



SOLIDARITY

In The Sunshine

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Amendment 1: How an Electoral Defeat Marked the Re-Birth of Florida's Labor Movement

FINAL VOTE	YES	NO
Total	2,667,543	1,497,970
%	64.0%	36.0%

We never asked for the fight over Amendment 1, but when the Governor and the Legislature forced this incredibly unfair and misguided tax scheme upon us, Florida's labor movement responded with courage, conviction and extreme competence. We were at the forefront of this fight from the beginning, not just during the repeated legislative sessions to get something on the ballot for January 29th but well before that.

We have long partnered with good government and social justice organizations, working proactively to identify the real sources of Florida's myriad tax problems. We have worked to provide real solutions for giving tax relief to the working families that need it while ensuring that everyone pays their fair

share for the critical services that all of Florida's residents need and deserve. Unfortunately, these solutions have all too often fallen on deaf ears, drowned out by the short sighted, selfish voices of Tallahassee's deeply entrenched special interests.

Amendment 1 was just a small part of a broader struggle, one that has been raging for the past several years across the state between those looking for short-term political gains, regardless of the cost, and those looking to truly reform Florida's antiquated tax structure. This struggle is far from over; in fact it has just entered a new phase where opportunistic politicians will vying to see who can come up with the more reactionary, more radical, more destructive next tax proposal. The fact that Florida's working families and the future of our state has been caught in the crossfire is of no importance to these warring special interests and their chosen politicians. In terms of the final vote, we lost this round, but even though the final vote did not go the way we wanted, we must remain steadfast in our resolve to continue to do what is right for our workers, their children and their communities. Some may think we are down, but we are certainly not out—In fact we are stronger now than ever.

Once Amendment 1 made it to the ballot we had two primary goals. First, we wanted to defeat this amendment, forcing the governor and the Legislature to go back to the drawing board and craft a plan that was about sound fiscal policy rather than political expediency. Second, we hoped to use the campaign to reinvigorate our movement, newly reorganized under the New Alliance. This would fine tune our program so that we are better prepared for future tax fights and the all important Labor 2008 political program. We did amazing work and came very close to meeting that first goal. We completely met and even surpassed our second goal.

In It From the Beginning...

It is first important to note that while Amendment 1 and all of its various manifestations were working their way through the legislative sausage making process, Labor refused to follow the path of other interested groups which adopted a "wait and see" attitude. Instead we hit the ground running. We used this time to aggressively pursue the New Alliance reorganization program, putting the proper pieces in place faster than most other states. This enabled us to marshal the resources necessary to hire excellent field staff to implement all of the political and organizing goals of the program. These staff were immersed in a vigorous and expedited training program. They received top-notch political training from David Carpio, attended a comprehensive program at the AFL-CIO Leadership Institute and received critical training in important programs like the Local Union Database and the Working Families Toolkit. Additionally, they quickly entered the field and developed working relationships with local union leaders, many of whom had never been able to access the one-on-one support these staff were able to provide. By the time that Amendment 1 was on the ballot, these staff and many other local union coordinators had already developed the skills and relationships they would need to mount a credible campaign against the amendment. Within weeks, hundreds if not thousands of union members had been educated about Florida's property tax problems and how the various ideas being floated at the time did not adequately address them. We accomplished all this while many other organizations, who stood to lose much with the passage of Amendment 1, were still sitting on the sidelines.

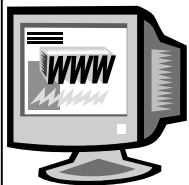
Florida Is Our Home

Florida Is Our Home (FIH) is the ballot initiative committee formed to enable Labor to work with its allies and communicate outside of organized labor. While this group represented an incredibly broad coalition of allies, Labor was the backbone of this effort. In less than six weeks, **over \$1 million was raised** and spent. Combined, **FIH reached 1.8 million likely voters** with direct mail and sent **1.7 million automated calls** into targeted households. The group distributed another **80,000 pieces of literature at MLK events** and at early voting. FIH bought radio advertising in key markets including Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa/St. Pete and Palm Beach. In addition, urban radio time was purchased in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa/St. Pete and Palm Beach.

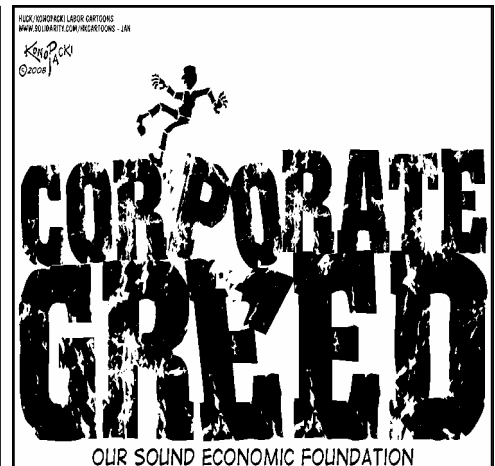


Florida Is Our Home brought together groups like ACORN, the League of Women Voters, the Florida PTA and many others. It also enabled us to engage Labor allies we have not been able to work with in the recent past. The Florida Association of Professional Firefighters (IAFF), SEIU and the Teamsters were invaluable partners. Additionally, our long-time friends at the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans (FLARA) were instrumental in reaching out to one of the most critical groups, our retirees with whom the Governor placed much of his own emphasis. FLARA President Tony Fransetta even personally recorded an automated phone call that went out to thousands of retirees, union and non-union alike, in key markets. Our work with FIH was a great success.

