



UFF Biweekly

United Faculty of Florida -- USF System Chapter

United Faculty of Florida - USF Chapter

15 January 2026

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What Does the State's Labor Commission Do? (Besides Harass Us)

The state's labor commission dealing with public employees has decided we need [another election](#) to determine if UFF shall continue to represent UFF USF employees in bargaining and contract enforcement.

- **PERC and Certification.** The state's labor commission for public employees is the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC), and they are the ones handling these elections.

Doesn't PERC have anything else to do?

- **PERC and Litigation.** PERC also hears complaints, although recently, PERC doesn't want to hear it.

So ...

- **Where did PERC come from?** It wasn't supposed to be like this. Or was it?

Which brings us to the source of all the mandates that PERC, the Board of Governors, and other bodies are carrying out.

- **Meanwhile, back in the Legislature.** Some legislators are not happy that the union is winning certification elections, and they want to do something about it.

So how do we educate legislators about the effects of their legislation? Here is the recurring blurb on that:

- **Government relations.** It's better to fight bad legislation in the Legislature than in the courts. For one thing, it's cheaper, and for another, it doesn't take years.

Bargaining Session tomorrow Friday, January 16, at 10 am, on USF Tampa in the Patel Center in CGS 140. It is open to the public, and we **strongly** encourage everyone to come in person and support the home team. (But if you absolutely cannot

come, here is [the link](#).) **Both teams will present responses to the other team's proposals.**

It's **527** Days Late

A new contract to succeed the current one should have been "tentatively agreed to" and ratified by the employees and the Board by **7 August 2024**. We are now down to a handful of articles. Don't just cross your fingers - come support the home team at tomorrow's bargaining session, 10 am on USF Tampa in the Patel Center in CGS 140.

EDues issues

If you are not paying dues, you are not a UFF member - and unless you are paying dues by check, you would be getting biweekly notices from FEA's computer about dues deductions. ***If you are not receiving FEA's receipts, you are not paying eDues.*** For assistance, [contact us](#).

Chapter Meeting

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow Friday at 12 noon on USF Tampa in CGS 140, and on Zoom. On [the agenda](#): on the certification election, the upcoming chapter election, the new syllabus rule, and more. And here are the [November 21 minutes](#). For those who cannot come in person, you can get a Zoom link by contacting [the chapter secretary](#).

Upcoming Events

Meetings and events will be posted on [the Events Calendar](#) on the [UFF USF website](#). Here are events for the next few weeks:

- January 16 at 10 am: Bargaining Session on USF Tampa in the Patel Center in CGS 140.
- January 16 at 12 pm: Chapter Meeting on USF Tampa in the Patel Center in CGS 140.
- January 21 at 2:30 pm: [Faculty Senate Meeting](#) on USF Tampa in MSC 4200; online to USF St. Petersburg in BAY 220 and USF Sarasota / Manatee in SMC C306.
- January 28 & 29: State University System Board of Governors [Meeting](#) at Florida State University.
- January 30 at 12 pm: Chapter Meeting at location TBD.
- February 4 at 2:30 pm: [Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting](#) on USF Sarasota / Manatee in C306.

In accordance with SB 256 passed by the state legislation in 2023, the Florida Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) requires **union recertification** votes annually.



Vote YES for:

- **union representation**
- **a legally-recognized voice to protect the right of faculty**
- **union negotiation for wages**
- **communication and leverage for policy improvements**

If you want to keep your contract and union, **you must vote YES!**

Contact UFF if you don't get a ballot from PERC by 1/4:
uff.ourusf.org/contact-us

UFF United Faculty of Florida
University of South Florida Chapter



PERC and Certification

It was only last May that [UFF won the USF certification election 645 - 19](#), and now we have another election that UFF must win in order to continue to bargain and enforce the contract. What gives?

In 2023, the Legislature passed and the governor signed [Senate Bill 256](#), which included [items we are litigating](#):

- [mandates on the content](#) of the union membership form, and
- [prohibition of union dues payment by paycheck deduction](#) (which was [struck](#) by the court, but this is probably not the end of that battle), and
- requires that every public employee union with less than 60% membership density [petition PERC annually](#) for a certification election (those SOI cards were the petition - and we need to file more annually).

At the moment, unions with more than 60% density have to verify their membership using membership forms mandated by the state, which complicates their recertification.

