



SOLIDARITY

In The Sunshine

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA AFL-CIO

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The Festival for Florida's Future: Creating a Working Families Movement in the State of Florida

Florida's 2011 Legislative session left people both shell-shocked and outraged at the intensity of assault leveled on working families. This made the need for Floridians to come together, in unity, to take back our state from politicians and big business paramount. Instead of holding another rally, or another conference, groups and organizations from diverse backgrounds came together, under the **Fight for Florida** (www.fightforflorida.com) banner to put on a festival in Central Florida on June 4th. On that day thousands of Floridians, from as far as Pensacola to Miami, traveling by bus, car and even motorcycle convoy converged on the Central Florida Fairgrounds in Orlando to be a part of the festivities and to attend workshops.

The **Festival for Florida's Future** marked the kick-off of a sustained campaign to organize and mobilize working families from all backgrounds to make a difference in the lives of all Floridians. Attendees participated in different workshops on a range of subjects from how to use social media, to a panel discussion with Awake the State organizers. There was even a workshop on how to run for office! Activists were also able to write letters and record video messages to Legislators while their children were entertained in a supervised play area.

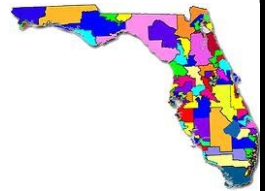
In the promenade there were over 40 different informational booths from a various community, faith, and political organizations which offered activists a gateway to take action and become involved with ongoing campaigns. This area also served as the central meeting place for activists from across the state to introduce themselves to one another, share ideas, network and connect to the larger progressive movement in Florida. On the main stage, music (from salsa to rock and roll) was intermixed with speakers like Silvia Perez (a farm worker from Immokalee) who spoke about her struggles as an immigrant looking for the "American Dream" and a decent education for her children. Fred Barr (an unemployed marketing executive) shared his story about dealing with the physical and financial strain of cancer while trying to find a job to support and provide for his family. Elton and Barbara Wright (school teachers with a disabled son) connected the actions of the Florida Legislative session to their daily struggle. Their stories are by no means unusual but are instead repeated each day by many Florida families enduring similar hardships. Mike Williams, President of the Florida AFL-CIO explained at the event, "You know, I remember when the American Dream of prosperity was achieved by many people. It was the result of a strong public education system and working at good paying jobs. Those jobs helped us afford a home, send our kids to college and let us retire with dignity. Unfortunately, that dream has become out of reach for Florida's working families because of our inaction - you, me, all of us - the wealthy special interests have seized complete control of state government. Their power and influence has turned that dream of prosperity and economic security into a nightmare of want and insecurity."

The **Festival for Florida's Future** ended with a rallying call that this day was not the end but the beginning of a

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working families' movement that will continue to grow and become a force unlike anything that Florida has ever seen. Together, united, the participants at the Festival sent a new message to Tallahassee: "Working families stand united to fight against the powerful special interests that hold our state hostage."

Public Hearings on Redistricting are Coming to a City Near You!



This summer, members of the Florida House and Senate will be holding public hearings on redistricting across the state. This is our opportunity to let politicians know how important it is to us that they faithfully follow the Fair Districts standards when they re-draw their own districts. Over 60% of Florida's voters approved Fair Districts in 2010 which created a rubric for how political lines will be drawn in Florida. Political districts are only drawn every ten years, so it is vital that the lines in Florida aren't gerrymandered to aide either political party. Below you will find dates and locations for the redistricting public hearings. If you live in or near these areas, please try to attend and make your voice heard on this critical issue. For more information on the campaign for redistricting please visit <http://fairdistrictsnow.org/home/>.

