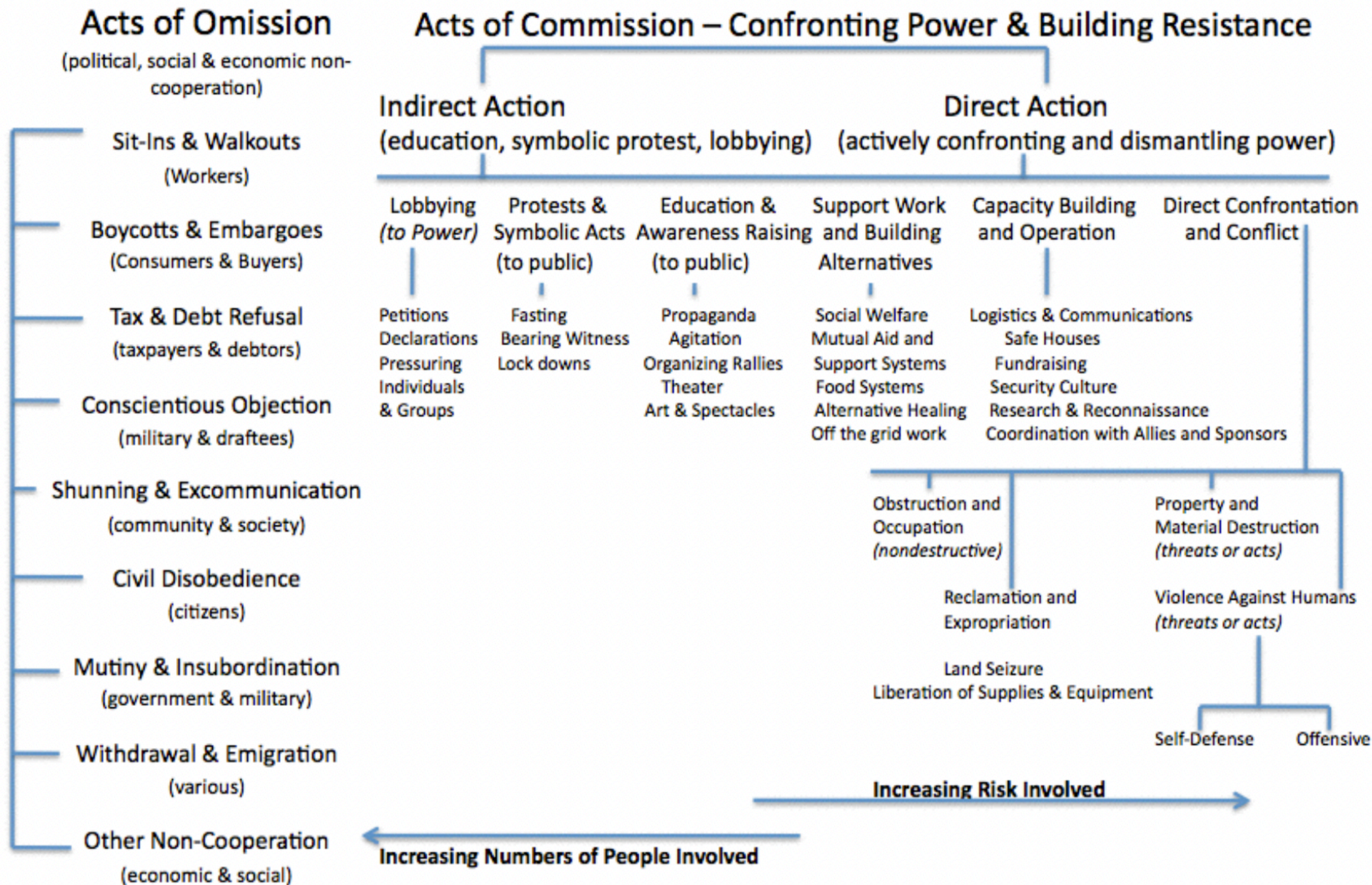
**Mayor David LaGrand**

*City of Grand Rapids*

- **Attend committee meetings**
- **Make what is being discussed/decided public**
- **Push for greater transparency**
- **Demand Participatory Budgeting**
- **Pressure Campaigns targeting public policy/public officials**
- **Boycotts targeting public policy/officials**
- **Direct Actions targeting public policy/officials**

