

# PEOPLE'S WORLD

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## Romney's win spurs Florida organizing to “pink slip Mitt” in November

By Ben Markeson



Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney surged ahead of former House speaker Newt Gingrich to score a decisive victory Tuesday in Florida's Republican presidential primary and take all of the state's GOP delegates.

Results released around 11 p.m. EST gave Romney 46 percent of the vote to Gingrich's 32 percent. Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and libertarian standard-bearer Rep. Ron Paul trailed them with 13 and 7 percent respectively. Romney swept almost all of more affluent and suburban Central and South Florida along with Jacksonville (Duval County) while Gingrich mainly won counties in the more rural and conservative Florida Panhandle.

Exit poll results posted on CNN.com show that Romney got 52 percent of the women's vote vs. 28 percent for Gingrich, who has been dogged by issues of marital conduct. Women may have been the decisive factor in Romney's victory since the polls show only a 5-point difference in their shares of the male vote (41 percent for Romney vs. 36 for Gingrich).

Romney got 47 percent of the votes of college graduates vs. 29 percent for former history professor Gingrich, whose greatest appeal appears to be to tea party voters and the less educated and

less affluent.

The candidates spent heavily on TV spots in the days leading up to the primary, fueled by lavish corporate contributions to Super PACs. Romney and Gingrich sought to exploit hot-button conservative fears about government involvement in health care and undocumented immigration along with attacks on Gingrich's ethics and character and Romney's predatory business practices at his private equity firm Bain Capital.

The right-wing website Newsmax.com reported that “a stream of negative attack ads costing

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tens of millions of dollars have flooded Florida's airwaves, and the vast majority of the commercials are being financed by a superPAC that is

**Progressive forces in Florida have begun preparing for Romney as the inevitable nominee.**

seeking to lower the poll numbers of the former House Speaker.”

The article noted that in just one week the Romney campaign and a Super PAC supporting him had made almost \$17 million in media buys vs. a paltry \$2.2 million expenditure by Gingrich and the Super PAC supporting him. (SuperPACs are political action committees that can raise unlimited sums from any private entity or individual thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court’s Citizens United and SpeechNow.org v. FEC decisions.) Citing information from opensecrets.org, the article notes that pro-Romney superPAC Restore Our Future had outspent the pro-Gingrich Winning Our Future Super PAC by a 5-1 ratio (\$16.6 million vs. \$3.5 million) to air TV attack ads.

Working people in Florida rightfully may be skeptical that the Republican agenda of budget cuts, privatization, corporate giveaways and tax cuts for the rich will help them as they struggle with a failing economy and ever-increasing inequality and misery. The Sunshine State’s recovery from the 2008 recession still lags, with its unemployment rate in December at 9.9 percent (well above the national rate of 8.5 percent) and 3.1 mil-

lion working Floridians receiving food stamps.

“Instead of running on issues, the Republicans’ main issue is who can beat Obama,” said Marlon Washington, field director of Working America’s Orlando office.

Valerie Cepero, 26, a pre-med student who has been unemployed for a year and is active with Occupy Orlando, called the Republicans “shameless in their disregard of the desires of the citizenry.”

Florida, the fourth most populous U.S. state, will be a hotly contested prize in this year’s presidential election because of its 29 electoral votes (tying it with New York). Progressive forces in Florida have begun preparing for Romney as the inevitable nominee. As Pink Slip Mitt, a campaign of Florida Watch Action, noted via Twitter Tuesday night: “The primary season is over. The general election season has begun. Game on.” The group’s website, PinkSlipMitt.org, has tools for anti-Romney activists, including a downloadable “pink slip” for use at his campaign events.



**Ben Markeson writes for the People’s World.**

## **Demand Congress cut the military budget**

By PW Editorial Board

**C**ongressional Republicans are attempting to undo cuts to the military budget mandated by last fall’s across-the-board “sequestration” process. The failure of the debt ceiling debate to produce a deficit-reduction plan triggered a required \$492 billion in military cuts over the next decade.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon, R-Calif., along with Florida Republican Rep. Ander Crenshaw, in December introduced the Down Payment to Protect National Security Act that would require a 10 percent cut in the federal workforce as an alternative to the first year of military cuts.

The Republican received the largest number of donations from defense contractors in Congress.

