

## **A Great Victory for Fair Districts... Poison Pill no more!**

On Thursday, July 8, 2010, the Honorable Judge James Shelfer ruled in favor of our coalition partners Florida's NAACP, League of Women Voters of Florida, and Democracia Ahora in their case (*Case No. 2010-CA-1803 Circuit Court Leon County*) to remove the "Poison Pill" Amendment 7 from this November's ballot. Recognizing the confusing and misleading language of the amendment, he struck the amendment off the ballot.

Judge Shelfer stated from the bench that by reading the ballot language of Amendment 7, the true intent is to "remove the one mandatory [requirement to make districts contiguous] and all future mandatory standards that may be placed in the constitution." He went on to say that it "is clearly and convincingly an attempt [by the Legislature] to hide the ball" and "if it were passed, its [ballot summary] flies under false colors."

THANK YOU to the Florida NAACP, League of Women Voters of Florida, and Democracia Ahora for taking on this fight against the politicians; for the people of Florida.

Now the voters – by voting YES on FairDistricts Amendments 5 and 6 -- will have a real shot on November 2 at changing the system that has allowed politicians to draw districts to ensure their own re-elections!

### **Additional Updates:**

The following is a list of additional updates and highlights from the past couple of weeks.

- New staff: FDF has hired a Finance Director John Briscoe. John joins the team with extensive experience in Development, having led successful fundraising efforts at Common Cause and the National Council of Churches. We are also in the process of hiring regional directors.
- Litigation- Amendment 7- Next Step: Legislature filed notice of appeal and motion to expedite. The appeal was filed in District Court of Appeal. It was passed through to the Supreme Court last week. Oral argument in the Supreme Court will take place on August 18.
- Litigation- Amendments 5 and 6: On Monday, July 19, the Supreme Court halted trial court proceedings while it considers whether the trial court or the Supreme Court has jurisdiction to hear the case. Briefs on the jurisdiction issue will be filed this week.
- Fair Districts Florida Facebook: Fan Page continues to grow – with 4,000+ fans. WITH YOUR HELP, we can continue to grow the list and reach as many Florida voters as possible.
- Media Coverage: Editorial support from Florida's newspapers continues- this time in support of the Amendment 7 ruling. Read all about it:

Orlando Sentinel: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/os-ed-quickhits-070910-20100708,0,6015333.story>

Naples Daily News: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/os-ed-quickhits-070910-20100708,0,6015333.story>

Tampa Tribune:

[http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/jul/12/ruling\\_a\\_step\\_toward\\_fairer\\_elections/](http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/jul/12/ruling_a_step_toward_fairer_elections/)

The Ledger:

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20100713/EDIT01/7135000/1036?Title=State-Reapportionment-Tallahassee-Sought-to-Clarify>

St. Petersburg Times: <http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/editorials/article1109434.ece>

The Lake Wales News:

[http://www.lakewalesnews.com/articles/2010/07/17/opinion/our\\_viewpoint/doc4c40a7ec52f4d007843866.txt](http://www.lakewalesnews.com/articles/2010/07/17/opinion/our_viewpoint/doc4c40a7ec52f4d007843866.txt)

The Bradenton Herald: <http://www.bradenton.com/2010/07/13/v-print/2426843/a-wise-and-strong-ruling-against.html#ixzz0u8Xrsbme>