

The President's

Solidarity Report



In this Issue: Supreme Court Ruling, VOTE by Mail, PCTA-PESPA Endorsed School Board Candidates, Writing Candidates and Legislators, Why we endorse educators for SB, If you Live in East Lake/Tarpon area, FEA files lawsuit.

SUPREME COURT RULING

My parents came to this country in search of a better life. My Dad had a trade and was able to get a union job in Manhattan at the largest retail store in the world, Macys on 34th Street. At the time, Macy's had its own carpenter's shop that took up an entire floor of the 19 floor, city block sized department store. (9 selling floors)

My Mom earned a living as a seamstress in NY's once famous garment district and was a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. These two courageous people, with no formal education or command of the English language, built a life together, raised a family and achieved the American Dream. They worked hard and earned a fair wage because of their unions. They had health insurance and other benefits because of their unions. They bought a house, raised a family, sent their kids to school, paid their taxes and spent their hard-earned money in their community, contributing to the local economy.

Somewhere along the way, people like my parents became the enemy. When the recession hit, people blamed the \$30 an hour assembly line worker instead of the greedy CEO's who took their golden parachute packages and severance pay while small investors and workers took the full brunt of the collapse.

As corporate profits surpass the Gilded Age of Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and Carnegie, union membership is down to a meager 10% of wage and salary workers. The June 27, 2018 Supreme Court ruling attempts to complete the work of the billionaire CEO's and the corporate special interests who wish to silence the voice of workers.

With its decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, the U.S. Supreme Court turned its back on American workers—the educators, nurses, firefighters, police officers, and public servants who make our communities strong and safe.

This Supreme Court decision will directly impact states with closed shops and agency fees, but we will not walk away unscathed here in Florida. Our national organizations will not have the funds to offer us the Professional development, programs, publications, political influence and other services if members across the country decide to drop their union membership.

I am hopeful that educators will continue to raise their voices as they have in West Virginia, Arizona, Oklahoma and other states across the country. We should not look at this as the final blow that finishes us but as the turning point when we started our comeback. Florida needs to show those states that never had to worry about recruitment, that we can be strong without mandatory union inclusion. Our membership grows every day and no law can stop us from growing. Whatever comes our way, we will take it on head first. We have to, because if we die, so does public education. Never forget that we are the defenders of public education.

Our country was built by hard working people who found success because their unions gave them an opportunity to earn a living wage. How sad it is that some feel that the historical record setting profits of corporate America are more important than funding education or the well-being of working class families. We must remain committed to working with our friends in labor to unite more workers together, to continue to grow our own union, and to elect candidates that will make it easier to unite in unions so that working class families always have a shot at achieving the American Dream.

VOTE BY MAIL

Brothers and Sisters,

July 30 is the deadline for voter registration for the primary. There is nothing more important for us as professionals and as a union than voting in the right School Board members and legislators that are friends of public education. When we vote as a block, we make things happen!

Voting has never been easier. Many of us choose to vote by mail to save time and for the ease and convenience. Below is a link to register and to request a mail in ballot as well as instructions on what to do.

I expect 100% of our members to vote their conscience. Our PAC makes endorsements, which you will receive by mail. Our endorsed candidates represent the best chance to achieve our professional goals and protect public education. They are, however, only recommendations. The important thing is for every professional educator to exercise their right and duty to vote in this election.

Hope you are all finding time to enjoy your summer break,

In Solidarity,

Mike

Vote-by-Mail

<http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voting/vote-by-mail/>

Vote-by-mail refers to voting a ballot received by mail or picked up by or for a voter who is unable or unwilling to go to the polls to vote during early voting or Election Day. A voter does not have to be absent from the county of residence or have an excuse in order to vote-by-mail except on Election Day (see details below). A request covers all elections through the end of the calendar year for the second ensuing regularly scheduled general election. To receive a vote-by-mail ballot, the voter or authorized person must contact his or her county [Supervisor of Elections](#).

A request for a vote-by-mail ballot may be made in one of the following ways:

- Online application on your [county Supervisors of Elections' website](#)
- In writing (e.g., by email, fax, mail) to Supervisor of Elections
- In person at Supervisor of Elections
- By telephone call to Supervisor of Elections

If you are making the request, the following information is required:

- The name of the voter for whom the ballot is being requested;
- The voter's address;
- The voter's date of birth; and
- The voter's signature (if the request is written).