**Examples - GRPD funding, Three Towers, Sanctuary Policies**

# Taxonomy of Action



# **Ways to resist the GR Power Structure**

- 1. Investigate where they have influence**
- 2. Monitor and expose them by creating media content**
- 3. Tax policies**
- 4. Attacking their wealth and assets - boycotts, disruptions, civil resistance, an anti-Capitalist analysis,**
- 5. Creating alternative/autonomous models that reflect how we want the world to look like**
- 6. Short term and long term goals**

# Example #1 - Grand Action Projects

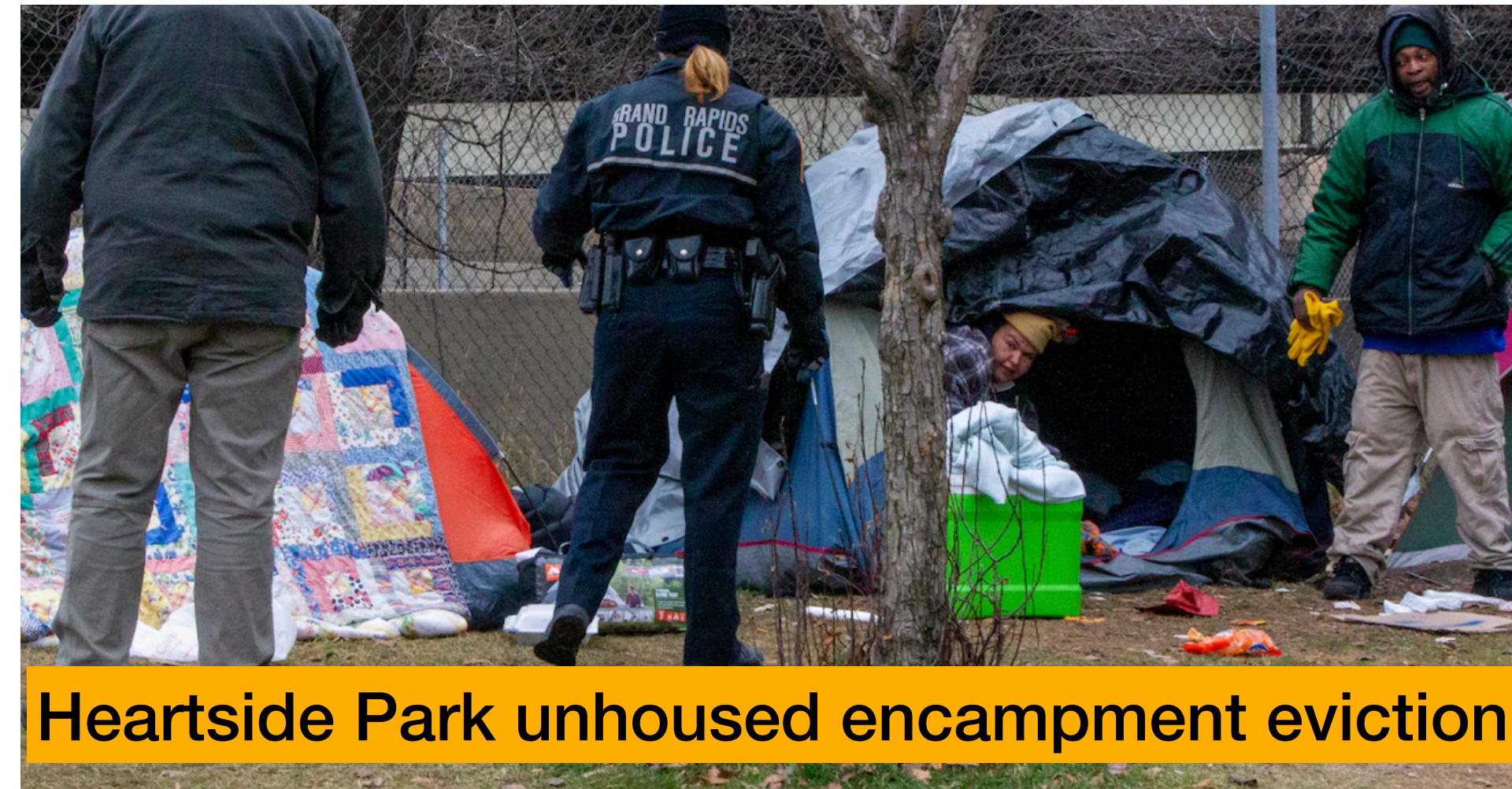


These projects are pitched as private/public partnerships, but who really benefits?