Working Assets is circulating a petition to tell Congress not to roll back the cuts in defense spending. The petition can be signed here.

Working Assets says, “It’s undeniable that we have a grotesquely bloated military budget. Even with the reductions, the United States will be on track to spend more on defense than the next 10 countries combined.”

In addition, Republicans have been howling about proposals for trimming the Pentagon bud-

get put forward by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and President Obama.

However these proposed “cuts” are not cuts at all but rather a slowing in the rate of the Defense Department’s budget increase.

“The administration’s 10-year plan” writes defenseprof.com, “actually calls for an increase in the national security budget over the next decade - but it would scale back the 18 percent boost previously set for that period.”

But don’t bother Republicans with facts.

Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., believes the GOP might buckle under the threat of the cuts. Levin said that the threat of \$500 billion in automatic cuts to defense spending will force Republicans to drop their opposition to including tax hikes to finance deficit reduction, writes thehill.com.

The Hill reported: “Levin said the cuts to defense and domestic discretionary spending mandated by last summer’s debt-ceiling deal, known as the sequester, must be kept together to have that effect, and voiced opposition to recent efforts by Republicans to undo the process for a year.”

Levin had McKeon’s bill in mind.

Tell the GOP the cuts in military spending must stay in place! And tell them it’s way past time the rich pay their fare share!

**But don’t bother Republicans with facts.**

# Want to raise your pay? Join a union

By Mark Gruenberg

**W**ant to raise your pay? Prefer to get to and stay in the middle class? Then the most economically wise move you can make - especially if you're a woman, a minority-group member, or both - is to organize and join unions.

But you don't have to take our word for it. Just look at the annual data compiled by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The BLS data on the union difference accompany its annual report on union density in the U.S. Both are based on a survey of 60,000 households. And, of course, there may be errors in the data. But BLS says it's more than 90 percent confident its results would mimic those of the entire nation if it could ask all 310 million of us its questions.

The differences are stark.

\* In 2011, the median weekly income of all 125,187,000 workers was \$756. That's the point where the workforce splits: Half above, half below. The median weekly income of all 14.8 million unionists was \$938. That's 24 percent above the overall median and 29 percent above the \$729 median weekly income for all non-union workers.

\* The median weekly income of a male unionist - all eight million of them - was \$982 last year. That's 18 percent above the 2011 median for all male workers (\$832).

\* The median weekly income of women unionists - there were 6.9 million of them last year - was \$879. That's 28.5 percent above the median for all woman workers (\$684) and 34.6 percent above the median for non-union female workers (\$653). In short, female union workers earned \$4 for every \$3 earned by their non-union sisters.

\* There's still a "wage gap" between men and women, even among unionists, but it's a lot narrower than the gap between non-union men and women. The median weekly wage for union women is 89.5 percent of that of union men - and the median for union women is higher than the median wage for non-union men. The male-female wage



gap for non-unionists? 81 percent. Want less pay discrimination on the job? Join its union.

\* The median weekly income for African-American male workers was \$653. For African-American male union workers it was \$802, or 23 percent higher.

\* Now let's do the same drill for African-American women. Female union workers earned \$744, or 87 percent of that white male's "yardstick." Non-union African-American women earned a median of \$577 weekly, or 67 percent of the white male wage.

Any worker would love to get a raise like that. And you can, if you organize and joins the union. Yes, there's still a wage gap, but not the yawning chasm you see between the median weekly wage of the white male and the Hispanic non-union woman worker. She earned \$501 weekly - 58.5 percent of the white man's median weekly wage, and dead last among all the subgroups.

We could go on and on, about how unionists, white and non-white, are more likely to have employer-paid health insurance, pensions, etc., etc., but we don't think we need to belabor the point.

If you want to get ahead, if you want a middle-class family-supporting wage, your best ticket is to join the union.

Now go show this column to your non-union neighbors.

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# Texans will fight voter suppression

By Jim Lane

**T**he Rev. L. Charles Stovall, a highly respected Dallas civil rights leader, hosted an action-oriented meeting in the same city to prepare a fight against anti-democratic laws and political practices in Texas.

"We are in a new era, a new situation, which none of us have ever seen before," Stovall said at the Jan. 26 meeting at St. Luke's United Methodist Church. He then outlined some of the negative effects expected from the voter ID law passed in the last legislative session, signed by Gov. Perry.

