

2022 IMPACT REPORT



FLORIDA CONSERVATION VOTERS



DEAR CONSERVATION VOTER,

Elections are temperature checks of where an electorate stands at a fixed moment in time. Who votes is just as important as how they vote.

While the 2022 elections were disappointing in Florida, they are only one metric by which Conservation Voters must evaluate the year. We knew that the first election after redistricting was going to be a brutal fight. It also came as no surprise that corporate special interests threw more money at their hand-picked candidates than ever before.

The only thing that can overcome enormous corporate spending on anti-environment and anti-democracy candidates is people power. That's why I am so proud to report that FCV now has a growing organizing team in Miami-Dade, Broward, Orange, Osceola, and Hillsborough counties. Building authentic trust is time consuming and necessary work. The results may not be immediate on a large scale, but connecting people with their own power not only makes a huge difference in their lives but builds enduring, collective power.

In the past, many politically-oriented organizations would parachute in during election season and disappear after Election Day. By design, this transactional style of mobilizing people does not lead to long-term or sustainable growth. From day one, we have strived to do things differently. Thanks to Conservation Voters like you, we are building a movement for the future. And despite temporary setbacks, our trendline is upward. We know that good things happen for our environment when we invest in people and our democracy.

Brick by brick, neighborhood by neighborhood, your Florida Conservation Voters team is hard at work in communities across the state. Please see pages 5-8 for information on what they are working on and where they are headed.

Together, we are building the Conservation Voter Movement from the ground up.



Alikei Moncrief, Executive Director



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Sunset over Tampa Bay

STATE LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR'S RACE

Midterm elections generally mean less turnout for voters of all types—Democrats, Republicans, and voters with no-party affiliation (NPA). And this year was no different. However, Democrats and NPA voters turned out at a much lower rate than Republicans, leading to big wins for that party across the state.

Turnout issues aside, pro-conservation candidates had a tough time matching the fundraising of corporate candidates flush with special interest and polluter money. It is challenging to run an effective statewide campaign with so few resources to communicate to nearly 15 million voters across several major cities, vast suburbs, and rural communities. This Herculean task was made even more difficult this year by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole, which left a trail of death and devastation across the peninsula and made communicating with voters harder, if not impossible.

As an example of the financial disparity between candidates, **Governor Ron DeSantis** had a 23 to 1 financial advantage over his opponent (and FCV-endorsed candidate) **Charlie Crist**. It is upsetting to see a candidate like Crist, who has such a strong record

on climate and protecting our land and water, fail to effectively communicate, organize, and compete statewide. His leadership will be missed next year as threats to our environment mount.

Even some of Florida's State House races were multi-million dollar affairs, which just a decade ago would have been unimaginable. Corporate polluters and special interest groups took advantage of a unique redistricting year to help anti-environmental, anti-democratic candidates win nearly every contested race in the House and Senate. And it wasn't pretty. Campaigns flooded the airwaves with hateful and misleading information and resources were slim for our endorsed candidates to fight back.

Unfortunately, many of Florida's pro-environment candidates could not overcome the financial advantage and were overwhelmingly drowned out. Hopefully, we will see some of these candidates consider running again, especially our good friends like **Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith** (D-Orlando) and newcomers like **Eunic Ortiz** (D-St. Petersburg). Rep. Smith's leadership over the years has been

invaluable and to say his loss was heartbreaking is an understatement.

Republicans now have a supermajority in both the State House and Senate. Coupled with an emboldened Governor increasingly focused on his Presidential ambitions and culture war politics, the situation could spell significant trouble for our democracy, voting rights, water, and especially our climate.

But it wasn't all bad news! FCV was proud to see many of our endorsed candidates win their races, and we cannot wait to work with them again soon. Congratulations to **Senator Linda Stewart**, **Representative Anna Eskamani** (D-Orlando), **Representative Alison Tant** (D-Tallahassee), **Representative Angie Nixon** (D-Jacksonville), **Representative Yvonne Hinson** (D-Gainesville), and **Representative Michele Rayner** (D-St. Petersburg)!

