

Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus

EDUCATE ✨ ADVOCATE ✨ SUPPORT ✨ ELECT

Chartered by the Florida Democratic Party
An Affiliate of the National Stonewall Democrats



Strategic Plan

2012-2016

Developed February-April 2012

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This Plan Assumes

- The Caucus exists to ensure the voice of GLBT Democrats is a credible, powerful voice in state and national political discourse. To do this, we ensure that our leaders are seated at relevant tables and that our local groups are strong.
- The Purposes listed in the Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus Bylaws updated 10 October 2009 are affirmed. These purpose statements may be expressed more succinctly to the general public as follows:

“The Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus exists to

Educate voters, candidates, and the general public on issues related to GLBT equality and the ideals, principles and positions of the Democratic Party

Advocate for legislation, causes and candidates that bring about full equality and justice for all Americans

Support the Democratic Party and its candidates actively

Elect Democratic candidates at all levels of government who represent the GLBT population and support full equality

and we do it with **EASE** because we are passionately committed to the outcomes we seek.”

- The Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus Platform as adopted in July 2011 is affirmed.
- Enthusiastic volunteers carrying out a coordinated strategy and implementing a series of goal-directed, aligned tactical steps will result in better outcomes for accomplishing the Caucus' purposes, candidates' success and the Party's future than would otherwise be achieved.
- Therefore, this Strategic Plan, once adopted, must be followed by tactical planning and sustained execution in order to realize success in the shortest amount of time possible.

Vision/Ideal Future State on which the Plan is Based

- Headlines in the Florida papers/websites/blogs the morning after the 2012 election will be:
 - Obama re-elected in landslide: Florida goes blue!
 - Senator Bill Nelson keeps his seat
 - All Florida Democrats reclaim their seats and a net increase for Democrats is achieved at every level of government
 - The number of openly-serving elected GLBT elected officials in Florida grows over the 2010 baseline
- Headlines in the Florida papers/websites/blogs by the morning after the 2016 election will be:
 - Democrats retain White House: First three back-to-back Dem terms since FDR!
 - Florida legislature turns bluer; GOP majority is significantly threatened or erased in both bodies
 - The number of openly-serving elected Democratic GLBT elected officials in Florida more than doubles from the 2010 baseline
 - Florida's Amendment 2 is repealed (or made irrelevant by action at the federal level)
- In our lifetimes we will be active in bringing about full equality for all Americans. To us this means
 - All adult citizens have the same rights, protections and responsibilities, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - Specifically: marriage equality is the law of the land, there are no distinctions in law or treatment of individuals related to family definition, parenting, housing, employment, medical care, taxation or other benefits of the civil government.

We are confident the goal of full equality can be achieved in our lifetimes because of the progress we have already seen and the models for change on which we can build. These include

- The decriminalization of GLBT status
- Recognition that being GLBT is a normally-occurring in-born trait
- Growing acceptance and affirmation of GLBT Americans and their open presence in virtually every walk of American life including elected office
- GLBT people being allowed to serve openly in the military

- GLBT people being allowed to foster and adopt children
- Marriage equality in seven states and recognition of civil unions in many others
- The anti-bullying movement

At Stake in the 2012 Election

- Failure to re-elect President Obama probably means reversing many of his GLBT-friendly policies and turning back the clock on many other Democratic priorities.
 - The GOP has promised to continue its emphasis on making life better for the wealthy minorities at the expense of everyone else.
 - Retaining and building on the the Affordable Care Act will be jeopardized by a GOP congress and/or President.
- At least two Supreme Court appointments are likely to be the responsibility of the President elected in 2012. A GOP President will solidify the right-leaning “original intent” temperament of the Court, threatening progressive legislation for decades to come
- The opportunity and political environment for advancing the cause of full equality is at stake in every election up and down the ticket

SWOT Analysis

The Strategic Planning Team considered the Caucus’ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) in light of its stated goals and the things at stake in the coming election.

Strengths (Internal to the Caucus)	Weaknesses (Internal to the Caucus)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Purpose and Passion: It’s personal to us • Geographic reach • Connections and networks • Credibility within the Democratic Party • Influence of GLBT causes/momentum between elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer leaders are over-committed and spread too thin • Limited view of ourselves and what we can achieve • Lack of ethnic diversity and age diversity on the Caucus Board and in our membership • Lack of leadership development within the Caucus • Lack of Members • Lack of viable GLBT candidates • Suboptimal internal/external communication • Lack of funding

<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities (External to the Caucus)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats (External to the Caucus)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to leverage our DEC connections to multiply our impact • Increase in number of GLBT slots for convention delegates to impact the National party • Ability to attract and leverage earned media • Connecting with like-minded groups to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ strengthen the force of our numbers and arguments ◦ build coalitions ◦ achieve greater diversity • Drive GLBT education/causes/ momentum forward between elections (build on our successes with the help of people we've helped elect) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness of influencers to change • GOP control in Tallahassee • Faux Democrats who damage the brand and waste a seat • "The Closet" as it affects elections and how elected officials conduct themselves • Fear, ignorance, and complacency • Spending limits • The war chest and funding opportunities of the opposition • GOP platform

Critical Success Factors and Barriers

A Critical Success Factor (CSF) is defined as something without which success cannot be achieved. The Strategic Planning Team identified the following CSFs to achieving the Caucus' short and long term visions.