If an immediate family member or legal guardian is requesting a vote-by-mail ballot for you, the following additional information must be provided:

- The requestor's address;
- The requestor's driver's license number (if available);
- The requestor's relationship to the voter; and
- The requestor's signature (if the request is written).

The deadline to request that a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed is no later than 5 p.m. on the 6th day before the election. Otherwise, a vote-by-mail ballot can be picked-up until and including on Election Day. However, the ballot must still be received by the Supervisor of Elections no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day if the voted ballot is to count.

How to Vote a Vote-by-Mail Ballot

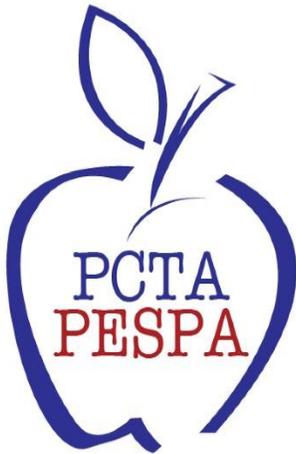
Instructions for completing the vote-by-mail ballot are included with the ballot. The voted ballot must be returned and received by the Supervisor of Elections no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day. Other return options are available for [Military and Overseas Voters](#).

If the voter decides to go to the polls to vote instead, the voter should bring the vote-by-mail ballot (whether it has been marked or not). Even if the voter comes to the polls without the vote-by-mail ballot, the voter will still be able to vote a regular ballot if the supervisor of elections' office is able to confirm that it has not received the voter's vote-by-mail ballot. However, if it is confirmed that the voter have already voted a vote-by-mail ballot, the voter cannot vote again at the polls. If the voter believes or insists that the supervisor of elections' office is wrong about receiving the vote-by-mail ballot or if the supervisor of elections' office cannot confirm that the voter has already voted an vote-by-mail ballot, the voter is allowed to vote a provisional ballot.

How to Track Your Vote-by-Mail Ballot Request and Returned Ballot

Any voter who has requested a vote-by-mail ballot can track online the status of his or her ballot through a link within the Division of Elections' [Check your Voter Status website](#) or through their county [Supervisor of Elections' website](#).

PCTA-PESPA 2018 Endorsed Candidates for School Board



Only educators with recent experience can truly represent our profession and our students. PCTA-PESPA Endorsed Candidates know, first hand, what has been harming public education. Our union-endorsed candidates need our support. PLEASE VOTE!

- Unfair evaluation systems
- Loss of teacher autonomy in the classroom
- Toxic testing, forced pacing guides, unnecessary paperwork
- Teacher salaries \$9,000 below the national average
- Support Professionals earning poverty wages
- Lack of Job security
- Lack of respect for veteran teachers
- Lack of consideration for current employees for transfers
- Increasing class sizes

When we vote, we win!

Paid political advertisement. Paid for by PCTA-PESPA PAC independent of any candidate and distributed only to members.

<p>Jeff Larsen DISTRICT 2</p>	<p>Carl Zimmerman District 3</p>	<p>Lorena Grizzle District 6</p>	<p>Nicholas Wright District 7</p>
			

WRITING CANDIDATES AND LEGISLATORS

PCTA Member Suzanne Woods of Sutherland Elementary wrote the following letter to Gubernatorial Candidate Adam Putnam. I encourage all our members to write candidates, legislators, write editorials and speak to groups concerning our area of expertise: public education!

Dear Mr. Putnam,

My Mom fondly referred to you as “Adam”, even though I don’t think she ever met you. She must have known your family some way back. I am, like you, a generational Floridian. My Dad’s family came to Tallahassee in the 1820’s and my Mom’s family came to Marion County in the 1840’s. I, like you, consider myself a conservative.

I believe in personal freedom and in doing the right thing. I believe in good stewardship and in supporting the common good. Would you call that conservative?

Today you were in a television advertisement standing shoulder to shoulder with the popular and outspoken sheriff, Grady Judd. Sheriff Judd was endorsing your bid for governor. I wondered if you were a friend of real public education as well.