FCV is also delighted to inform you that our own **Water and Land Policy Director Lindsay Cross** (D-St. Petersburg) won her race for Florida House District 60! **Florida will have an environmental scientist in the State House next year!**

#NOT OUR GREEN

FCV follows the Cycle of Accountability as a guide to our work. This plan means we listen to the needs of a community, communicate those needs to elected officials, and then hold lawmakers accountable when they fail to act on those needs. In 2018, Governor Ron DeSantis promised to clean up Florida's waters, even going so far as to create a new Blue-Green Algae Task Force. In 2019, this Task Force, composed of water scientists from around the state, issued policy and funding recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to stop

massive blue-green algae blooms from devastating waterways and killing marine life like our beloved manatees. FCV and our allies have tracked every action the legislature and Governor have taken since that time and determined that he has only implemented 13% of the Task Force recommendations. This failure is unacceptable, especially considering Florida's massive loss of seagrass and wildlife over the past four years. We highlighted the Governor's failures during the summer, and you can be sure we will continue our advocacy into the next legislative session and beyond. Learn more at www.bit.ly/bg-algae



LOCAL ENVIRONMENTALIST KEEPS HIS SEAT

While the state legislature and gubernatorial races proved difficult for conservation candidates across the board, we are proud to report that FCV was an effective messenger in a closely watched Tallahassee local race.

Over the summer, FCV endorsed incumbent **Tallahassee City Commissioner Jeremy Matlow**. Commissioner Matlow has consistently demonstrated a strong and solid environmental ethic and has made substantial accomplishments on environmental issues. Specifically, he initiated and brought forward the 2019 ordinance to transition the city, including the city's electric utility, to 100% renewable energy by 2035. Matlow has been pushing ever since to meet that goal. Additionally, he has voted and advocated to bring city buildings to the highest level of LEED certification, fought against environmentally destructive road projects and projects that exacerbate sprawl, and advocated for greater transparency around water quality issues. Matlow has also pushed for a stronger tree ordinance and the creation of a related committee to strengthen existing tree protections, an issue

which is near and dear to many Tallahasseeans.

Many may recognize Jeremy Matlow accomplishments; however, his Chamber of Commerce-backed opponent outraised him with maxed-out contributions from developers, powerful Tallahassee lobbyists, and others who have chafed at Matlow's ardent support for clean energy and strong environmental protections.

To combat their pro-polluter messaging, FCV ran a series of digital video ads defending Commissioner Matlow's record and his commitment to a clean, green

Tallahassee. Using sophisticated targeting tools and models, FCV helped drive the conversation and motivate voters among key Tallahassee constituencies.

During the August election, Commissioner Matlow won his race by more than 4,000 votes and passed the crucial 50% mark, making a runoff election unnecessary. We are delighted to have Commissioner Matlow back in office for another four years, and we look forward to working with him to protect Tallahassee's beautiful water and land.



LOCAL WINS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Floridians consistently vote in favor of our water and land when given the opportunity. In many instances, water and land conservation ballot measures win by higher margins than most candidates!

We often say that conservation is a patchwork between local, state, and federal partners, with each agency working together to provide maximum ecological benefits and outdoor recreation opportunities. No one entity can do it all. That's why FCV routinely supports local

county or city government ballot initiatives that supplement the conservation efforts of their state and federal counterparts. Some of our most beloved local parks were created through local bonds or penny sales-tax referenda.

FCV is proud to report that voters approved five of our endorsed local conservation measures this year. These local ballot measures will allocate hundreds of millions of dollars to creating parks, protecting environmentally endangered

lands, improving water quality, and protecting drinking water sources. **Congratulations to residents of Indian River, Nassau, Brevard, Alachua, and Polk counties** Your investment in protecting our environment will pay off for generations of people and wildlife.

INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA

Now faced with a Republican supermajority in each chamber of the Florida Legislature and another term of Governor Ron DeSantis' masterclass in greenwashing, we know the next two years will be some of the toughest we've faced as an organization. But we also know we can make real and lasting changes if we focus on building power locally in our communities.

Over the last 18 months, FCV has invested heavily in developing strong community ties through our organizing programs in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Osceola, Orange, and Hillsborough counties. And our efforts are already paying off for families across the state.

We were on the ground in Kissimmee when Hurricane Ian flooded homes, streets, and entire neighborhoods. Thanks to support from the Florida Grassroots Community Recovery Fund, our

Chispa team was able to provide hot meals, bedding, and clothing to those in need for several weeks after this devastating storm. Sadly, climate change is making extreme weather events and rapidly intensifying hurricanes like Hurricane Ian and Nicole more common.

