



J WILLIE DAVID, III
State President

FLORIDA CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

P.O. Box 593248, Orlando, Florida 32859
(407) 272-9254 • info@fcranews.com • www.fcranews.com

“PRESS RELEASE”

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CONTACT

Attorney Kyan Ware, Spokesman, FCRA
(407) 272-9254 | media@fcranews.com

FCRA Condemns Orange County Commission Hijacking Of Sick-Time Ballot Initiative

ORLANDO – The Orlando based Florida Civil Rights Association strongly and resolutely condemns Orange County Commission’s underhanded push to kill democracy over the Sick-Time Ballot Initiative. The Orange Commission, coupled with so-called business “leaders” are leaving a stench that wafts its way through Orlando streets and eventually to the court system, said J. Willie David, III, the Association's president.

More than 50,000 Orange County citizens came together to put the Earned Sick Time Initiative on the November’s ballot to create local labor legislation for employers and employees. As a result of this initiative, corporations are mounting an aggressive campaign to take over Orange County Government and turned it into a “democracy killer” to deny voters the basic right to decide on the paid sick days mandate or any other laws, David added. *Big money and corporate profiteers* have hijacked our *democracy* through a willing commission. The hijacking is on full display here, he stated. David stated that regardless of arguments for or against the initiative, it has the right to be decided by the voters of Orange County, he stated.

Recently, a three-judge panel ruled that Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs has until Sunday, Sept. 16 at 3:30 p.m. to explain why the Earned Sick Time campaign’s emergency request for voters to be allowed to have their say should not be granted.

It is clear to the Florida Civil Rights Association that "the will" of Orange County voters is under attack for corporate greed and profits. The County Commission has demonstrated that it is out of touch with the needs of hard-working families, said David. Other cities across the nation have decided on paid sick time off for employees, he stated. Orange County citizens should have the same rights to decide, he stated. The commission and big businesses need to stop their attacks on democracy and get to work on policies that will help create jobs and grow our economy in Orange County, David stated.

The initiative process led by citizens is vital to reforming Orange County’s public policy at every level in the public and private sectors, said David. The people exercised their voice by petitioning the government through initiative and referendum campaigns, he explained.

The Orange County commission is engaging in underhanded, duplicitous tactics to block the Earned Sick Time measure by holding sham hearings on ballot language AFTER the deadline, he explained.

The entire lot of the people involved in this need to be sent to the unemployment line for killing the public trust in Orange County Government, he stated. Attacks on our democratic system cannot and will not be tolerated by voters, stated David. Any language changes should be decided before the deadline for ballot inclusion, he stated, or the deadline should be moved back.

The Orange County Commission needs to get out of the voters way, David added. 50,000 people is not a small number to silence. It is obvious that the people followed the law; the Orange County Commission needs to do the same. "In a better society, these individuals would be personally liable, he stated."

It is hypocritical to promote democracy at gunpoint overseas when we don't practice it here, David stated. We cannot ask others to trust our government unless we ourselves are willing to uphold and protect our own democracy at the ballot box. The Orange County Commission is a shining example of that hypocrisy, he stated. They need to lead, follow, or get out of the way.

The Florida Civil Rights Association supports the earned sick time measure which clearly benefits working people and citizens of Orange County. The Florida Civil Rights Association will continue to support workers' rights and vigorously oppose any efforts that undercut the rights of all citizens across Florida.

ABOUT THE FCRA

The Florida Civil Rights Association is a non-profit, non-partisan, statewide organization with members and supporters nationwide dedicated to protecting and expanding the civil rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitutions and civil rights laws of the United States and the State of Florida.

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