Collectively these Grand Action 2.0 projects combined have used nearly a billion of public taxpayer dollars. What could we have spent this money on to meet community needs? **It's never a question of cost, rather a question of priorities.**

# Example #2 - Housing



Public Safety Committee member Ed Kettle said that most unhoused people are “not competent” and suggested that the humane thing to do is to lock them up in mental health facilities. He views the primary cause behind homelessness as mental health issues.

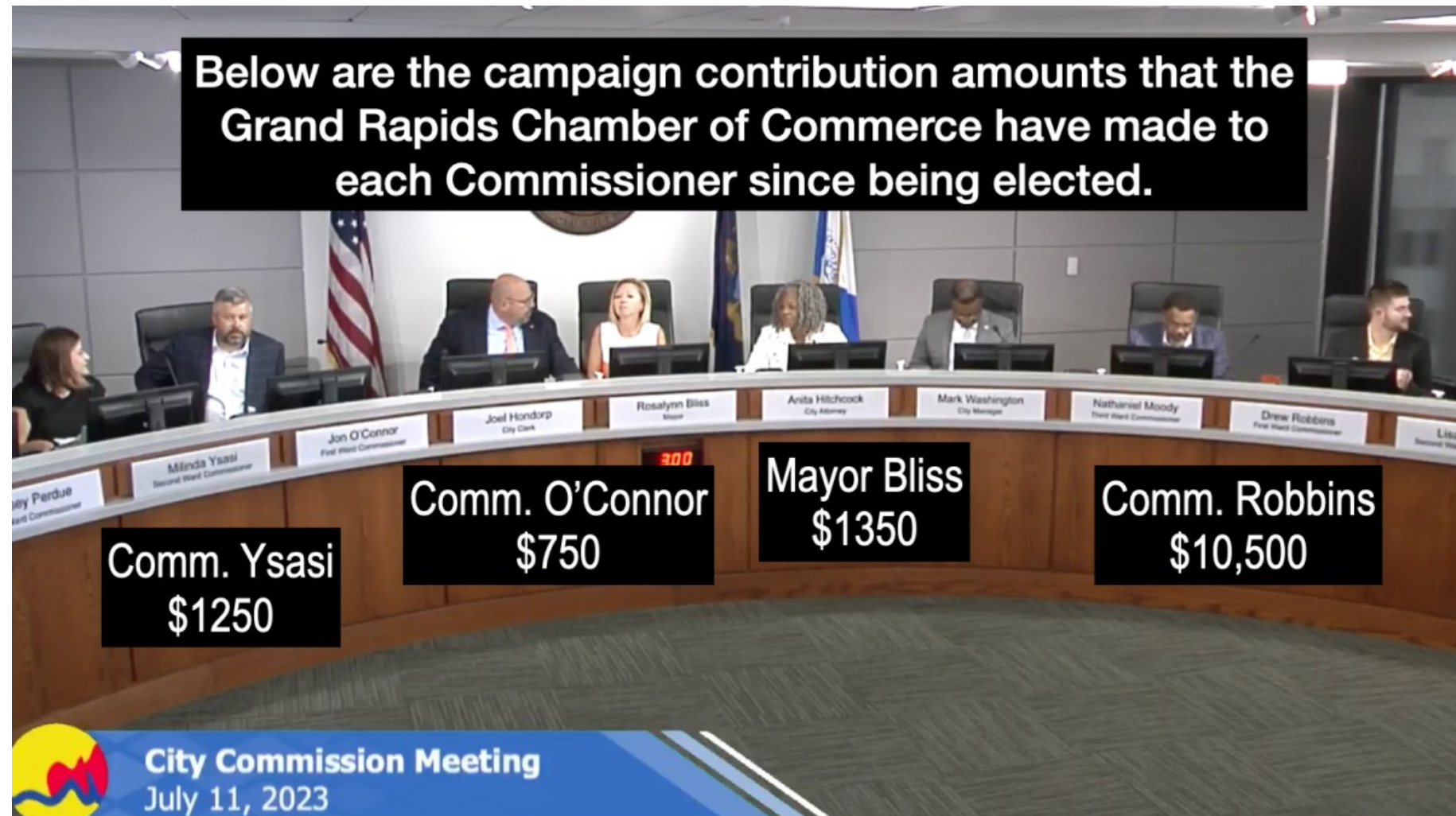
Public Safety Committee member Marlin Feyen said that he wants to prohibit all sitting and lying in the downtown area. Feyen is a businessman who made his wealth off of workers at Feyen Zylstra, while he **sat** in his corporate office.