In South Florida, our Democracy For All team registered thousands of new voters, deftly switched to a robust get-out-the-vote program, and recruited 292 people to apply to be poll workers during a national poll worker shortage. Additionally, the team is holding our first-ever Youth Summit, bringing hundreds of young people together to learn about the importance of civic engagement and how to get involved locally in their communities. This work is part of our ongoing effort to build the knowledge and skills of young

people, who will soon be the largest voting bloc in the nation.

These stories are just the beginning. As we move into 2023, we aim to strengthen these connections and continue to lift up community voices on the issues affecting everyday Floridians. To elect pro-environmental champions at every level of government, we need voters to turn out. Voters need to be able to see themselves reflected in their candidates and trust our democratic systems. This is the responsibility of us all to help break down these barriers and build trust in the candidates who will fight to protect our environment, protect our democracy, and create a healthy and sustainable future for everyone.

ADVOCACY BY THE NUMBERS

4,673

PEOPLE WHO
TOOK ACTION
to contact our elected
officials

88,213

TEXTS SENT TO
OUR MEMBERS

61,895

CONNECTIONS
made to legislators by
email, phone, and Twitter

33

COMMUNITY
phone banks, text
banks and letter-writing
events

6,087

CALLS MADE
BY VOLUNTEERS_s

39,978

TEXTS SENT
BY VOLUNTEERS

ORGANIZING WITH LATINO COMMUNITIES

Unlike most other environmental programs, our Chispa Florida team is among only a few that engage in traditional community organizing. We build the capacity of our members and local leaders in Latino communities to influence policymakers to protect communities' rights to have a safe climate for generations to come. That's one of the reasons we have partnered with Friends of Split Oak to denounce plans for a toll road through Orange and Osceola counties' shared Split Oak Nature Preserve. By reaching out to Spanish-language media and providing public testimony in Spanish and English at official hearings, we successfully broadened the chorus of voices in opposition and continue to support the fight to save Split Oak.

Our Chispa team also kicked off Earth Month by hosting our first Banco de Mujeres, raising awareness and financial support to ensure those in need have access to necessary menstrual and personal hygiene products. Through Banco de Mujeres, we also educated our communities on the impact menstrual and personal hygiene products have on the planet. On Earth Day, we celebrated our first Community Gala: Una Sola Tierra Awards, an event honoring Earth Day and recognizing partner organizations, community leaders, and allies who have worked tirelessly to advance environmental justice and promote a better environment for our communities.

One of our top priorities in 2022 has been the Clean Buses for Healthy Niños campaign. We work with communities across the state to call on school boards and elected officials to put the health of our children and families first. We encourage counties to apply for Florida's Volkswagen

Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund to convert dirty diesel buses to clean, zero-emission school buses through educational webinars and community events.

During the summer, we celebrated Latino Conservation Week, making history by being the first Latino team to collect the most cigarette butts at Wekiwa Springs State Park in Florida. We also hosted our inaugural Climarte Summer Camp, which incorporated art and craft-making to help children understand climate change in an age-appropriate way.

We also hosted Talleres de Conciencia Climática and Eco-Ansiedad, a workshop on climate awareness and how to manage eco-anxiety. And we worked in partnership with other local groups to plant a community garden.

In Central Florida, Chispa Florida spent the tumultuous election season with Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. Despite the new obstacles these hurricanes presented, our team worked to get out the Latino

vote with caravans and phone and text banks, while also focusing on hurricane recovery by providing meals, bedding, and clothing to those affected by flooding from the storm. Additionally, we surveyed the community about Hurricane Ian, their resulting needs, and the storm's effects on their lives. Our community survey continues to guide our efforts in ensuring we provide resources to those most affected by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

Heading into 2023, our Chispa Florida team will deepen relationships within the communities we're working with to continue to build trust and elevate their voices on the issues affecting them, while also strengthening our partnerships with community organizations to better aid in our mission to create a healthy and sustainable future for everyone.





Hurricane Ian Relief Effort

CHISPA
BY THE NUMBERS

56

COMMUNITY EVENTS

7,635

COMMUNITY EVENT
ATTENDEES

509

COMMUNITY SURVEY
TAKERS

360

COMMUNITY MEMBERS
SERVED BY BANCO DE
MUJERES PROGRAM

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ORGANIZING?

Community organizing happens when people work together to solve problems and reach shared goals. It starts with listening to a community's needs and their experience of a problem. It focuses resources on training local leaders, sharing information and expertise, and connecting local leaders with people in power, such as lawmakers, the media, and others. It is about empowering communities and providing them with the tools they need to make positive changes in their lives through their own grit and determination.



