



Contact:

Josh Anjar
Florida AFL-CIO
Phone 850-224-6926
Cell 850-228-9841

Jacqui Sisto
Florida Education Association
Phone 850-201-2800
Cell 850-228-5443

MEDIA RELEASE

2011 Legislative Legacy: Job loss, higher taxes, and cuts to education ***Working families ready to fight for accountability from politicians who promised jobs***

On the final day of session, you can expect to see lots of pats on the backs as legislators celebrate the conclusion of another successful Legislative session. Needless-to-say, you will not see us celebrating. Standing united for the last sixty days, thousands of police, firefighters, teachers, nurses, and other public employees walked the halls of the Capitol, testified at committee meetings and held events across the state to share their outrage at the barrage of attacks on middle class Floridians.

The 2011 Budget, like the entire Legislative Session, has been a dream come true for corporations and the wealthy at the expense of working families and some of the poorest, most vulnerable citizens. The last election was a mandate to create jobs. Despite the rhetoric, jobs were not the priority this session. Politicians slashed Florida's education budget, victimized the unemployed and imposed a three percent income tax on public employees to the detriment of our local economies, community safety and our children's education.

Despite a continuous flow of thousands of concerned citizens outraged about the direction of the state, both in their district offices and at the Capitol, the Legislative leadership fixated on tax breaks for big businesses and the wealthiest Floridians, clearly demonstrating what Tallahassee politicians value, and who they deem disposable.

Over the course of the summer and through the fall, into 2012, labor organizations will work with community allies to educate Floridians on the need to take Florida back from the politicians who have continued to hold our future hostage.

Statements from Labor Leaders regarding the Budget

"The budget passed by lawmakers is a disaster for Florida public schools. It would force districts to fire employees, including many high quality teachers. It would force cuts in programs and would force school districts to make choices that would hurt our students. While we should be making a solid investment in our children, who are the future of Florida, our elected officials are determined to place their priorities elsewhere, like easing the tax burden for CEOs and corporations. Just when our children need help the most, lawmakers have turned their backs on them." **[Andy Ford, President, Florida Education Association](#)**

"Firefighters will not forget that this Legislature passed a draconian budget that taxed our incomes. We will continue to do our job of protecting our communities but it is unconscionable that as we put our lives at risk that politicians see fit to balance the budget on our backs. We need a strong economy, not political games to silence our voices and curtail our representation in Tallahassee. We will work to change this as we move towards the elections in 2012." **[Gary Rainey, President, Florida Professional Firefighters](#)**

"Our members fully understand who has stood with them and who made it their mission to rob them of their salaries and voices at work. Police Officers sacrifice every day to protect our communities and the budget that passed adds to the sacrifice they and their families will be expected to make. We wanted job creation and a return of a vibrant economy; both of which would have helped create safer communities. Sadly, this was not what some in Tallahassee thought was relevant in 2011." **[James Preston, President, Fraternal Order of Police](#)**



[Please click HERE to open link](#)

"When the dust settles and our elected officials return home, they will find that glossy wrap-ups on the "successes" of the 2011 legislative session have not fooled voters. Paychecks and communities will feel the after effects of this session. The leadership should not be surprised to find outraged constituents who will make their voices heard every day leading up to November 2012."

[Mike Williams](#)
[President](#)
[Florida AFL-CIO](#)

“Over the last 3 1/2 years, general public employees and transit employees have worked hard to make their departments more efficient and have taken on heavy workloads without any extra compensation and effort to support the shortfall of revenues impacting local governments. This budget places a tax on public employees who have already given so much in order to give the State of Florida a balanced budget; while corporations continue to enjoy in Florida profits and tax breaks. This is a slap in the face to working families in Florida.”

Michael Lowery, Chairman, Amalgamated Transit Union, Florida State Legislative Conference Board

“On top of cutting jobs and cutting school funding, this budget will literally result in cutting short the lives of our seniors in nursing homes. Rolling back the hours of bedside care received by nursing home residents will usher in a return to the days of bedsores, crippling falls and premature death for our parents and grandparents. This legislature should be ashamed.” **Monica Russo, Executive Vice President, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East**

“The big question posed this session was, which Florida do we want? One where everyone pays their fair share or one where we take money from hardworking families to lavish more tax breaks on those who need them least. Rick Scott and the Tallahassee politicians were elected to create jobs, but instead of finding solutions that work, it was politics as usual. They pushed a radical agenda that funnels taxpayer dollars to their big campaign donors.” **Jeanette D. Wynn, President, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees Council 79**

Upcoming Events

May 10th - Press Conference at 11:00AM, Florida Press Center - Florida’s Labor Leaders Stand United Together

June 4th – Fight For Florida Festival – Orlando Fair Grounds

###