The Public Hearings on redistricting will take place across Florida at these locations listed below:

Monday, July 11th: Jacksonville 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Florida State College Downtown Campus

Tuesday, July 12th: St. Augustine 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Flagler College Auditorium

Tuesday, July 12th: Daytona Beach 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the News Journal Center at Daytona State College

Wednesday, July 13th: The Villages 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Colony Cottage Recreation Center

Wednesday, July 13th: Gainesville 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Santa Fe College Fine Arts Hall (NW Corner of Campus)

Monday, July 25th: Lakeland 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Polk State College—Main Auditorium

Tuesday, July 26th: Wauchula 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Hardee County Civic Center

Tuesday, July 26th: Wesley Chapel 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Wiregrass Ranch High School Gym

Wednesday, July 27th: Orlando 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center

Thursday, July 28th: Melbourne 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Brevard County Commission Chamber

The NALC of Florida show tremendous display of power and charity in campaign to Stamp out Hunger!

Poverty and hunger continue to plague the streets of America making the need for organizations like labor unions paramount in helping our communities with basic relief and care . The Brothers and Sisters of the **National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)** did just that this year as they continued their annual food drive to “*Stamp out Hunger*”! The NALC reports that over 50 million Americans— including 17 million children— lack sufficient food, making our hunger problem in America an epidemic that needs national attention!

The NALC’s annual one day food drive is the largest in the nation and is always held on the second Saturday in May by Letter Carriers who during their normal route collect the canned food left next to mailboxes. This is the 19th year of their food drive with over 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states participating in this important charitable work.

This year’s food drive was a tremendous success making it the eighth consecutive drive surpassing 70 million pounds of food collected. Furthermore, the NALC reports that due to the success of last year’s food drive, they have collected a total of over 1 billion pounds of food.

In Florida, NALC Branches are the shining example, delivering millions of pounds of food to hungry working families across the sunshine state. Many of Florida’s Branches ranked in the top brackets of their classifications with NALC Branch 1477 (representing St. Petersburg) coming in **1st place in the entire country** for the amount of food they collected in a single day. Tampa’s NALC Branch 599 came in **2nd this year in the entire country**; both of these Branches collected over a million pounds of food each for the impoverished in their areas. These two Branches were not the only Florida NALC to rank nationally, many Florida Branches took first place in their own respective categories (which is determined by the number of members in their local). Clearwater’s Branch 2008 that represents collected over 1,004,250 lbs. of food in a single day. Branch 2072, collected over 408,300 lbs. of food, in the Fort Myers area, while Ocala’s Branch 1103, collected over 284,700 lbs. of food.

The NALC Food Drive continues to illustrate labors’ commitment to our communities and neighbors. As more and more people are feeling the effects of the economic recession, the NALC food drive demonstrates how, collectively, we can make a difference in people’s lives. Florida’s Labor movement thanks every NALC member who collected food on their routes and all union members who left canned goods by your mailboxes to give to the less fortunate.



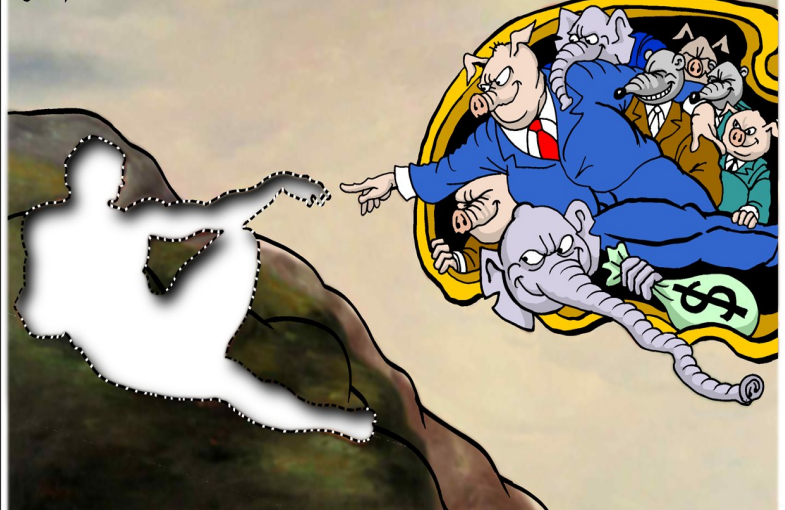
Remembering where we came from...