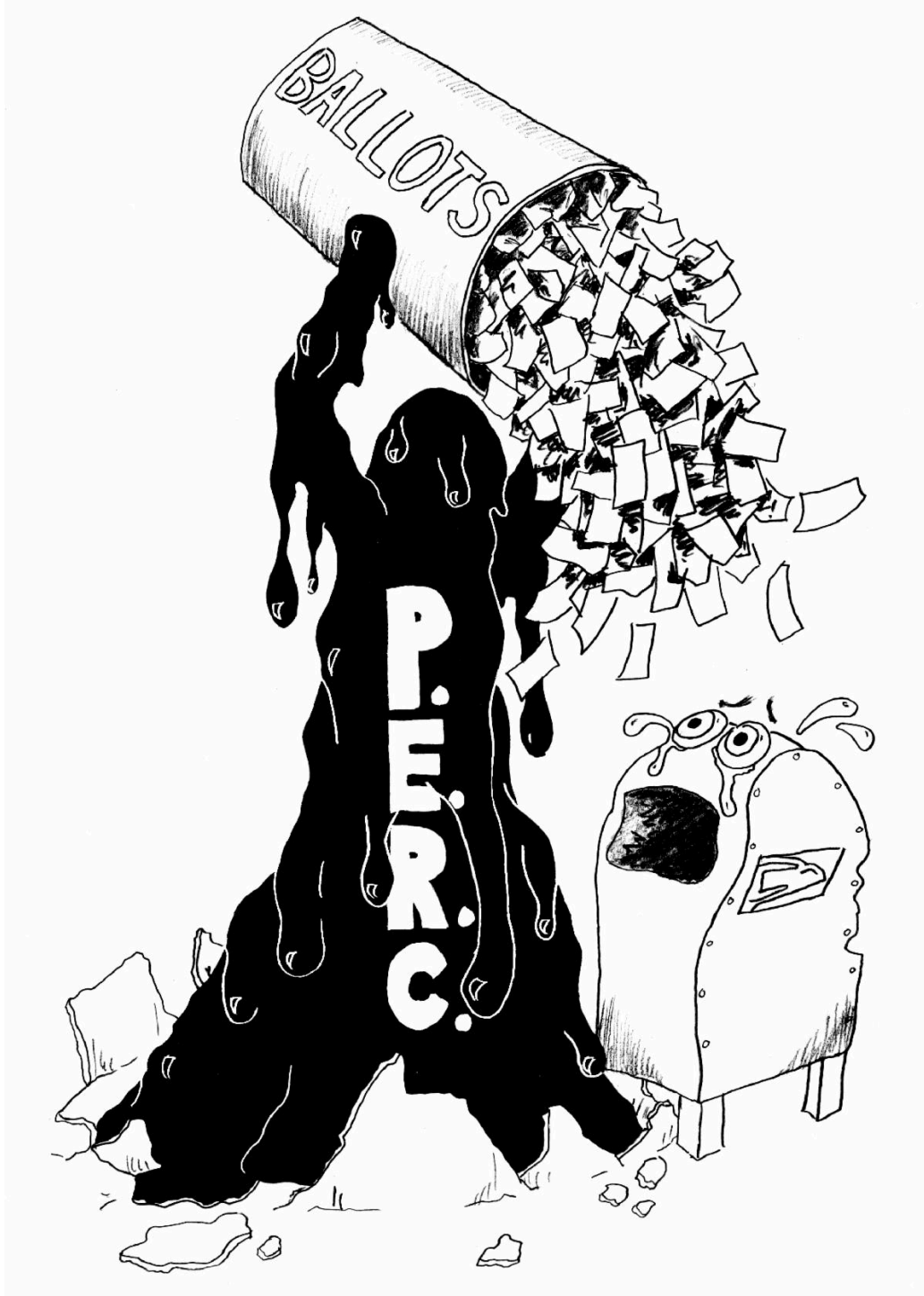
The law says that **in order for a union to continue to bargain and enforce a contract, it must have 60% membership density or win a certification election conducted by the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC)**. We are

fighting this law in court, but meanwhile, **PERC is having difficulties following the law.**

By [Statute 447.305\(6\)](#), every year a union must petition PERC for certification (that petition being those SOI cards; see [Statute 447.307\(2\)](#)) at the time of our registration (for USF, in March), and unless that union has 60% membership density (which, alas, USF does not), PERC will then hold a certification election. Last year, in response to our petition, PERC held an election in May, and this year, in response to ... whatever ... PERC is holding another election in January. In fact, PERC has scheduled elections at several institutions - including USF - so that ballots would arrive when school was not in session. This suggests that PERC is not interested in high turnout.