2022 GR Chamber proposal

<https://grandrapidscitymi.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=5119&Inline=True>

# Example #2 - Housing continued



The Chamber of Commerce created Housing Next group cannot be allowed to impose their market-based housing solutions in West Michigan, especially for the thousands that are housing insecure.



*Even if rents froze tomorrow, and wages increased at their current rate, it would take until 2036 for people in similarly earning professions to be able to live comfortably and affordably in Kent County, according to the report. [https://housingkent.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HK\\_SoH2024\\_V10.pdf](https://housingkent.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HK_SoH2024_V10.pdf)*

*If home prices remained at the rate they are now, people in those occupations still wouldn't be able to afford a home in Kent County until 2041, the report stated.*

# Targetting the DeVos Family


*“That call of freedom went forth from a rugged wilderness, and Europe and Asia and Africa sent their sons of adventure to hew out a new society in a land of forests and savages.”*

Richard DeVos quoted in *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right*



*“When HIV first came out, President Reagan formed a commission and I was honored to be on that commission. I listened to 300 witnesses tell us that it was every body else’s fault but their own. Nothing to do with their conduct, just that the government didn’t fix this disease. At the end of that I put in the document, it was the conclusion document from the commission, that actions have consequences and you are responsible for yours. AIDS is a disease people gain because of their actions. It wasn’t like cancer. We all made the exceptions for how you got it, by accident, that was all solved a long time ago. That’s when they started hanging me in effigy because I wasn’t sympathetic to all their requests for special treatment. Because at that time it was always someone else’s fault. I said, you are responsible for your actions too, you know. Conduct yourself properly, which is a pretty solid Christian principle.” Rich DeVos*

★ **WANTED** ★



**The DeVos Family**

*For contributing to the Criminalization of Abortion on two counts!*

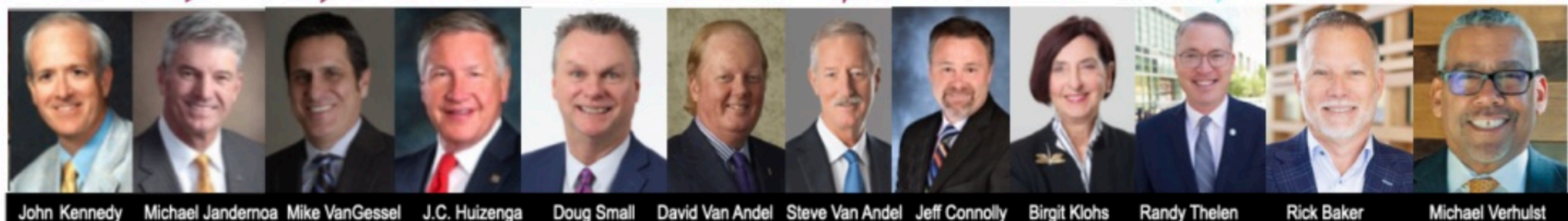
1. By contributing millions from their family foundations to Right to Life and other anti-Abortion groups.
2. By contributing over \$100 million to the GOP since 1999 to support candidates and a party platform that opposes Reproductive Justice.