DEMOCRACY AT WORK

This year FCV's Democracy For All Florida (DFA) program was able to provide access to the ballot by implementing robust voter registration, poll worker, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) programs in Black, Caribbean, and Latino neighborhoods in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties.

Our team began the year by organizing communities to oppose the Florida Legislature's passage of gerrymandered maps and the voter suppression bill, SB 90. By late spring, we launched a robust voter registration program in BIPOC communities with low rates of voter turnout in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Through site-based community canvassing, DFA registered 13,664 people to vote in South Florida over the course of just a few months.

After receiving reports from election administrators across the state of poll worker shortages, DFA called 60,925 voters in two counties of need, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach, to encourage residents to sign up as poll workers. We recruited a total

of 292 poll workers from these two counties.

In order to turn out the vote, DFA also knocked and put door hangers on 15,511 South Florida doors and made a plan to vote with 1,523 residents in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. Along with our door-to-door outreach, we called 209,661 voters of color in Miami-Dade and Broward counties and made a plan to vote with 2,343 of those whom we reached.

Alongside these mobilization efforts, DFA also provided youth civic education and advocacy resources through our Democracy For Youth (DeFY) program in Miami-Dade County's public middle and high schools. Through our virtual and in-person events, youth council meetings, and workshops, DeFY educated youth on key civic topics such as the history of voting, organizing 101, civics and good government, and environmental justice. From our 85 workshop graduates and volunteers, we built a six-member Youth Council led by our youth organizers. The Youth

Council's purpose is to provide a safe space that encourages activism and leadership skills to create and lead local campaigns.

One of our proudest campaigns is our Sex Ed Pop-Up Series in partnership with Power U, Planned Parenthood, and other community partners. This series was created in response to Miami-Dade County School Board members voting 5-4 against age-appropriate comprehensive sexual education curriculum for middle and high school students. Through these pop-ups, youth have learned tools and gained knowledge about issues relating to human sexuality, starting with consent to learning about doulas and more.

Empowering young people with this information helps improve health outcomes and build resilience to their changing world. This is part of our overarching mission to create healthy communities for everyone while also teaching young people the role that politics play in all aspects of their lives.



2022 DeFY Graduates



DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

BY THE NUMBERS

85

STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED OUR DEMOCRACY FOR YOUTH PROGRAM

34

DEMOCRACY FOR YOUTH WORKSHOPS

209,661

VOTERS CALLED DURING GET OUT THE VOTE

15,511

DOORS KNOCKED DURING GET OUT THE VOTE

292

POLL WORKERS RECRUITED



VOLUNTEERS HELP POWER OUR WORK

FCV's digital voter outreach campaign for the 2022 election cycle sought to increase voter education and turnout among our membership and the general public. We asked voters to return their mail-in ballots, cast their ballot during early voting, and encourage their friends and family to vote. With the help of 50 volunteers during 14 shifts, we were able to contact 54,000 voters in Florida through phone calls, text messages, and letters.

We increased the capacity of our existing volunteers, which included

a more diverse base. Many of our new volunteers were younger, which was critical to encouraging young people to vote. We also welcomed many new volunteers and continued working alongside returning volunteers who helped power our work in previous campaigns. Directing voters to our new Voter Information Center, we helped provide voters with their polling locations (which may have changed in the redistricting process), locate their nearest early voting site, find information on how to request and return their mail-in ballots, and even register to vote online.

**Try out our new voter information center!
Visit: www.fcvef.org/voter-info**

WORKING TOWARD A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Clean Energy For All Florida (CEFA) is a collaborative effort of more than 100 non-profit organizations in Florida that center their work in environmental justice and energy equity. As a group, CEFA has worked year-round on several issues affecting Floridians. Our most challenging and significant win this year was the net-metering campaign. Because of our efforts, more than 1,200 individuals took action, sending emails to Governor DeSantis urging him to veto a bill that endangered rooftop solar in Florida. After weeks of intense public pressure, the Governor vetoed the bill.

CEFA, as a whole, continues to fight against utility bill increases (rate hikes) and utility disconnections

that affect the lives of millions of Floridians, educating our communities on this issue and promoting their participation through public comment at the Public Service Commission (PSC). Together with our CEFA partners and 30 pro-climate action legislators, we called on the Governor to declare a climate state of emergency. More than 900 Floridians emailed in support of this initiative.