Florida AFL-CIO Hits You Tube!



The Florida AFL-CIO continued its march into the 21st Century during the Amendment 1 campaign with the successful launch of our very own You Tube channel. For those technologically challenged who still use rolodexes, postage stamps and VHS tapes, You Tube is an extremely popular website that allows anyone to publish their own videos on the Internet for the world to see. This new communication media has also given rise to an online community of millions of people and has become an integral part of the politics of cyberspace. Anyone can post videos and comment! **To visit the Florida AFL-CIO channel on You Tube, point your web browser to <http://www.youtube.com/floridaaflcio>.**



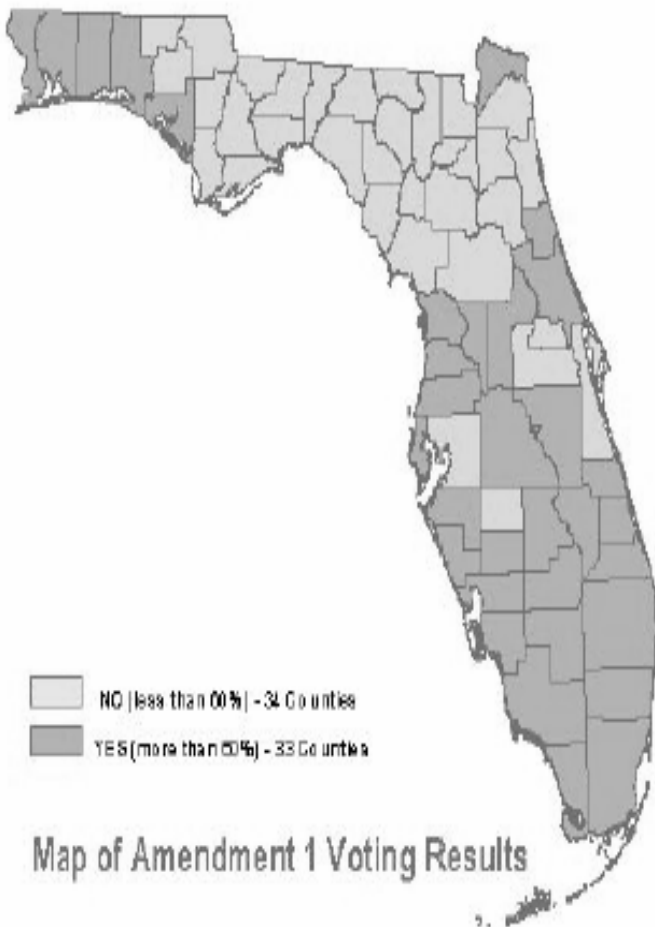
Labor's Campaign By the Numbers

Once we knew that Amendment would be on the ballot, Florida's Labor Movement shifted its campaign into overdrive, implementing a full fledged presidential style campaign implemented in days and weeks rather than months. Here are some of the numbers regarding what we accomplished throughout late December and January. These numbers are very preliminary, and there are many categories we are still working to get data for. However, these preliminary numbers clearly show that we all did amazing work!

- ◆ Volunteers entered in Local Union Database (LUD): 944 volunteer entries
- ◆ Local union participation as entered in LUD: 473*
- ◆ Direct local union contacts: 230 local unions contacted
- ◆ Educational presentations: 88 individual union presentations
- ◆ Worksite communication events: 128 separate events
- ◆ Worksite flyers distributed: 41,000
- ◆ Local union direct mail: still compiling data
- ◆ Local union phone bank events: still compiling data
- ◆ Local union mail pieces: still compiling data
- ◆ Working Family Toolkit orders: 311 separate orders**
- ◆ Working Family flyers ordered: 124,609 flyers ordered**

*During the early days of the campaign the LUD was not fully utilized, therefore this number is actually much Higher

**It is hard to be precise about information on the Working Family Toolkit at this time. For example, many unions downloaded single PDF files for their own use meaning that the number of users and the flyers generated is actually much higher than the numbers above.