To look into your stance on Florida’s schools, I checked out your website. The literature says that you believe in a parent’s right to choose in regards to their children’s education. This is the standard “reformy” verbiage used to justify stealing our public schools. After all, who could argue with parental choice? Handing each child’s family a packet of money or a voucher and saying “Go choose how you want to spend this,” sounds libertarian, but it doesn’t work, and it’s not fair.

First of all, that’s not the individual’s money; that’s the government’s money. The government is us. We should have some say in how those schools are run, but when it’s handed out to spend like that, we do not have a say. We do not elect charter school boards. We can’t look at their books. We can’t attend and speak at their school board meetings. Those schools are private companies. Giving them money is taxation without representation. Secondly, setting up many competing school systems within the same district is inefficient. It doesn’t promote the common good. My grandparents grew up in Gainesville. Like many towns, it had a town square, or commons, in the middle. Cattle could graze there; horses could water at the trough. Imagine, though, if everyone got a voucher to use their little piece of the town square however they wanted. Charters could form little plots and get their own troughs (or not) using public money. Vouchers could be used to put up your own fence (or not) for your own three sheep. Do whatever you want on your own patch. It’s your right to choose. Folks back then had more sense than to fall for a silly scheme like that. It would have been privatizing the town square. That’s stealing from the community. Furthermore...and here’s the BIG IDEA...the citizens in the town actually cared about each other. The town square was a point of civic pride. It was used for the common good.

Sadly, the political motivation of many Florida legislators lately is monetary profit, not concern for the citizenry. While they trumpet conservative values and mock what they call the “liberal elites,” they are actually scallywags. Privatizing public education is stealing from the

public. Real public schools belong to all of us. Calling charter schools and voucher schools public schools does not make them so.

Generational Floridians have sacrificed to build a Public School system. From their fragile and humble beginnings, a little over one hundred years ago, millions of children have received good educations. My great grandparents, with their agrarian roots, would be so proud to see the accomplishments of their descendants: engineers, nurses, farmers, writers, artists, lawyers, doctors, chemists, inventors, accountants, and a few teachers all got their start in real public schools. As a teacher, I am grateful for my education, and I trust that I have paid it forward. When I think of real conservatives, I think of people who care about one another. When the neighbor's barn is on fire, you get together and help put it out.

So, what are my conservative beliefs? I believe in protecting our natural resources for us, and for future generations. I believe in using tax money wisely. I believe that all of our citizens should have clean water and clean air. I believe that our government representatives should be working for the good of Florida's citizens, all of them, not just the rich ones. And, I believe that government funded schools should be truly public. Is that the kind of conservatism you believe in too?

Sincerely,
Suzanne Woods

WHY WE ENDORSE EDUCATORS FOR SB

Two years ago, PCTA-PESPA endorsed two candidates for School Board that were educators with recent experience and staunch union members. Our union members mobilized behind these candidates and were a major reason these union sisters were elected. We even unseated an incumbent School Board member who raised more money than our candidate. It was a tremendous display of solidarity and union power.

The efforts expended by our union members to sway that election has paid dividends. As expected, every decision made by our candidates has mirrored our interests. They question when needed and do not blindly accept the agenda and data given to them by administration without reaching out to educators. They know that educators talk freely to me and they use me as a conduit to get the perspective of educators at every level.

People will say that you don't have to be an educator to be a good Board member. That may be true but only recent classroom experience can give a person an understanding of what professional

educators face today. The teaching profession has changed these past 15 years and only someone who has been in the classroom recently can know this. Of the three incumbents we seek to replace, two have no classroom experience and one has not taught in a very different time.

Our Board is made up of good people with hearts for public education but that does not prevent them from voting against us. They do not do it to hurt us but you all know it does. We do not vote **against** candidates, we vote **for** the people that have felt the changes to our profession and will strive to protect the employees and students of PCS from the harm that rains down on us from Tallahassee.

This is not a popularity contest! The complaints I receive every day from our members can't all be settled with the contract. We need the School Board to re-examine District policy and we need Board members that are willing to shake things up. Board members are told they need to stay in their lane. They should not go to schools unannounced. They need to go through channels. We have two board members that understand that all the employees, including the Superintendent, work for the Board. Now is our opportunity to have a majority of the School Board with that same mentality.