Nevertheless, **UFF has to win this election. Or else.** Our lawyers are concerned about these irregularities - especially in light of some legislation being considered this year (see below), and **they have urged all UFF chapters to urge all faculty to vote in this certification election.**

In addition, last May, **PERC failed to send ballots to correct addresses** (and many ballots were returned unopened). If you are in the UFF USF Bargaining Unit but did not receive a ballot, ask PERC for a ballot - their email is ballotrequests@perc.fl.gov; put "Replacement ballot requests for EL25279, USF" in the subject line and include your name and home address. And please cc to uff@ourusf.org so we know how bad the situation is (and so we can nag them).



PERC and Litigation

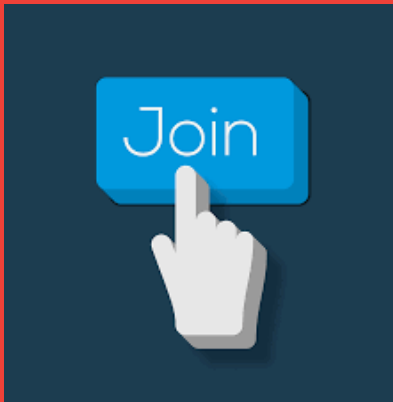
PERC also handles union litigation. There are three major kinds of legal actions.

- **An Unfair Labor Practice** is a complaint that management violated labor law or commonly accepted standards of conduct (here is what the [Florida Bar says](#)).
- **A Bargaining Impasse** is when one or the other side bargaining a contract informs PERC that they are stuck. PERC then sends a Special Magistrate to hear both sides and make a recommendation. If the recommendation is not accepted, the issue goes to the Legislative Body (in USF's

case, the USF Board of Trustees). Here is [Florida Statute 447.403](#).

- **Arbitration** is the final step of the grievance process. A grievance is a complaint that the contract has been violated, and after multiple steps at the university level, the case goes to PERC. Or it did until the Legislature passed a law banning arbitration for faculty unions - another issue in court.

So lately PERC has not been dealing with arbitrations (the next step being going to court) and PERC has decided not to deal with many unfair labor practices (which are thus going to court). Not surprising as now they are dealing with all these certification elections. Your taxpayer dollars at work.



Union Membership

If you are not a union member, please [join today](#) (the form connects automatically to the eDues form, so you will want to have your banking information or checkbook information handy). We are stronger standing together in solidarity.

If you have difficulties with the eDues form, see the [instructions](#).

Membership Status

If you are going on a reduced-pay leave or sabbatical, or if you are retiring or resigning, please contact us so we can **adjust your eDues accordingly**: visit the [UFF Membership Policy webpage](#). In particular, **if you are retiring, we encourage you to consider joining the UFF Retired chapter**: here is [their webpage](#).

Where Did PERC Come From?

In 1968, when Governor Claude Kirk (whose campaign platform included more money for schools) vetoed a bill to raise property taxes in order to pay for education, over 40% of all Florida

teachers staged the [first statewide teachers' strike](#) in U.S. history. (Actually, it was a [mass resignation](#) plus walkout.)

Floridians sympathized with the teachers, and that year, Floridians also approved a new state constitution that included the right for employees to choose a union: "The right of employees, by and through a labor organization, to bargain collectively shall not be denied or abridged." It took [five years](#) - and repeated nagging by the Florida Supreme Court - for the Legislature to pass the Public Employees Relations Act, creating the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC). In particular, [Part II](#) concerns public employee unions - like UFF.

The new constitution did impose some limits; in particular, it bars public employees from striking, so the historic alternatives have included [fact-finding bodies](#) and applying leverage and finding common interests. Implicit in all this was the understanding that employees would not strike and the State would tolerate and engage with unions.

During the past three years, the State has reneged on this commitment by weaponizing the certification process and imposing restrictions on grievances (e.g. denying university faculty unions access to arbitration). UFF contends that these actions are illegal and these matters are being litigated. Meanwhile, it is PERC that is doing the weaponizing and imposing.

What is a Contract Good For?

