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Florida Legislators File HB 1 Repeal

Tallahassee, FL — During the 2021 Legislative Session, House **Speaker Chris Sprowls** and Senate **President Wilton Simpson** pushed **[HB 1: Combating Public Disorder](#)** through the Legislature, and **Governor Ron DeSantis** signed the bill into law despite concerns about its constitutionality. **HB 1** was written to punish protestors and to infringe on local governments ability to control their own law enforcement budgets to address and respond to community needs.

Representative Angie Nixon (D- Jacksonville) and **Senator Shevrin Jones (D- Miami Gardens)**, in collaboration with The Black Collective and the Community Justice Project, have filed **[HB 857/SB 1172](#)** to a repeal **HB 1**, which violates Floridians' First Amendment right to freedom of speech and to peacefully assemble—and also makes it dangerous for citizens who choose to exercise those rights.

“Repealing HB 1 will stop the silencing of Black and Brown communities which has always been a part of our country’s history.” says **Representative Angie Nixon**. “Instead of infringing on people’s first amendment rights, legislators should be focusing on creating policies that allow Floridians to have the freedom to be healthy, prosperous, and safe.”

Portions of **HB 1** have already been found unconstitutional by Florida courts. In September, U.S. District Judge Mark Walker **[found portions potentially discriminatory](#)** and granted a preliminary injunction preventing portions of the law from being enforced until the lawsuit is decided by the courts.

“The architects of HB 1 have twisted Florida's laws to violate the constitutional rights of individuals and municipalities alike,” said **Berbeth Foster, Esq, senior staff attorney for the Community Justice Project**. “Until this law is repealed, the state of Florida is telling the nation, and in fact the world, that we are a state intolerant of dissenting viewpoints and vengeful against those who dare to challenge white supremacy.”

On November 16, 2021 nine Florida cities also sued the Governor for his attempt to prohibit local governments from being able to reallocate funding. In most cities, law enforcement consumes a large portion of their budget. In the past, cities have had the right to adjust their law enforcement budgets to respond to economic changes and community needs. Under **HB 1**, these decisions could be reversed or rewritten. This prohibits cities from making decisions that directly impact local residents and limits their ability to reimagine their public budgets to respond to the needs of the community.

“HB 1 is an abuse of power, the state’s attempt to silence Black people and condone violence perpetrated against them. Communities are asking more of their local elected officials, and through HB 1 the state established a process to interfere in the participatory local democracy and governance of cities,” said **Francesca Menes, co-founder of The Black Collective**. “Reimagining public safety is about shifting resources to where they are most needed, laying a path for our communities to thrive rather than maintaining the status quo.”

“HB 1 blatantly violates Floridians’ constitutionally-protected rights and is yet another demonstration of just how fragile our democracy is as power-hungry politicians attempt to silence any and all voices that disagree with them,” said **Senator Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens)**. “The right to peacefully assemble is fundamental to any healthy democracy and a force behind positive change throughout history. As a federal judge ruled recently, this dangerous law has no place in Florida and ought to be repealed immediately.”

HB 1 attempts to silence Florida’s citizens who openly advocate for their communities. Non-violent and peaceful protest is a historical staple in this country that has been pivotal for the civil rights movement and Black communities seeking justice. We cannot recoil back into an era where citizens' voices are choked by punitive laws.

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