“The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions and government relief for the destitute, and above all new wage levels that meant no mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

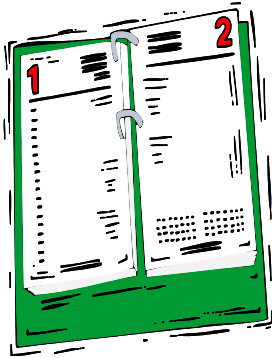
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THE CORPORATE GODS CREATE "JOBS"

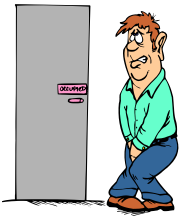
Notes from the Legislative/Political Coordinator – Phyllis Garrett



Working Families Lobby Corps: The 2011-2012 Working Families Lobby Corps will start the week of September 19, 2011 in conjunction with the first week of Interim committees. Be a part of the day to day, “In Your Face Politics” that had such an impact on Legislators and public perception in 2011, as we continue to Fight for Florida’s Families during this next Legislative cycle. Information will be available soon at your local union and CLC offices.

The Florida AFL-CIO 2011 Biennial Convention: The Florida AFL-CIO’s Biennial Convention will be held October 9–12, 2011, at the Buena Vista Palace Resort and Spa, Lake Buena Vista, Florida. More information on the upcoming convention will be sent to you in the upcoming weeks. However, for more information on the Convention including special room rates, please contact Helen Parker at hparker@flafclcio.org or (850) 224-6926

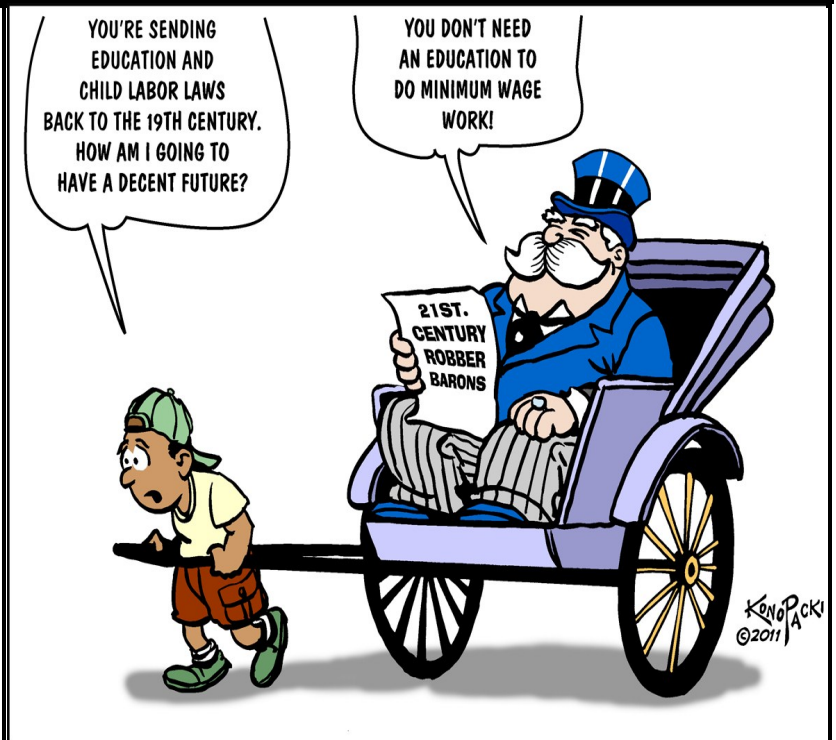
One Last Thing Before You Go...



In the near future, check your mailbox for the **Florida AFL-CIO’s Final Report on the 2011 Legislative Session** that will detail both the legislation that passed and failed along with the voting records and ranking of state Representatives and Senators. This report will be published in the early part of July, so keep your eyes posted for this important report!

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.



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Mike Williams
President
Brian Dempsey
Secretary-Treasurer



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