



Solidarity Report

"Everything you want is on the other side of fear."

~ Jack Canfield

This is NOT a Drill! -URGENT

As of last Friday, we were very hopeful that SB 1296, the anti-union legislation that had been floating around the Capitol, had been permanently stalled. However, over the weekend information was shared that someone very powerful is putting pressure on certain members of the legislature to move this bill forward.

Here is a reminder of what this very bad bill does:

- keeps the 60% membership density requirement for certain public sector unions in place
- if the 60% membership density is not met, a recertification election must occur to keep the union
- **NEW REQUIREMENT:** The union must receive support from a majority of ALL employees in the bargaining unit, not just those who vote
- Employees who do not participate in the election are effectively counted as "no" votes
- **EXAMPLE:** 100 employees in the unit; 51 MUST VOTE YES to keep the union.

Although we do not believe that mandating individuals to vote is constitutional, and legal challenges will be made, justice is not always swift so we have no time to waste.

Since the implementation SB 256, your union has actively and aggressively worked to meet the 60% membership density requirement. However, with the constant churn of employees leaving VCS and education in general, we have not yet reached our goal. It is the "net" number that counts.

The current membership density for each unit is listed below:

- Instructional - 53%
- Support (Paras & OS) - 29%
- TSP - 11%

In order to avoid the decertification of our union, or to speak plainly, the loss of VUE, we must exceed these density requirements. To reach 60% membership in each unit we need (net):

- Instructional - 319 new members
- Support (Paras & OS) - 140 new members
- TSP - 482 new members

Although these numbers may seem large, please remember that there are more than 4,000 instructional staff, more than 1,400 support staff, and more than 1,300 TSPs working in our district.

Sitting on the sidelines is no longer an option. Every member of VUE needs to understand the threat that we are facing.

If this law is passed, we become vulnerable and could lose our union if we do not meet the 60% membership density. Expecting half of all teachers support staff, and TSPs to participate in an election is unreasonable and a strategy designed to ensure our failure.

But, we will not fail! OUR UNION, and OUR MEMBERS have overcome every challenge that has come our way. From the attempt by the Superintendent and Board to decertify us, to this current situation, I am confident that we will continue to rise.

Let's be clear, they only win if we allow them to. We either reach our goal or we lose our union, our contract, our protections, and our voice. If you want to keep your union, you've got to do the work.

Speak with your coworkers NOW about what is at stake and tell them that it is time to stand together.

- Talk with your steward to identify the potential members at your site
- Reach out to the new/newer employees at your site and share the benefits of having a contract

Share the link or QR code below and help build our union to ensure that our power continues to grow and that we stand up to the bullies who want to destroy us. Solidarity!

How to Join VUE

The process to join your union now requires two steps:

- create an account with FEA Central Membership System (CMS)
- link a bank account for the ACH draft or pay one lump sum dues payment.

All new members must create an account in CMS. The link to the portal is www.ourvue.net/membership

Once the CMS account is created, linking a bank account is the next step. This is completed in a step-by-step process that is navigated using Plaid. VUE stewards and staff are available to assist. Please contact us if you or a coworker needs help to complete the steps to join. We will set an appointment and come to you. No Potential Member Left Behind! Call or email today!



Membership QR Code



Ready to Take Action?!

Are you tired of the lack of respect shown to those of us who work in our beloved public schools?