See the GRID document - The DeVos Family Reader

# Targetting the DeVos Family

1. Boycotting their companies - publicize a list of DeVos Companies, create media content, get other organization & institutions to commit to the boycott, public actions at their businesses, disruptive tactics, stickers, flyers, wheat pasting, sidewalk stenciling, enter place of business - order and then leave. Boycotts are only effective if when there is organized disruption of a company's ability to make a profit.
2. Organize those affected by DeVos funded policies - LGBTQ communities, immigrants, labor unions, public school employees, Reproductive Justice groups, those committed to separation of church and state, non-profits that have relied on DeVos Foundation \$\$, working class people who are living paycheck to paycheck.
3. Begin campaigns to organize employees of DeVos-owned businesses - hotels, coffee shops, etc.
4. Target politicians that receive campaign contributions from the DeVos cartel.
5. Organize ongoing actions at 200 Monroe - DeVos Headquarters (Monroe & Lyon)

# Interlocking Systems of Power

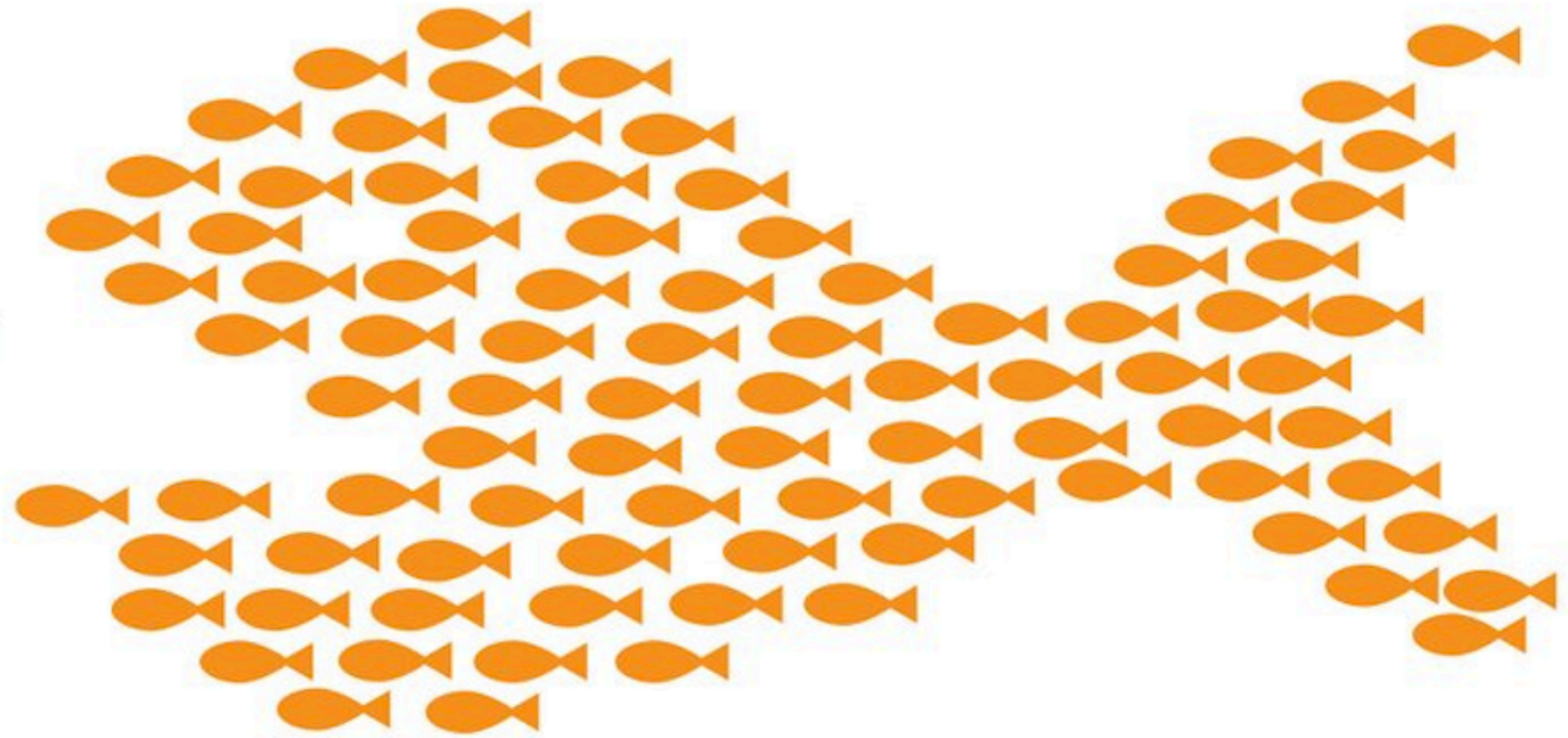
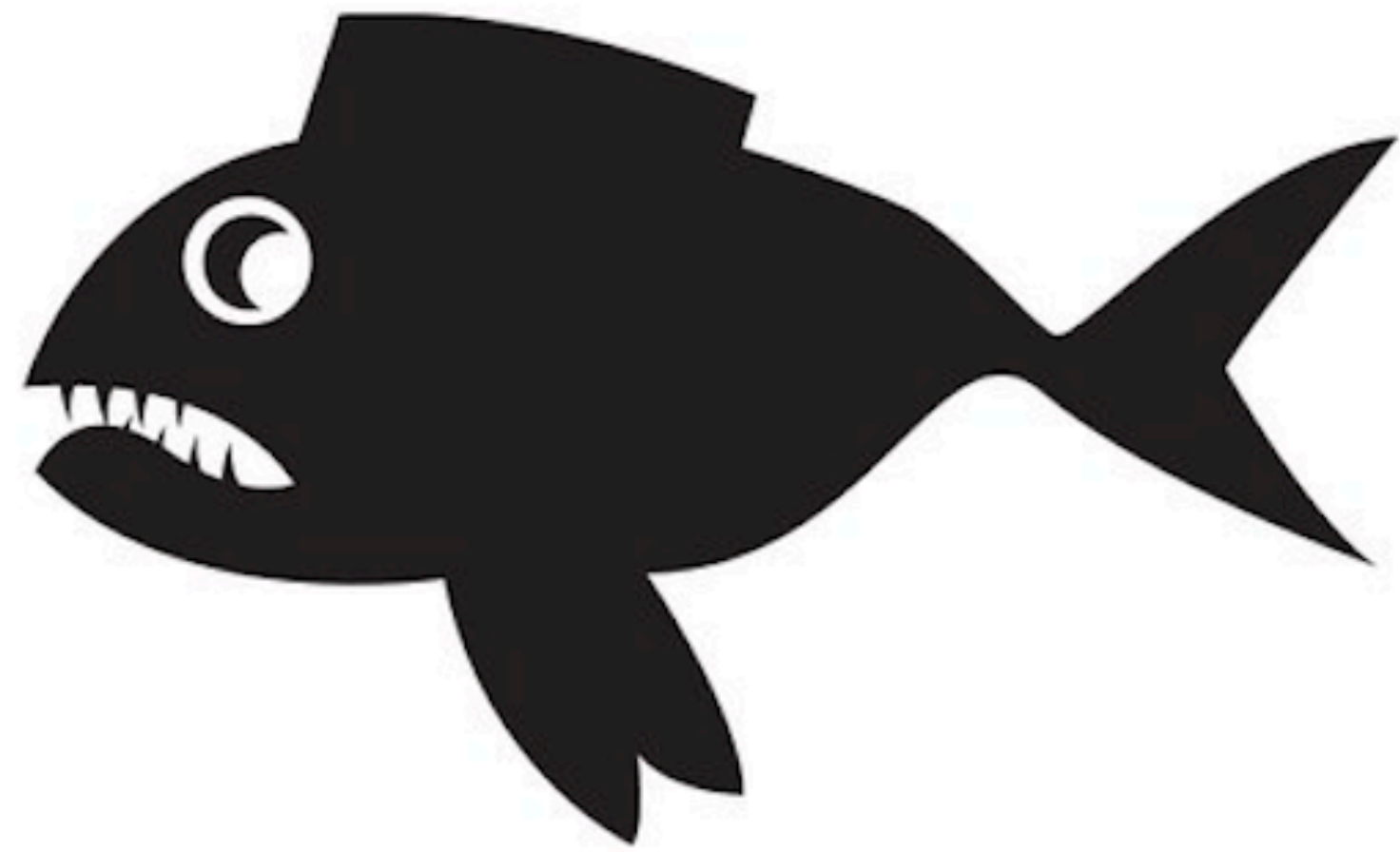


John Kennedy Michael Jandemoa Mike VanGessel J.C. Huizenga Doug Small David Van Andel Steve Van Andel Jeff Connolly Birgit Klohs Randy Thelen Rick Baker Michael Verhulst

**PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS THAT MAKE UP PART  
OF THE GRAND RAPIDS POWER STRUCTURE**



ORGANIZE!



**Organized people can beat organized money**

**ORGANIZE!**