As we grow in CEFA, our legislative priorities are focused on energy efficiency and affordability, environmental health and disaster justice, and a just transition for Floridians. Our main legislative priorities for 2023 are increased energy efficiency, affordability,

and access to clean energy, especially in frontline, low-wealth, and rural communities and to bar disconnections from the grid due to financial insecurity. We also aim to hold public utilities accountable for unnecessary rate increases and pollution. Alongside our partners, we will continue to promote initiatives at the state and local level to address the causes of climate change and our imperative need to transition completely away from fossil fuel usage to cleaner, more equitable energy sources.

We are inspired by our communities and will keep advancing environmental justice and energy equity as the heart of all our climate work.

BRINGING THE FEDERAL LOCAL

The Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), alongside the Infrastructure Investments Jobs and Justice Act (IIJA), provide local communities in Florida with tremendous opportunities to cut carbon emissions, provide cleaner, safer, and more sustainable transportation options, and prepare for the devastating impacts of climate change. Billions of dollars in federal funds were made possible through the advocacy efforts of FCV, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), and countless partners to the Biden Administration and Democratic Legislatures including United State Representatives Darren Soto, Kathy Castor, Val Demings, and Charlie Crist. After celebrating the passage of the landmark legislation and the champions who made this victory possible, we began building the foundation for new capacity within our organization to help actualize these funding opportunities to Floridians.

Clean school buses, modern and sustainable infrastructure, and public transportation are locally based impacts that, once connected, help cut Florida's fossil fuel emissions and curtail harm caused by the climate crisis. These benefits will only come to Florida if local communities successfully apply through the various programs.

Our new LOCAL advocacy team has been tailor-made to better connect federally designated Justice40 communities to the climate movement and opportunities from the federal level, through the state and directly to the local level where funds are ultimately distributed. Continuing our collaboration with partners and within national networks, we work to ensure the communities within Florida that have the biggest barriers and roadblocks to clean energy and sustainability movements are uplifted and successful in their funding applications.



President Biden at the opening ceremony of the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow

BUILDING THE CONSERVATION VOTER MOVEMENT TOGETHER

Our mission is to build political power to protect our environment, protect our democracy, and create a healthy and sustainable future for everyone. We do this by educating and organizing people to take action, holding elected officials accountable, winning elections, and advancing just environmental policies.

When you make a gift to Florida Conservation Voters, you are not only helping us fight for protections for our wildlife, water, and public lands, a fair and accessible democracy, and a just transition to a clean energy future, you are also helping to make Florida a more sustainable and equitable place to live, work, and play.

“I’ve been immersed in climate science and solutions for many years and have realized that the best thing we can do to fix the climate crisis—better than going solar, recycling, buying an EV (electric vehicle), going vegan, etc.—is politics! We have all the technical solutions in hand today.”
—Dave Sillman, FCV DONOR

WE FOCUS ON

CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Climate change is the single biggest environmental threat facing Florida and our living planet.

To act urgently, lawmakers must commit to clean energy and climate action. FCV advocates for climate action and clean energy solutions at the Florida Capitol, including pushing for 100% renewable energy goals, electric school buses, and climate considerations in water and building infrastructure. We work with environmental justice partners to advance energy independence, efficiency, and affordability in communities statewide.

DEMOCRACY

FCV believes that threats to our planet and our democracy are intertwined. We are committed to ensuring fair and just participation in the electoral process by all Floridians, and we believe that access to voting is an essential foundation for citizens to engage in issues such as safe drinking water, air quality, or affordable clean energy.

LAND AND WATER

Conserving lands and waters protects the natural wonders in our state, improves our quality of life, and grows our economy. Consistent and full funding of conservation programs ensures that we can protect large habitats and productive agricultural areas, as well as create new parks and preserves accessible to all Floridians. FCV advocates for funding at the local, state, and national level and calls on all Floridians to continue advocating for increased and consistent funding for Florida Forever and other conservation programs.

Water is the lifeblood of our state. Our economy, public health, and quality of life all depend on clean water. FCV advocates for strong laws that stop pollution at the source and hold polluters accountable. We work to ensure that resources are directed to implement water quality solutions based on scientific consensus and that all appointed offices in environmental-related positions are filled with people who will best advocate for our water.

WAYS TO GIVE

PERSONAL PHILANTHROPY

Make an Annual Gift

Become a Monthly Sustainer

Leave a Legacy via Estate Planning

VOLUNTEERISM

Join our Board

Become a digital organizing volunteer

Become a community organizing volunteer

For more information on how you can support FCV or get involved, email contact@fcvoters.org.



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