The law requires all Texas voters to have a state-issued photo identification card in addition to their usual proof of voter registration before they can vote. Older people, blind or disabled people, and a lot of people not proficient in the English language do not hold driver's licenses. In order to exercise their democratic rights at the polls, they will have to go through the expense and bother of getting a special identification card from the driver's license office.

Students living away from home might also find themselves disenfranchised because they will not be allowed to use their student identification cards to establish their residency.

The excuse being given for voter ID laws is that they prevent fraudulent voting at the polls, but supporters of the bill have not been able to produce any actual cases of such fraud. Furthermore, the Texas voting laws governing absentee voting, where fraud is much more likely, have not changed.

One of the first speakers introduced by Rev. Stovall at the Jan. 26 meeting was Peter Johnson, who was originally sent to Dallas as a Southern Christian Leadership Conference organizer by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. himself. Johnson summarized what is happening with an allusion to the Ku Klux Klan: "This conspiracy today against the right to vote is being led by the same people who used to wear their bedclothes!"

# Cinco prisioneros cubanos no están solos

Por W. T. Whitney Jr.

**E**s importante para establecer correspondencia con Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, Ramón Labiñino y Antonio Guerrero, ahora en la cárcel por 13 años.

Los prisioneros aprecian la vigorosa campaña mundial en su nombre. Sin embargo, a la par que sus años en prisión remontan, ellos necesitan recordatorios de que no están olvidados, de que no están solos, y que nuestro apoyo no titubea.

René González abandonó la prisión recientemente, porque finalizó su período. No está apto para recibir cartas porque la ubicación en Florida donde estaba cumpliendo libertad condicional está sin revelarse.

El escribir a los prisioneros es frecuentemente un proceso de doble camino. Por ejemplo, durante Diciembre Antonio Guerrero proporcionó reportes y opiniones para varios corresponsales. Él escribe desde la prisión de Florence, Colorado, donde está detenido.

En una revisión de fin de año, él nota que René González tiene "libertad pero está en constante peligro físico, es una libertad sin ser capaz de tener a Olguita y a sus hijas junto a él; es una libertad sin libertad".

Gerardo Hernández continúa bajo las terribles condiciones de una penitenciaría, algo que conozco muy bien. Su fuerza permanece alta contra la injusticia de la sentencia de doble vida y a pesar de no poder recibir visitas de Adriana. Para mí, la reciente visita de mis dos hijos ha sido la cosa más maravillosa que me ha pasado en estos 13 años de encarcelamiento.

Refiriéndose al Coloquio Internacional para los Cinco concluido recientemente en Holguín, Cuba, Anto-

nio dice, "nos da gran fuerza escuchar acerca de la participación de amigos de todo el mundo. La lucha por nuestra causa está creciendo". Observa, sin embargo, estamos "en medio de un mundo que no puede aceptarlo más y está muriendo de dolor. Es un mundo que nos está pidiendo correr para ayudarlo a salvar a la humanidad de tanto egoísmo, un mundo que nos está llevando, como Fidel afirmó "a ritmo despiadado a una catástrofe definitiva y total".

En otra carta, Antonio pregunta, "¿A dónde conducirá toda esta locura? ¿Cómo puede tratar el mundo con esta ambición? ¿Quizás es difícil darse cuenta que éste sistema de mercado de los países ricos es insostenible?".

Antonio ve "más inestabilidad en las operaciones normales de prisión. Fue casi normal que en el mes de Diciembre tendríamos un bloqueo. A la mínima excusa cerrarían la prisión entera".

En otra carta a sus partidarios, Antonio recuerda un intercambio con un "hermano del alma" llamado Manuel, quien escribió, "Ahora tenemos el CELAC, la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y del Caribe, muchos están temblando en el mundo ante la ola fascista del imperialismo, [pero] en estos precisos hora y lugar -la tierra- vemos grandes procesos que se están provocando en Nuestra América".

Antonio está de acuerdo: "El CELAC con muchos desafíos por delante, representa esperanza para la fraternidad, la justicia, y la paz para todos los pueblos de Latinoamérica y el Caribe, y aún más, para toda la humanidad".

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