



SOLIDARITY

In The Sunshine

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA AFL-CIO

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Working Families Rising: 2011 in Review

If there was a lesson to be learned from last year it is that elections matter! Pure and simple. 2011 was a year when working families' livelihoods hung in the balance due an assault at every level of government. Emboldened by the election of 2010, Congress looked to balance the budget by trying to fundamentally alter social security and Medicaid while continuing to pass additional tax breaks and handouts to Wall Street and large financial institutions instead of prosecuting them. Meanwhile, throughout the country, a large scale anti-union/anti-middle class campaign was launched through states' Legislatures. These attacks went against unions, the middle class and the poor, undermining the tenants of our democracy. In some states they aimed to eliminate collective bargaining, while others looked to pass Right to Work legislation; some wanted to eliminate the minimum wage or change unemployment insurance while finally many states passed election reforms that restrict people from making their voices heard in future elections. Again, if there was a lesson to be learned it is that elections matter.

However, 2011 was not the end of the labor movement. Working people didn't sit back— people organized, forged alliances and worked against anti-worker legislation together, in the streets, the ballots (read more about the defeat of Ohios' S.B. 5 inside this Issue) and at their state Capitols. Whether their efforts were successful, the American people were (re)introduced to the power of a diverse and empowered working families movement.

In Florida, we knew early in 2011 that we would be dealing with some of the most difficult, uphill battles we had ever faced. Under the guise of a \$4 billion budget deficit, empowered by Tea Party funders, Rick Scott and his corporate cronies, moved the most anti-worker political agenda in the history of the state in an attempt to dismantle some of the most important programs and policies for Florida's workers and their families. Public sector workers saw devastating changes to their pensions, our unemployment insurance system was gutted while close to a million Floridians are still out of work, our students and teachers were saddled with an untested and illogical "merit-pay" system and millions of Medicaid beneficiaries were forced into a for-profit HMO system. These are just a few of the major policy disasters ushered in by Governor Scott and his allies. However, Florida's Labor Movement, supported by our allies across the state and thousands of working people, beat back every single attack on the fundamental right to collectively bargain and the ability for unions to participate in the political process. Working families lost a great deal, but they did not lose their ability to fight back and be represented through their union. These state battles created alliances that were soon put to the test as people began to occupy the streets of New York and across America. People from all walks of life gathered together to occupy in hundreds of cities across the nation bringing the issues of income inequality, jobs and economic justice to the forefront of our collective conversation. Their actions/anger were directed at Wall Street and Banks who ushered in the economic downturn but have yet to pay for their actions. 2011 started with a corporate right wing push to fundamentally change America, but the labor movement, joined by the larger progressive community pushed back and ended the year empowered and ready to work together. They might have started the war on workers in 2011, but we will be victorious in 2012.



CALLING ALL ACTIVISTS!

A Working Families Lobby Corps Update from Phyllis Garrett, Political and Legislative Coordinator

The Working Families Lobby Corps was present at the Capitol every day of Interim Committee weeks and as a result several Legislators sought out representatives of Labor to find out “Why are you here”, “What are your issues” and “What can I do to help”?

Labor’s presence must increase for session and we do that through the Working Families Lobby Corps. The goal continues to be two activists from each CLC each week of session. Our presence must remain strong. Bills are being filed on a daily basis that indicate attacks on Labor and Florida’s Working Families are still foremost in the minds of our super majority Legislature. This session will be no easier than the last one.

The fight continues!

Session runs the following weeks: January 10-13, 2012, January 17-20, 2012, January 23-27, 2012, January 30-February 3, 2012, February 6-10, 2012, February 13-17, 2012, February 20-24, 2012, February 27-March 2, 2012, March 4-9, 2012.

For more information on how to be a Freedom Fighter, call your local CLC or contact Phyllis Garrett at 850-224-6926 or pgarrett@flaflcio.org. Make the COMMITMENT NOW!



From the Sunshine State to the Buckeye State...

In early November, American Labor History was made when for the first time ever, voters in a state wide election defended the right of public employees to collectively bargain by repealing Senate Bill 5 in Ohio.

This legislation eliminated the collective bargaining rights of close to 350,000 public employees of Ohio, including teachers, nurses and firefighters. After the Ohio Legislature pushed through Senate Bill 5, working families began a massive mobilization to repeal the law. In just a matter of weeks, activists working together collected more than two million signatures to put a S.B. 5 repeal on the ballot, where it was ultimately defeated by a wide margin of 61 percent to 39 percent. During the build up to this historic electoral victory, the staff of the Florida AFL-CIO volunteered to help in the Ohio AFL-CIO’s get out the vote effort! Secretary Treasurer Brian Dempsey, Political Field Director Salandra Benton, Zone Coordinators Sheena McCleary and Rodney Statham, South Florida AFL-CIO Mobilization Coordinator Jim Junecko, Communications Director Josh Anijar and Community Organizer Edwin Enciso all put on their winter coats and journeyed to Ohio to help knock on doors, make phone calls and leaflet at worksites to educate voters about the importance of repealing Senate Bill 5. The Florida AFL-CIO was not alone in lending a helping hand to the efforts in Ohio, we were joined by Brothers and Sisters from across the nation who wanted to help the state’s labor movement. Together, we showed that an injury to one is an injury to all and that if we are under attack in any area of the nation like in Ohio, that it is up to all of us, as a national movement, to assist in their efforts. The defeat of Senate Bill 5 sent a message to emboldened Tea Party Governors that their Koch brothers-backed agenda is not the direction that the majority of Americans want to head in. More importantly, the labor movement showed to its own membership that when it comes to our issues and our program, we can not only be successful with our rank and file but also with working people of all professions and political ideology. Ohio showed the power of democracy and the power of dedicated activists as workers from all crafts and sectors struggled together to defend the rights of follow workers. For the staff of the Florida AFL-CIO this experience was an honor to be a part of, and only empowers and dedicates us for the hard work ahead in 2012.





