

Good morning, FEA Presidents past and present!

My name is Ryan Haczynski and I am a proud union member. Up until recently, I held leadership positions in Hillsborough's CTA, serving both as an executive board member and a senior building rep/steward for several years. Due to my advocacy efforts to get educators all across Florida to [take a personal day out of protest on 1/14/20](#)--and the nervousness it caused among fellow union members--[I resigned said leadership roles](#) (yet retained my membership) and will continue to speak out regardless of the personal cost(s) I may face. At this point, I do not care what the state does to me. Our students and their future are too important for me to remain silent.

I am writing to all of you today to offer some unsolicited advice/perspective on the upcoming day of action on 1/13/20. While I appreciate Andrew providing me with all the details and big picture plan--and I genuinely love every part of it--I do not agree with the date at all. As some of you undoubtedly know, the original date was 1/14/20. Some of you or others in the know have confirmed this. In my personal conversations with leadership, I was directly told and *encouraged* to keep saying what I was saying at various board meetings, only to feel blindsided by the switch of the date.

And ever since that time I keep asking myself: "why?" Granted, I understand there is a belief that somehow FEA will have all the media attention by having their own day, but do you think the media will care? It will be written off simply as a "union" event; I don't say that with malice, but as a shrewd political tactician/NPA centrist who will always put people over politics. A good number of people may be alienated by the fact that this is a union initiative, which is why it would be better if multiple organizations all came together on the same day with thousands of people who simply care about kids. If we do not have this viewed as a grassroots movement that inspires all stakeholders to join in with us, this will be nothing more than a flash in the pan. And, as I mentioned in an open letter to Fed, Andrew, and Carole mid-summer, until we dominate the headlines and get our public ed cause in the minds of voters (public ed ranked 8 or 9 in the top 10 of 2018 issues on three statewide polls), this is all for naught.

Moreover, when I went to Orlando to speak last Tuesday, I had the good fortune to meet Wendy Doromal for the first time. While I don't recall if she said this to me before or after I spoke, she said to me "FEA is holding its day of action on 1/13" (because I had mentioned 1/14 during my comments) to which I replied "yep, but that's the wrong day." She responded with "the first day of the legislative session is just ceremony and pageantry" and though I did not say it aloud my mind immediately thought "**Hell yeah it is! That's EXACTLY what we need to disrupt!**" Seriously, how much

more/longer are we going to act so deferentially toward Tallahassee? Do you realize how many people are bothered by the way FEA leadership praised the DeSantis announcement last week? Do you understand why so many people will not join the union because they feel it is "toothless", "weak" or some other pejorative term? All those "grateful" responses really riled a number of people. Heck, at this point, changing the date even makes me wonder if Corcoran himself asked you to not do this on the first day of session...but I digress...

My point is this--I believe we should put this up to a vote and let democracy take its course. Although I will not be a delegate this year due to long held concert tickets/plans, I am hoping that other presidents of locals who feel this way will caucus with their delegates to discuss the possibility of changing the date back to the original of 1/14/20. It will be far more inclusive if we get educators, parents, students, and anyone else who cares about public ed to show up en masse. If this is an FEA only event with 10,000 people, while impressive, it won't cut it. This needs to be a wide cross-section of Florida citizens taking a stand **TOGETHER** on behalf of all students and their future. Because if what Senator Tom Lee said recently at a town hall I moderated two weeks ago (a newer brand of Republican has taken over the legislature, and most of them hate the teachers unions), all this will do on 1/13/20 is stoke their wrath before the session begins. Admittedly, there is a risk either way, but I feel if we can put together a much broader coalition for the first day of session it will have a much bigger and far more lasting impact.

I hope that all of you will excuse my impertinence in emailing all local presidents directly. I know that all of you were on a conference call discussing this yesterday, which is why I needed to say this now. Please consider putting this to a vote this week at the FEA DA. Regardless of what you decide, my wife and I already have a hotel room for both days. but I hope that we can gather as one massive throng that is at least 50,000 strong on the first day of session.

Yours in solidarity,

- Ryan Haczynski (a.k.a "Teacher Voice")