I have heard members question the PAC endorsements. Your Union does not tell people who to vote for, we make recommendations. However, when we vote as a block, we are powerful and we can and will make changes. Where is the solidarity in everyone voting for different candidates? We will simply nullify each other's votes and maintain the status quo.

In my view, our decision is an easy one. We know that candidates with recent classroom teachers and who are union members will have our same values and beliefs when they prepare for a vote of the Board. We know they will consider our opinions, views, and facts always. We know that our incumbents can be counted on to vote our way sometimes. Finally, why take a chance on any candidates that have never taught k-12, been evaluated by Marzano or had to administer a high stakes test to a stressed-out student. (remember Ken Peluso?) Taking these factors into consideration, I know we will all make the right decision on who to support.

Mike

IF YOU LIVE IN THE EAST LAKE/TARPON AREA

If you live in the East Lake/Tarpon Springs area and are eligible to vote for the East Lake-Tarpon Fire District Commission, I would ask that you consider a candidate that I am proud to personally vouch for. Tom McKone. Tom has been working in our District as a substitute teacher working with some of our most challenging students. He served on the East Lake Fire

Commission and is the only fire commissioner to attend classes and attain the certified district official certificate from the Florida Association of Special Districts. He was also a founding voluntary trustee of the Firefighters Pension Fund.

Men like Tom McKone live for public service. Tom volunteers his time with an organization that called Abilities of Florida Inc., a non-profit corporation that provides rehabilitation and employment services for individuals with disabilities. They have helped many of our wounded veterans and my family was blessed by their assistance when my son Rocco became permanently disabled.

Tom has been endorsed by Commissioners Charlie Justice and Pat Gerard. Tom is a good man and a true public servant who will do a good job for his community and department. Please remember to vote for Tom McKone for Seat 2 on the East Lake/Tarpon Fire District Commission.

FEA files suit to stop unfair law targeting rights of teachers

TALLAHASSEE — The Florida Education Association, in conjunction with other plaintiffs, filed suit today, July 2, to stop enforcement of a new provision in Florida law that unfairly targets teachers unions — and teachers unions alone — for decertification as local bargaining agents.

This law is a very targeted attack on public school teachers' rights to organize, speak out as a group and advocate for themselves, their students and their schools.

The FEA suit is directed at the Decertification Law now codified in Section 1012.2315(4)(c) of the Florida Statutes (2018) and at the constitutionality of House Bill 7055, the “log-rolled,” omnibus bill on education passed by the Legislature this year. Along with legislation on many other subjects, that bill included the Decertification Law.

The lawsuit has been filed in the Circuit Court of the 2nd Judicial Circuit, Leon County. The defendants named in the suit are the chair and commissioners of the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC), who are being sued in their official capacity.

The Decertification Law, effective July 1, applies to unions with units of “instructional personnel” and specifies that if a unit’s membership density is below 50 percent, the union must petition the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) for recertification as the “exclusive representative for all unit employees” within a month of applying for renewal of registration. “The certification of an employee organization that does not comply with this paragraph is revoked,” the law states.

The FEA lawsuit challenges the constitutionality of the law on several bases, including that it unfairly seeks to target public school teachers unions without touching other public-sector unions, such as those for police and corrections officers.

“Certain interests in this state want to shut our members up and shut us down, and we aren’t having it,” said FEA President Joanne McCall. “The Florida Education Association and our local teachers unions will continue to be the loudest defenders of public education in this state. We speak up for our students and our schools every day, and we will not be silenced.”

The Florida Education has filed suit to stop the Decertification law on behalf of our 140,000 members and in conjunction with other plaintiffs, including several local teachers unions, and individual union members and non-members.

The Decertification Law only comes into play when a local union is up for registration renewal. When that annual renewal date falls varies from local association to local association.

“Frankly, this attack on teachers’ collective bargaining rights has been a boon for membership growth. Teachers want unions,” said FEA President McCall.

To view the lawsuit, go to <http://www.meyerbrookslaw.com/Litigation.htm>.

For help contacting local unions, members and non-members involved in the suit, please call or email Joni Branch in FEA Communications, joni.branch@floridaea.org or 850.201.3223.

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The Florida Education Association is the state’s largest association of professional employees, with more than 140,000 members. FEA represents pre K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, educational staff professionals, students at our colleges and universities preparing to become teachers and retired education employees.