



Contact: Josh Anijar
Florida AFL-CIO
Phone 850-224-6926
Cell 850-228-9841

135 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Mike Williams, President

Florida AFL-CIO

Press Release

Show of Solidarity – Workers Abandon Committee Hearing Over “Worker Gag Bill”

Over 60 workers packed one side of a Florida House Committee room this afternoon to oppose HB 1012 by Representative Dorworth, a bill that would make it illegal for public sector employers to deduct voluntary union dues from employee paychecks. The bill, dubbed by many as a “worker gag” bill, will also make it much more difficult for public employee unions to spend their resources on legislative advocacy or other political activity. The meeting was scheduled to last three hours but after just more than hour, the workers abruptly left the meeting. Lisa Henning with the Fraternal Order of Police was the final speaker for the workers. She said, “Our members voluntarily pay their dues because they want to join together for a stronger voice in the issues that impact them and their families. I am here to represent them and look out for them. So now, as Governor Scott keeps saying, I am going to get to work and go try to protect their retirement security.” As she left the podium, all of the workers in the audience filed out of the room, leaving only a small handful of lobbyists from the Florida Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations. The meeting was noticed for the exact same time as SB 1130, the major revision of the state’s pension system that has dominated the Capitol over the past several weeks.

The workers left the committee room together because it was clear that the majority had already made up their minds on the issue and they felt their participation was irrelevant. The teachers, firefighters, police officers, bus drivers and state workers also wanted to show solidarity and physically demonstrate what the legislative process would look like should the bill ultimately pass, committee rooms with only lobbyists for the corporate elite, with nobody looking out for the interests of Florida’s working families.

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