

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

UFF Official Statement on Roe v Wade Ruling

Friday's Supreme Court ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade* should remind us all of one indisputable fact—**elections matter**.

Whatever your feelings on the merits of *Roe*, the pattern is clear that our fundamental freedoms are under attack. Other recent SCOTUS rulings have limited the state's ability to restrict gun usage, paving the way for campus carry, and dismantled the constitutional barriers between church and state, just to start. Combine these rulings with the Florida Legislature's recent attacks on public education, voting rights, intellectual freedom, LGBTQ rights, and more, and we all must recognize that the loss of constitutional freedoms and human rights are not things to fear on some future day. That future is here, and it is happening now.

One of the SCOTUS justices has already signaled what's next: attacks on contraception, marriage equality, and sex between consenting adults. Next Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature will renew its attacks on the right to unionize, the ability of higher educational institutions to hire their own faculty, and instructors' freedom to determine what can be said and taught on our higher education campuses. We know what we face, and the outlook is grim.

Today, we affirm that UFF supports the personal freedom of all higher education faculty, students, staff, and community members. In court and on campus, we are fighting to protect freedom of speech, freedom of association, intellectual freedom, and personal privacy. Over the past two years, we fought to maintain the health and safety of our members and your communities in the face of a State that would deny you that basic right within your classrooms. We reaffirm our commitment to the future of higher education by recognizing that removing bodily autonomy will directly harm the educational and career opportunities for people who become pregnant, especially those who are part of marginalized communities. We reaffirm our beliefs that healthcare access for all is a fundamental human right, that everyone has a right to autonomy over their own body, and that every person should have access to safe reproductive healthcare. We continue to resist all efforts to abridge these rights, and we ask you, your families, and your friends to collectively join us in that resistance.

Two years ago, pro-higher education candidates lost elections for Governor and Senator by a margin of less than a 1%. Had union members and their families increased their participation in the voting process, Florida would be a very different state today.

Now, more than ever, we must all become actively involved in the election process to resist further loss of our constitutional rights and to affirm our commitment to the fight for human rights for all. The UFF recently launched the largest Get Out the Vote (GOTV) effort in our union's history, and we need you to make that effort a success. Elections have consequences, and in this political climate, we must fight for the rights that we hold dear—we cannot take them for granted.

**The Higher Education Affiliate of Florida Education Association, National Education Association,
American Federation of Teachers, and AFL-CIO**

We can't take the easy way out and let this happen to us or the generations to follow. Now is the time. Florida is the place. Yes, it is an uphill climb. But, everyone can do something, and collectively we will succeed. Contact your local chapter leaders today and ask how you can join our union's election efforts.

In Solidarity,

Andrew Gothard, UFF President

Caitlin Gille, UFF First Vice-President

UFF Steering Committee

UFF Government Relations Committee

UFF Leadership, Equity, Inclusion & Diversity Committee

Matthew Lata, President, UFF/FSU Chapter, UFF Government Relations Committee Chair

Nicole Morse, UFF Government Relations Committee Co-Chair

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