A contract can help when you get in trouble - *if you use it*. If your contractual rights are violated, you have the right to file a grievance seeking redress, and we can help. But remember, **you have thirty days from the time you knew or should have known about the contract violation to file the grievance, so if something happens, contact us asap.** For more information, see the [Grievance Page](#).

Collective Bargaining Agreement January 2026 Bargaining Session



Sessions are open to the public. We strongly encourage everyone to attend.

UFF USF Chapter meeting following negotiation: noon in CGS 140

**Friday, January 16th
10am**

CGS 140

USF Patel Center

UFF United **University of**
Faculty **South Florida**
of Florida **Chapter**

uff.ourusf.org



Meanwhile, Back in the Legislature

This certification business (not to mention banning arbitration, post tenure review, posting syllabi, restricting general education curricula, closing DEI offices, etc. etc. etc.) came from the Legislature, which was thus too busy to deal with trivialities like housing, insurance, and health care.

So far, Florida Education Association unions (including UFF) have been winning certification elections overwhelmingly, and

there is a feeling in the Legislature that something must be done about this. Last year, a pair of bills would have required that supporting votes by [a majority of all employees represented](#) by a union - not just a majority of votes cast - would be necessary for recertification. Similar bills have appeared in this year's session in the [House](#) and the [Senate](#). **This is why our lawyers want as many faculty as possible to vote in this certification election.**

It's not clear where this is going. Last year's effort to raise the bar for recertification failed, and this year is an election year when the Legislature is worried about [consituent complaints](#) about trivialities like housing, insurance, and health care.

Much of the recent drama is because of recent legislation, all the more reason why we need to educate politicians about the consequences of their legislation. To see how to educate politicians, see below.

Government Relations

This year is an election year, so the Florida legislative session started on Monday.

While UFF visits legislators during the session - and the UFF staff and officers invite UFF members to come join them during the session to help educate legislators about probable effects of bills already in the hopper - **the time to influence legislation is *while it is being composed***. That means NOW.

The chapter's Government Relations Committee is seeking volunteers to visit their local legislators - and **legislators pay more attention to their own constituents**. If you are interested in talking to Tampa Bay area legislators about higher education issues, contact [the chapter secretary](#). Thank you.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Bargaining the Next Contract

Your UFF-USF Bargaining Committee met with USF-BOT bargaining representatives to begin negotiations for the successor agreement to the

current Collective Bargaining Agreement 2021-2024. The Bargaining Committee wants your ideas, comments, suggestions, and desiderata from the employees that the union represents. Please send thoughts on bargaining to [the Bargaining Committee](#).



Follow us on Social Media &&& *Join us on Social Media*

We have a Facebook group: see [United Faculty of Florida at USF](#). This page is a place where UFF members can exchange thoughts and ideas. **The page is "public", but only dues-paying UFF members are eligible to post items on the page. If you are a UFF member, ask to join on the page, and the moderator will invite every UFF member that asks to join.** Non-members are welcome to look (but you need a Facebook account to do that). So check us out ... join the conversation.

- We have a blog: see [The USF Faculty Blog](#). This has news items as they come up.
- We are on Twitter (aka X), so follow us on Twitter / X via [@UffUsf](#).
- We are on Instagram, so check us out at Instagram [@usf_uff](#).
- We even have a You-Tube channel: [check out our videos](#).

We are revamping our publicity machine, and if you are interested in social media, in membership, or in conversations with you colleagues across campus, *come join the campaign*. Contact [the Communications Committee chair](#).



USF United Support Fund for Food Pantries

Many of our students are struggling during with food insecurity, and the USF Foundation is supporting the [USF Food Pantries](#) to help out. They are accepting non-perishable donations, but one can also make monetary donations for the pantries at all three campuses.

Details, Details

The USF-UFF Chapter website is <http://www.uff.ourusf.org>, and our e-mail address is uff@ourusf.org. About this broadcast: This Newsletter was broadcast from Constant Contact, and is intended for all members of the UFF USF Bargaining unit (USF faculty and professionals at most departments). A (usually identical) version will be broadcast to USF-News and USF-Talk from mccolm@usf.edu.

If you do not want to receive the UFF Biweekly, you can unsubscribe below or contacting [the Chapter Secretary](#). If you do not receive the Biweekly, but want to, contact [the Chapter Secretary](#).

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