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# Press Release

## **The question remains, where are the jobs? Dark Days for Working Families Continue...**

**House votes to slash benefits for the unemployed, Senate moves to cut retirement security, House committee approves a bill to silence Police, Firefighters, Teachers and other public workers in the political process  
 ALL IN A SINGLE DAY!**

The legislature has turned their backs on working families to give corporate elites tax breaks. In this economic crisis which was a result of a decade of wasteful spending and corporate welfare Florida's budget should not be balanced on the backs of the working men and women of this state.

### **SB 830/HB 1021 – Workers' Gag Bill**

These bills would prohibit voluntary payroll deduction resulting in denying taxpayers a voice in their profession and America's political process. The proponents of these unfair bills have made some wildly inaccurate claims about why the Legislature needs to pass this bill. In order to clear the air and dispel these false claims it is important to note that:

- Florida is a right to work state. **This bill is not about who does and doesn't pay dues. No Floridian pays dues to any organization unless they choose to.**
- *Many other* organizations utilize the dues deduction systems who *also* participate in the political process: insurance companies, investment firms, credit unions, even the United Way.

**And don't be fooled. This is not about cost.** The current statute says that any cost associated with dues collection and transmittal can be billed to the organizations using the system.

### **SB 1130 – Public Employee Income Tax:**

Public employees earn these modest pensions through decades of public service. The Florida Retirement System (FRS) is NOT struggling or in trouble. FRS is completely sound and able to meet its obligations. The governor and Legislature say money is needed for pensions, but this is simply a bailout for bad spending decisions by politicians, and is intended to fund tax cuts for corporations.

For too long public employees have made sacrifices to make this state work, for too long public employees have felt the burden of the state legislature, and now, when the working families need help more than ever, the legislature cuts their pay and forces a new tax on them. This does not show respect to the workers that educate our children, keep our streets safe, provide transportation for Floridians, and dedicate their lives to saving ours.

### **HB 7005 – Further Punishment for the Victims of our Economic Crisis:**

The current recession was created by Wall Street and the banking industry that pushed deregulation and made risky investments making CEO's and stock traders prosperous while working families lost their livelihoods.

The rhetoric that the unemployed are "lazy" or not looking for a job so they can get a check of \$275, is disingenuous and fails to realize that it will take a minimum of 4 years and 900,000 jobs to return to pre-recession levels.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Florida's Unemployment Rate is holding steady at 12.0% and is tragically stable with less than a 1% total change over the past 6 months. There are simply not enough jobs to get the estimated 1.108 million Floridians back to work.

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