

THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



Making Florida more “small d” democratic March 1, 2025

With control of the Governor’s office, the State House and Senate, Republicans might be expected to embrace democratic norms and do what the people want. Not in Florida!

At the behest of the Governor, the democratically elected Republican supermajority in the legislature stubbornly ignores the will of the people. Last session, it passed a 6-week limit on abortion. Then, in November, Florida voters tried to guarantee abortion rights in the state constitution by passing Amendment 4. The overwhelming majority, 57% (53.55% in Lee County) approved the amendment. That would have been enough in every other state where citizens vote on constitutional amendments. But Floridians have a higher hurdle—60% is required.

But wait, there’s more! Not only did Republican lawmakers fail to heed the will of the people on reproductive rights, they actually used public resources to fight Amendment 4 (and also to oppose Amendment 3 on marijuana legalization, favored by 55.9% of the voters (53.92% in Lee County)).

Now, Democrats in the State Legislature are seeking ways for the will of the people to prevail. Senate Minority Leader Tracie Davis, (D-Jacksonville), and House Minority Leader Fentrice Driskell, (D-Tampa), have introduced bills ([SB 870](#), [HB 741](#)) to allow abortion until viability (22-24 weeks). Democratic legislators are also seeking to end government opposition to citizen-sponsored amendments. Rep. Michele Rayner (D-Tampa Bay) has introduced the “Public Resource Election Neutrality Act” and Sen. Carlos Guillermo Smith filed the “Broadcast Freedom Protection Act” to stop the use of millions of taxpayer dollars on public service announcements to campaign against ballot initiatives proposed by the people. Smith also filed a bill to reduce the threshold to pass constitutional amendments in Florida from 60% to a simple majority (50%).

Although these positions may be favored by the great majority of Floridians, they face long odds in the legislature unless some Republicans can be convinced to do what Florida voters want. That’s where you come in. Let your legislators know you support these bills. See below for how to contact them.