



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2011

Contact:

Josh Anijar

Florida AFL-CIO

Cell 850-228-9841

janijar@flafclcio.org

Ann Vanek-Dasovich

Florida AFL-CIO

Cell 850-567-2459

avdasovich@flafclcio.org

WORKING FAMILIES MOVEMENT LAUNCHED IN FLORIDA TO FIGHT FOR JOBS, THE ECONOMY AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FLORIDA

Festival unites communities and motivates Floridians to take action

STATEWIDE, FL – Billed as a day of celebration and solidarity for activists after a tough Legislative session that directly attacked the foundations of the middle class, Saturday's **Festival for Florida's Future**, hosted by the Fight for Florida Coalition, combined some serious elements along with some well-deserved fun. By bus, car and motorcycle convoy, from Pensacola to Miami, thousands of Floridians converged on the Central Florida Fairgrounds in Orlando to join in the festivities and attend workshop and educational trainings. The Festival also included five live bands, half a dozen speakers and numerous activities throughout the day for the entire family.

The **Festival for Florida's Future** marks 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 workshops, wrote letters and recorded video messages to Legislators while children were entertained in a supervised play area.

Speakers like **Silvia Perez** (a farmworker from Immokalee) 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 personal situation. Their stories are by no means unusual but are instead repeated each day by many Florida families enduring similar hardships. **Lily Ekelsen**, Vice President of the National Education Association, shared her vision for the future, one filled with dignity for all people and all professions. **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 start of a 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."

###