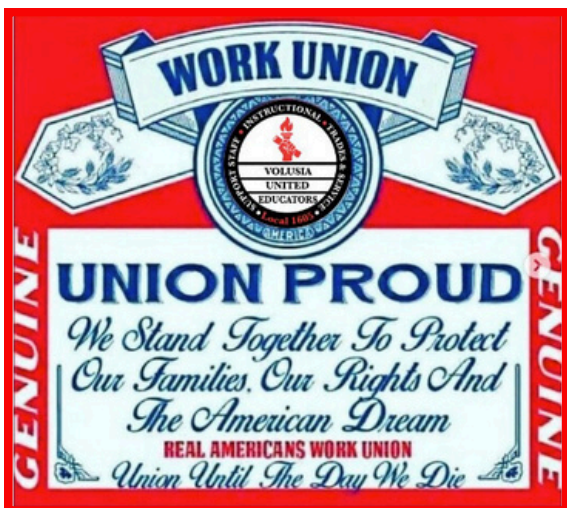
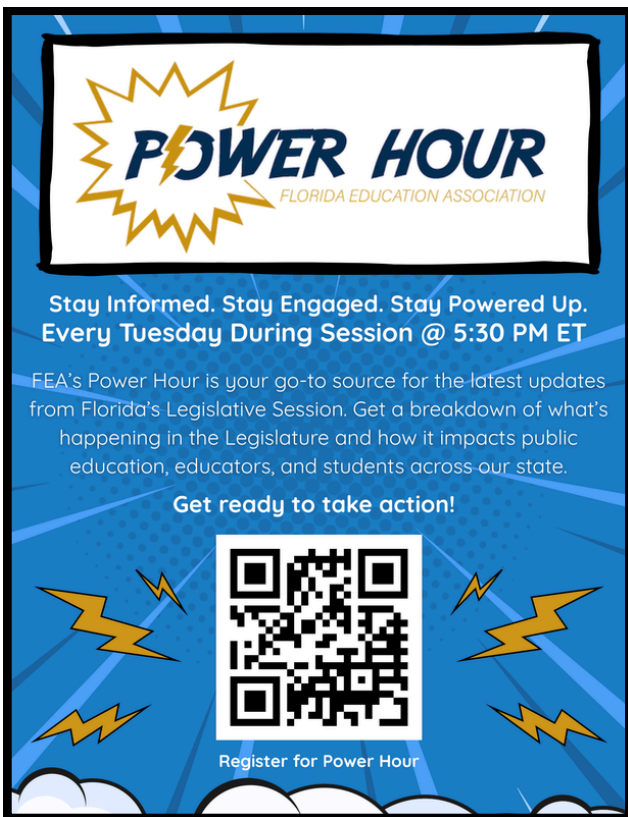
Are you tired of the constant attacks on your union?

Are you ready to join the FIGHT FOR A BETTER LIFE?

If you answered YES to these questions, then I need you to join me on Tuesday night for FEA's Power Hour.

Scan the QR code in the flyer or click this link, <https://floridaea.zoom.us/meeting/register/6Ujrwh7ITTeY2S4WRS-DcA#/registration>

I urge you to spend 1 hour of your week engaging in this important work of your union. If this is the only action you are able to take during this year's legislative session, I'll take it. Please join us on Tuesday. Will I see you there? I hope so!



Focus Survey!

We are calling for members to complete a survey to determine the extent and depth of the impact of Focus errors, and what you (VUE) are willing to do. The link to the survey is, <https://forms.gle/C8iyYjbqLMBzgxXx7>.

Please take 2 minutes to complete this survey. We need this data to develop a strategy to make fixing Focus a priority for VCS.

We are counting on you to talk with VUE members at your schools and worksites to complete this process. The more responses, the better the data, which results in more leverage to make things right. Solidarity!

The people have the power. All we have to do is awaken the power in the people.

— John Lennon —

Don't Be Fooled, Unity Matters!

Recently, we have seen increased communication from outside organizations targeting educators and public school employees. These out-of-state groups are backed by billionaire funding, and their goal is to divide workers, weaken your collective voice, and convince you to give up the contract protections that we have fought hard to secure. Don't believe the disinformation being spread about YOUR UNION. These are the same folks who are putting pressure on Florida's elected leaders to decertify YOUR UNION!

BE CAUTIOUS. Do not share personal information with unfamiliar groups or respond to communications designed to isolate you from YOUR UNION or your colleagues.

These efforts are not about supporting educators, they are about taking away your **power to stand together and fight for a better future.**

Recent public comments suggesting that teachers' unions should not "exist" make their agenda clear. We will not respond with fear, we will respond with action!

