

DEFEND FLORIDA NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Defend Florida's focus is election integrity. We learned a lot from last year's efforts. Whether you live in Florida or not, many things we've learned will apply to everyone.

HERE'S WHAT WE DID:

- Met with legislators in their home offices prior to the start of the legislative session in January.
- Scheduled meetings with legislators in Tallahassee.
- Presented election integrity bills to legislators at the beginning of the session in January.
- Some bills got sponsorships in the House but not in the Senate.
- Attended committee meetings.

HERE'S WHAT WE LEARNED:

- We were late to the party. Many legislator sponsorship quotas were already met by the time we met with them in January.
- Make your first visits with legislators during their orientation period when they are settling into their offices and forming committees.
- During this time, it's easy to get appointments. If you can't get an appointment or you can usually just drop in to someone's office and get an

audience with them. Things are much less formal and they may spend more than the usual 15 minutes with you.

- Our bills will get nowhere unless the Speaker of the House and the Senate President are on board.
- House sponsorships are easier to get because there are more members. They are more accessible because they live in your county.
- Establish good relationships with your state's leadership, your local legislators, and their legislative and administrative aides.
- Check our legislator's LinkedIn and Facebook pages to find their interests. Use this information to form relationships. You don't have to like them. You just need to create a relationship.
- The aides are essential for gaining access to your legislator. First impressions are key.
- If you have a contentious meeting with your legislator, they will tell their aide never to schedule another meeting with you. Word of mouth spreads to other legislators and you will find yourself in no man's land.
- If you have a good relationship with your legislator and they can't sponsor your bill, they

may steer you to someone who will.

- Raise Funds for Candidates. Set fundraising goals and organize events to support candidates. Leverage online platforms and local sponsorships for additional financial backing.

KEYS TO A GOOD MEETING:

- Research, research, research.
- Prepare a message.
- Schedule an appointment.
- Conduct a professional meeting.
 - One person should introduce your group. If there are a lot of you, introduce yourself with your organization's name i.e. Defend Florida.
 - One person should take notes on the legislator's body language.
 - Assign no more than two presenters that are confident in the material.
- Make the ask. Can we have your support?
- Leave a one-page summary document at the **end** of the meeting.
- Build relationships. Follow up is important. Keep touching base with the legislator so they will remember you and be more apt to make another appointment with you.

OTHER IMPORTANT TASKS TO BEGIN NOW:

- This year, the down ballot didn't get help from President Trump. Fixing this is a priority.
- Find good quality candidates that can win primaries. More often than not, the candidate that wins the primary wins the general. This includes all down ballot races like legislators, Supervisor of Elections, and Commissioners etc.
- Vet candidates. They can be a great person, but if they struggle to articulate their ideas, can't raise money or lack volunteers, they won't make it. They must be able to think on their feet and connect with people.
- Candidates need training. Debbie Faris is putting together **Campaign Fundamentals 101** which will teach the pathway to successful campaigns. Her training will avoid the hair on fire moments when something comes up and blindsides the candidate. Debbie has managed campaigns and helped turn dark blue Broward County Florida into light blue. She is finalizing the details and will announce its completion soon.
- Other avenues for training are:
<https://faci-training.org/schools>
<https://www.patriotacademy.com/https://www.fipl.org/>
Your local REC.

- GOTV...Get Out the Vote. Trump won't be on the ticket in 2026 or 2028. We need to register more Republicans and learn how to chase the votes, especially medium and low propensity voters. Target specific counties and legislators for voter outreach. Train volunteers and create materials to engage voters and drive turnout.
- Learn from Pastor Tim Thompson of California. (ourwatch.com). He and his volunteers were successful in banning fluoride in their water because they were relentless in establishing relationships and meetings with their County Commissioners. They wrote and passed an ordinance which is the same as a law.

CHALLENGES FOR FLORIDA:

President Trump nominated several Florida Representatives to his cabinet. Therefore, there will be 2 special elections spanning 6 to 8 weeks to replace Representatives Gaetz and Waltz. Short campaigns are advantageous because candidates can run successful campaigns with less money.

If President Trump pulls one of your Representatives, find and vet a MAGA candidate to fill the seat.

Defend Florida's task is to find MAGA candidates to run against RINO

Randy Fine who has been endorsed by President Trump, Rep. Byron Donalds and Sen. Rick Scott. It's going to be a tough lift, and we will need a confident candidate to overcome those endorsements.

STAY IN THE LOOP:

Attend Defend Florida zoom calls every Tuesday at 7pm ET by registering at www.defendflorida.org If you miss the call, it will be available at www.defendflorida.org/p2

Volunteer to help with Defend Florida initiatives.

Read the Defend Florida newsletter which is available on our website or in the weekly meeting reminder email.

Let's work together to



MAKE AMERICA FLORIDA!