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Press Release

Florida House Votes to Silence Workers

In the latest round in the ongoing assault on Florida's middle class, the Florida House of Representatives has voted to remove our state's public employee unions from the political process.

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida House of Representatives voted to approve legislation this morning that will make it illegal for workers to have their voluntary paycheck deductions for union dues processed by any public employer. HB 1021 also creates new and onerous regulations on public employees who choose to have their unions participate in politics and legislative advocacy. This move does nothing to create a single job or solve Florida's budget woes and is widely considered to be an act of political retribution against employee organizations that have been pushing back against many of the policies of the current supermajority in the Legislature.

This bill is a direct attack against the working middle class of the state. There are over 300 organizations that currently have some form of employee wage deduction processed by the State of Florida and many more that have similar arrangements with municipalities. Many of these groups such as insurance companies and financial services providers directly participate in Florida politics with contributions and armies of lobbyists in the halls of the Capitol.

This legislation only targets one group...the unions that represent Florida's public employees.

As this legislation moved through committee, the only supporters were lobbyists representing the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Associated Industries of Florida and others who have no connection to this issue in any way, shape or form. Conversely, hundreds of workers testified in committee against this bill.

Florida AFL-CIO President Mike Williams issued the following statement after the vote. "The debate on the House floor this morning makes the true intent of this legislation perfectly clear. This is nothing more than an attempt to silence Florida's workers and their unions through complicated new regulations that make it more difficult for workers to exercise their constitutional right to join and be active in a union. It also is trying to make it more complicated for those workers to work collectively through the political process on the issues of importance to themselves and their families. At the end of the day this is about ensuring the halls of the capitol are devoid of workers and their advocates leaving only the voice of the big special interests of our Capitol."

The Florida AFL-CIO is the state federation of over 600 local unions representing over 500,000 workers, retirees and their families from a broad range of trades and professions.

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