- Talk with your coworkers about the power of US.
- Attend the 10 minute meetings at your worksite to learn what YOUR UNION is doing to fight for improvements.
- Invite potential members to join you in BUILDING the POWER we need to shut this nonsense down!

Every conversation matters. Every new member builds power. Stay informed, stay connected, and continue organizing because when we stand together, we win!

To share the link to join VUE, click [HERE](#). The QR code to access the membership portal is below. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out!



Membership QR Code



Check Your Check!

Do you understand how your paycheck is calculated? For me, the answer is; maybe. Understanding how our pay is calculated helps us to have confidence in our employer and alerts us when something changes or goes wrong. Several of the issues with the Focus system have been identified due to VUE members asking questions after noticing a change.

We are providing a brief overview to help provide clarity on how your paycheck is calculated. This information is being provided to help members better understand the common processes used to calculate our pay. Payroll calculations vary based upon individual circumstances. This information is not intended to provide financial advice nor should it be relied upon as official determination of pay or deductions. If you have specific questions, please make sure to give us a call.

- **Start with Gross Pay** - your total earnings before anything is taken out. Also called base salary or hourly wages. This can also include overtime, pay for additional duties or subbing, stipends or supplements.
- **Subtract Pretax Deductions** - these deductions are taken out before taxes are calculated, which can lower the amount of income that is taxed. They can include health, dental, or vision insurance premiums, retirement contributions, flexible spending or health savings accounts.
- **Calculate and Subtract Payroll Taxes (FICA)** - federal payroll taxes must be calculated. These includes Social Security (Typically 6.2% of eligible wages) and Medicare Tax (Typically 1.45% of eligible wages)
- **Calculate and Subtract Federal Income Taxes** - Federal income tax is withheld based on your W-4 form. This amount is individualized based upon your instructions to the employer.
- **Subtract Post-Tax Deductions** - these deductions are taken out after taxes and do not reduce taxable income. Some examples include optional insurance products, charitable contributions, or other authorized deductions.
- **The Balance Remaining is Your Net Pay or Take-Home Pay** - this is the final amount deposited into your bank account after all deductions and taxes.

As we continue to work with the district to navigate the implementation of the Focus system, we encourage you to review your pay stub regularly, compare your stub with previous paychecks if something looks different, and make sure to contact us if you have questions. We are here to help!

Retiring Soon?



Make sure you join VUE-Retired when you retire. Do you know that your insurance policies with NEA/AFT will end with your retirement? By joining VUE-R you can retain those precious benefits!

Visit our website at vueretired.org for more details or contact CJ Allen, President VUE Retired, 386.212.4245 or cj-english@msn.com

Target Tallahassee

By Dorothy Featherston

This week Susan Holbrook and I had the opportunity to participate in Target Tallahassee. We met with Representatives Chase Tramont, Webster Barnaby, and Bill Partington. Despite extremely busy schedules, each graciously made time to sit down with us.

We were able to share the daily realities educators face in Volusia County and to remind them that teachers are committed professionals dedicated to student success — not the adversaries some media narratives suggest.

All three representatives welcomed thoughtful conversation, answered our questions directly, and expressed openness to continued dialogue. They acknowledged the complexity of our work and shared an interest in improving conditions for both educators and students. I encourage each of you to reach out and share your story. Legislators need to hear directly from the educators serving their constituents every day.

✉ Chase.Tramont@flhouse.gov

✉ Webster.Barnaby@flhouse.gov

✉ Bill.Partington@flhouse.gov

In addition to our legislative meetings, we connected with union brothers and sisters from across the state who were also advocating for fair pay and improved working conditions within their respective professions.

The Florida AFL-CIO provided daily morning briefings to keep advocates informed on key legislative developments, and the Florida Education Association (FEA) staff offered consistent guidance and support before we headed to the Capitol.

Seeing individuals from every corner of Florida engage in passionate, informed advocacy for a stronger future was both energizing and inspiring. One of the greatest joys of teaching is realizing you've made a difference in the life of a child. Equally powerful is recognizing that through advocacy, we can influence policies that impact children — and educators — across the entire state of Florida. Solidarity!

