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Press Release

Workers Mouths Taped Shut in Quiet Protest Outside Committee Hearing on Bill that Would Silence Florida's Working Families in Florida's Legislative and Political Processes

Today, as Senators debated their legislation that would deny public employees the right to use their money in political activities, workers, community activists and students stood outside the committee hearing with tape over their mouths to symbolize their protest against the radical proposal by Senator Thrasher. Senate Bill 830 would deny state agencies from deducting dues, coupled with language that would deny workers opportunities to spend their money on political activities. In a time where Florida's unemployment is over 12%, the Senate is focused on breaking the power of working people, instead of concentrating on creating jobs and rebounding our economy.

Instead this legislation does nothing but solidify political power for one party. Reports from the 2010 elections indicate that when looking at the top 10 political donors across all parties, the top 7 of those were corporations and business groups giving to Republicans. The bottom three were Labor Unions donating to Democrats. This is all about ensuring that in 2012, the top 10 are all business special interests groups giving to Republicans and that the Democrats base of financial support is eliminated.

Jayne Walker, a supervisor with Lynx Bus Service in Orlando Florida, joined the demonstration outside. She said that the legislature is "trying to shut out everyday citizens from having a voice in this process". She continued by saying "What are they afraid of? I am a mother, I go to church, I pay my taxes, and we all should have a voice"

This is a direct attack against workers of the state of Florida. If the chamber of commerce can spend billions on campaigns why should teachers, police officers, and firefighters be denied their rights to participate in the political process. In a time where jobs should be the main focus of the legislative session, the politicians seem focused on draconian legislation to limit the collective power of workers.

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