What the Results Tell Us

- ◆ 34 counties voted "NO" on Amendment 1, 33 Counties voted in favor
- ◆ Especially high numbers in Southwest Florida (where our program was almost nonexistent) helped pass the Amendment
- ◆ The presence of field staff is directly connected to our success rate in all areas of the state. We won in some areas we did not expect to win and shaved several points off many others. The only constant is that these are areas in which we had paid staff working the New Alliance program.
- ◆ Property Tax issues are not partisan and we can't count on traditional bases of support in future tax amendment issues.
- ◆ The final results when compared to early polling indicated that our efforts in key areas of the state made a big impact, shaving 6% - 8% off the early poll numbers.
- ◆ The presence of paid field staff working through the New Alliance framework should be a priority for Florida's labor movement.
- ◆ The Governor and his big business friends out-spent Labor and its allies by over 4 to 1. They learned that when they take on a completely unified labor movement it will cost them!

What the Heck Happened to the E Messenger?

As our most dedicated E Messenger readers have noticed, it has been a long time since our little online newsletter graced their email inboxes, and they have been quick to let us know about it. For those of you unfamiliar with the E Messenger, it is an electronic newsletter delivered twice weekly full of hyperlinks to news stories around the nation, video clips, reports from the video blogs and stories of interest from the Labor Movement. Our subscriptions were growing by leaps and bounds and delivery was going well until we hit a little snag. The computer servers for AT&T and all of its affiliated Internet Service Providers came to the conclusion that we were spamming our own members! This is due largely to very complex software systems that looked at Internet traffic and decided that their system would block any incoming mail from our server at the Florida AFL-CIO. Since so many of our subscribers are using **Bellsouth.net** or **att.net** for their Internet service, the delivery system could not function. We have spent countless hours on the phone with folks from all over the company and are being told there is no way to lift the block...so for now...no E Messenger. By the end of the month we will have moved everyone with a bellsouth.net or att.net email address out of our E Messenger list so that the system will function again.

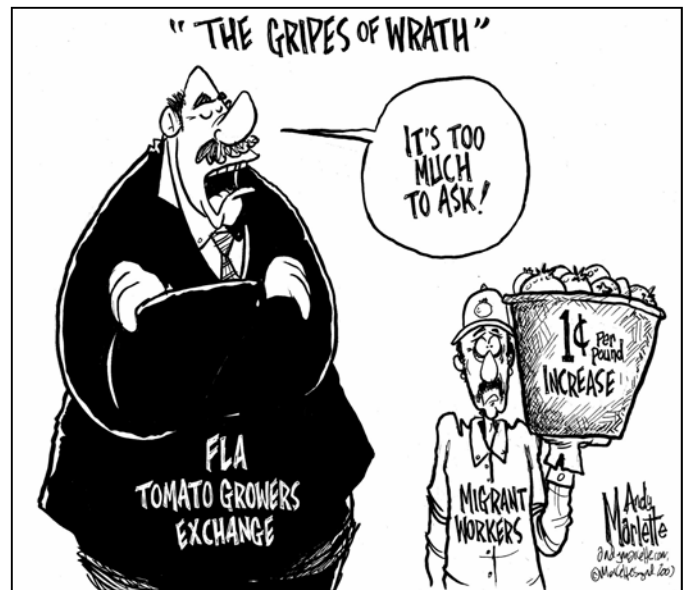
What can you do if you have one of these offending email addresses? There are two things. First, try getting us an alternate email address. There are many free services like hotmail.com or gmail.com that can give you a new email address. This will not stop your bellsouth email. Set up another account, let us know what it is by using the E Messenger link on our website, and you are all set. Second, as AT&T customers, you are the best people to help us fix this problem. **Call the customer service number for your phone/Internet service provider and tell them that you can't get the emails you want from flafclio.org, which is IP address 65.40.36.188 (this IP number will mean something to tech support people).** If AT&T gets enough customer complaints, they will be more likely to really address the problem. **If you have any questions about this or need help getting a free email account, please don't hesitate to contact Rich Templin at (850) 224-6926. Sign up at www.flafclio.org.**

The 2008 Legislative Conference

The Florida AFL-CIO Annual Legislative Conference will be held **March 16 - 19** in Tallahassee. Conference headquarters will be at the **Doubletree Hotel**, 101 South Adams Street. Conference registration forms have been mailed and are available from our office and must be completed by **March 9, 2008**. We strongly urge you to register early to avoid delays and extra costs for late registration. Registration fees for Florida AFL-CIO affiliated delegates will be \$125.00 per delegate, \$150 for non-affiliated delegates. After the March 9th deadline, there will be an additional \$10.00 charge for each delegate.

We have planned an informative and exciting agenda with plenty of workshops, guest speakers and time left over for fun and solidarity. Workshops on Sunday, March 18th include: New Lobbyist Training - Florida's Tax and Budget Issues and how to conduct a Power Analysis and more!

For more information or to receive copies of the registration materials please contact Hazel Ziegler at (850) 224-6926 or email at hziegler@flafclio.org.



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