



## *Florida House of Representatives* Democratic Office

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### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment Silences 1.7 Million Floridians** *HJR 7231 Aims To Confuse and Misguide Floridians*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Florida House Democratic Caucus members led the debate today against HJR 7231, arguing that it would silence 1.7 million Floridians who have been clear in their demands to reform Florida’s broken reapportionment process.

Proponents of the proposed constitutional amendment claim that it is needed to “clarify” FairDistricts Amendments 5 and 6. But HJR 7231 is not a “clarifying amendment.” Rather, it is a blatant attempt by Republican Party leaders to hold on to power while deceiving voters into believing they are supporting the reforms of Amendments 5 and 6.

Following a party-line vote on the measure, Florida House Democratic Caucus members issued the following statements warning Floridians about the misguided and blatant attempt by the majority party to mislead them in November:

**Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston):** "This sham amendment is the epitome of political gamesmanship by the ruling party. Floridians deserve more respect from their legislative leaders. HJR 7231 is a slap in the face to the 1.7 million Floridians who want their voices to be heard."

**Democratic Leader Pro Tempore Geraldine Thompson (D-Orlando):** "The citizens of Florida worked hard to get Amendments 5 and 6 on the ballot so that the legislature will have to follow fairness standards when redrawing congressional and legislative district lines. These amendments also strengthen minority-voting rights in Florida."

**Representative and Vice-Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus Ron Brisé (D-North**

**Miami):** "In a very despicable attempt to avoid the will of the people, some members of this legislature have voted to advance HJR 7231 to the ballot. The proponents of this additional and unnecessary amendment simply want to retain the power to draw districts with no rules in order to protect themselves instead of protecting the voters themselves."

**Representative and Vice-Chair of the Legislative Hispanic Caucus Luis Garcia (D-Miami):** "It is a shame that fair minority representation has been subverted in such a political way. HJR engages in fear tactics and misleads people about the reapportionment process. Floridians deserve a more thoughtful discussion and less political gamesmanship. The tactics employed are similar to those used by the totalitarian government of Venezuela."

**Representative Perry Thurston (D-Fort Lauderdale):** "Proponents of HJR 7231 are telling Floridians that this measure clarifies Amendments 5 and 6 when, in fact, it does the opposite. HJR 7231 instills fear and demagoguery in an issue that is complex and extremely sensitive. It is quite clear that those espousing HJR 7231 are moving ahead with this misleading constitutional amendment to protect their power and have shown little concern for the will of the people."

**Representative Joe Gibbons (D-Hallandale Beach):** "Unfortunately, some of my colleagues and even some of my fellow members of the Legislative Black Caucus are pushing a measure that would lead voters into thinking that HJR 7231 merely clarifies the intent of Amendments 5 and 6 and strengthens protections when, in reality, the measure would weaken amendments supported by 1.7 million Floridians."

**Representative Janet Cruz (D-Tampa):** "Fair representation should guide the process for reapportionment. Sadly, the proponents of HJR 7231 have chosen to side with maintaining political free reign over this sensitive process rather than listen to 1.7 million Floridians. The disingenuousness of those leading the charge to place HJR 7231 on the ballot is disrespectful and shows their lack of concern for the will of Floridians."

**Representative Richard Steinberg (D-Miami Beach):** "Floridians should not be tricked by the proposed constitutional amendment because it is nothing more than a sham amendment and an attempt by leaders of the majority party to retain power. It should be called the Unfair Districts Amendment."

**Representative Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed (D-Deerfield Beach):** "I don't see how minority-access district are being protected by HJR 7231."

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