Awake the State...

A Florida tradition.

Last year on the first day of the Legislative Session thousands of people from all walks of life came together across Florida to take part in "Awake the State" rallies in their cities. Local Labor unions and Central Labor Councils joined community activists and organizations in rejecting the legislative priorities of Rick Scott and key leadership in both houses. After the rallies took place, Awake the State continued to build in local areas. Throughout the rest of the year in many areas of the state, Awake the State groups met, organized and took action together and now, for the fourth time in less than a year, they are gearing up for another state wide mobilization. On January 10th, join in a local Awake the State rally and send a clear message to Governor Scott and his extremist allies in the Legislature: it's time to stop cutting the budget and instead invest in our future to protect and expand our middle class. Lets go Awake the State!

Awake the State Rallies as of 1/3/12 however please visit Awakethestate.com prior to January 10th to get the most updated information on the rally you plan on attending:

- Miami: 1/9/12 | 6 PM at the Miami Dade Auditorium located at 2901 West Flagler Street
- Sarasota: 1/10/12 | 10 AM in front of the Herald Tribune Offices located at 1741 Main Street
- Saint Petersburg: 1/10/12 | 3 PM at Williams Park located at 330 2nd Avenue North
- West Palm Beach: 1/10/12 | 4:30 PM at the Occupy Palm Beach Occupation Site located at N Olive Ave and Banyan Blvd
- Tampa: 1/10/12 | 5 PM At Gaslight Park located at 410 N Franklin St.
- Ocala: 1/10/12 | 5:30 PM at the First Congregational United Church of Christ located at 7171 SW Hwy 200
- Lakeland: 1/10/12 | 5:30 PM at Munn Park located at 201 East Main St
- Fort Lauderdale: 1/10/12 | 4 PM at 2132 E Oakland Park Blvd
- Shalimar: 1/10/12 | 4:30 PM at the Courthouse Annex located at 1250 N. Eglin Pkwy
- Tallahassee: 1/10/12 | 9 AM at the Historic Capitol Steps located at 400 S. Monroe St
- Inverness: 1/10/12 | 3 PM at the Citrus County Courthouse located at 110 N. Apopka Ave.
- Melbourne: 1/10/12 | 4 PM at the Brevard County School District Building located at 2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
- Pensacola: 1/10/12 | 4 PM at Representative Clay Ford's District Office located at 1804 W. Garden Street.
- Orlando: 1/10/12 | 4 PM at the Orlando Progressive Center located at 134 East Colonial Drive
- Tavares: 1/10/12 | 4:30 PM at Wooten Park located on E Ruby Street.
- Palm Coast: 1/10/12 | 5:30 PM at Belle Terre Parkway in front of Kohl's.
- Stuart: 1/10/12 | 5:30 PM at the South side of the Roosevelt Bridge and US-1



Remembering where we came from...

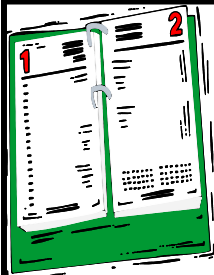
"Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things. Among them are...a few other Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or business man from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid."

President Dwight D Eisenhower

The Real Super Committee Controlling Congress...



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Save the Date

Florida AFL-CIO Cope Convention: Mark your calendars for the 2012 Florida AFL-CIO COPE Endorsing Convention!! The endorsing convention will be held June 1-3, 2012 at the Diplomat Hotel, Hollywood, FL. For more details and information, please contact Helen Parker at hparker@flafclcio.org.

Watch what happens at the Capitol each week with the **Second Season of the Working Families Lobby Corps Session Video Updates**. These videos will allow you a front row seat each week to the action and movement in the Florida's Legislative Session. Please use and share these and other important videos on our Florida AFL-CIO You-Tube page with the Brothers and Sisters in your union so they understand and can act on issues facing their families and co-workers.



One Last Thing Before You Go...



Become an Online Activist Today!

FLAFL-CIO's Website: flafclcio.org

FL AFL-CIO's Facebook: [Facebook.com/FloridaAFLCIO](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaAFLCIO)

FL AFL-CIO's Twitter: [@Florida_AFL_CIO](https://twitter.com/Florida_AFL_CIO)

FL AFL-CIO's You-Tube Page:

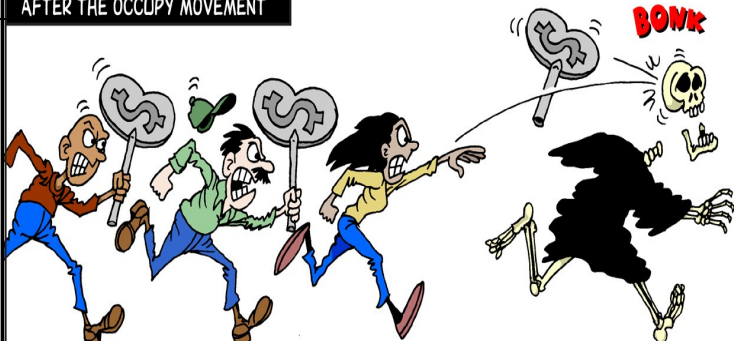
[YouTube.com/Floridaaflcio](https://www.youtube.com/Floridaaflcio)

If you were a lucky person that got this newsletter from someone else and would like to be added to our mailing list so you too can receive "Solidarity in the Sunshine", then please email or call **Joshua Anijar** at janijar@flafclcio.org or **850-228-9841**. Please title email "Sign-me up" and we will add you to our mailing list.

BEFORE THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT



AFTER THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT



HUCK/KONOPACKI LABOR CARTOONS
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