The Florida Voter

Conversations with Cecile



Dear League members,

We are at a crossroads in Florida. Recently, we have been confronted with a number of changes that limit a Floridian's ability to be heard.

Here are some examples:

1) A directive to University of Florida professors to not testify in a case that alleged that the state legislature was intentionally passing voter suppression laws. **The League issued a strong public statement against this assault on the professor's First Amendment Rights.** A federal judge enjoined this draconian behavior and the professors were able to testify and keep their jobs.

2) Some in the state legislature are trying to limit the power of citizens' initiatives. An example of a successful citizen initiative is the Fair Districts provisions which guarantee that redistricting will not harm minorities and would not favor a political party or individual candidate. Another example is the passage of Amendment 4 in 2018 which restored voting rights to most felons that completed their sentences. **House Joint Resolution 129 proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to increase the percentage required to approve an amendment to or revision of the State Constitution from 60 percent to 66.67 percent.**

3) **One of the most recent and egregious attempts to limit the voice of the citizens is a new Department of Management Services (DMS) rule that went into effect today, March 1.** That rule drastically limits the use of the Capitol building and grounds for citizens and various groups. The rule requires events hosted by citizens and groups to be in agreement with a state agency's

mission. To reserve space, a request must come from the head of state agency, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida. In tandem with this new rule, if a Capitol law enforcement officer thinks that an event or gathering is disruptive, offensive, or disturbing government business then those rallying or protesting may be issued a trespass notice and/or arrested.

THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! It is truly reminiscent of 2021's House Bill 1 law that allowed police to arrest anyone at a rally. This law has been successfully enjoined and is not in effect during its court appeal.

There is an exception to this new DMS Rule. If an organization, individual, or group wishes to hold a news conference, they are not subject to the agency head sponsorship requirement. Unfortunately, not every organization can organize a news conference. The rule as a whole is a direct assault on our First Amendment Rights. The League will NOT sit quietly by and allow citizens to be muzzled!

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING US at our LOBBY DAYS NEWS CONFERENCE NEXT WEEK on March 8 at 1:00 p.m. (ET) in front of the north side of the Capitol building facing Monroe Street for our League news conference which will focus on defending democracy and protecting against these and other limits on our freedoms.

In League,



Cecile M. Scoon, Esq.
President