- Increasing the number of appointed and elected GLBT officials
- Optimizing fundraising results and spending strategically
- "People power," i.e., a strong, trained cadre of volunteers, and growing influence through both grass tops leaders and grassroots activism
- Unity within the movement and coherent, aligned messages
- Strong, dedicated Caucus and Party leaders

Other factors impacting success include

- Up-to-date and effective communication (website, outreach, etc.)
- Effective coordination with like-minded groups
- Getting out the vote

A barrier is defined as something which currently exists and which must be eliminated, neutralized or overcome to achieve success. The Strategic Planning Team identified the following significant barriers to achieving the Caucus' short and long term visions:

- Lack of community (gated communities, focus on differences rather than common purpose, inattention to getting out of the 'gay ghetto' and making an impact on the larger community)
- Failure to put principles before personalities/lack of trust and working together
- Lack of Caucus diversity
- Struggling Chapters

Less significant barriers that should be considered include

- Complacency
- Bigotry
- GOP control in Tallahassee
- Resource shortages
- Lack of skills within the Caucus and the Caucus leadership

Other factors that can impact success and must be worked through/around include

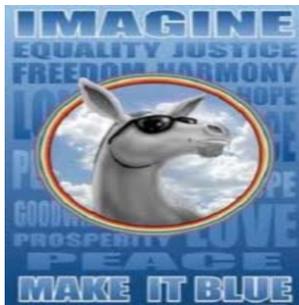
- The fear of stakeholders and influencers to get involved
- Conservative media
- Still present stigma, homophobia
- Lack of data integration

Impact of SWOT, Critical Success Factors and Barriers on the Strategic Plan

- Strengths must be leveraged to take advantage of the opportunities and achieve the CSFs
- Strengths must be leveraged to reduce the likely negative impact of the threats and overcome barriers
- The Plan must reflect strategies/tactics for overcoming the weaknesses and barriers that stand between us and success
- The Plan must address the weaknesses that can make the threats a reality, that increase the negative consequences of the threats, or increase the barriers

Strategic Plan: One Objective, Four Pillars

Overarching Strategic Objective for 2012-16 Unified Political Force for Positive Change



The Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus will be the political force behind a strong, unified voice for full equality that is instrumental in

- Keeping Democrats in the White House
- Increasing Democrats' legislative influence at the state and national levels
- Doubling the number of openly GLBT elected officials in Florida from 2010 levels
- Repealing Amendment 2 or renders it irrelevant due to action at the national level

Priorities, Messages & Communication



We will form priorities and convey messages that move voters toward desirable action.

Statewide Caucus Infrastructure



We will build a strong statewide Caucus infrastructure (organization, people, skills) that can support all reasonable efforts to get candidates elected and continue to serve as a significant constituency within the Florida Democratic Party.

Finances & Fundraising



We will develop the processes and programs needed to ensure adequate financing that grows year over year

Democratic Influence & Bench Strength



We will assist the Party in electing Democrats and developing its candidate bench to include strong members of the GLBT community.

Priorities, Messages & Communication

We will form priorities and convey messages that move voters toward desirable action.

By 2012	Committee Assigned	By 2016	Committee Assigned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a set of clear messages and positions for the Caucus • Craft and implement communications practices that include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Press packs ◦ Website ◦ Social networking ◦ Collateral material for events • Work with the Progressive Caucus and other like-minded groups in community outreach for GOTV with special emphasis on reaching persuadable voters that will increase the diversity of the movement • Ensure the Florida Democratic Party Platform includes GLBT priorities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create/execute an annual plan for educating elected officials and community leaders • Create a biannual legislative priority list and work with elected Democrats to pass it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Stable funding for HIV/AIDS ◦ Statewide ENDA ◦ Overturn ban on adoption • Integrate grassroots/grasstops messages and activity to support passage of the legislative priorities • Train volunteer speakers and provide tools to deliver these messages locally • Create a rapid response plan for messaging on emerging issues 	

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Craft and implement a comprehensive communications plan addressing<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Media outreach/press packs◦ Website/social networking◦ Collateral material for events | |
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Statewide Caucus Infrastructure

We will build a strong statewide Caucus infrastructure (organization, people, skills) that can support all reasonable efforts to get candidates elected and continue to serve as a significant constituency within the Florida Democratic Party.

By 2012	Committee Assigned	By 2016	Committee Assigned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise bylaws • Set annual membership growth goals • Support developing Chapters with advice, guidance and technical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a local Caucus development guide with milestones and benchmarks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All local Caucuses will be in alignment with be aligned with benchmarks • Set and achieve annual membership growth goals • The State Caucus will have a full complement of “leaders in training,” and local caucuses will be encouraged to do the same • Charge all current local Caucuses with developing local plans which support the goals of the State Caucus. All local Caucuses should complete their plans and turn them in as a prerequisite for bi-annual recertification 	

- Create a prioritized list of counties for development of a local Caucus
- Create a comprehensive, multi-year membership development plan
- Create a volunteer recruitment and development plan (including orienting new people to activism and addressing their fears, basic volunteer training, operational guidance, and succession planning for all volunteer positions)

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Finances & Fundraising

We will develop the processes and programs needed to ensure adequate financing that grows year over year

By 2012	Committee Assigned	By 2016	Committee Assigned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to build/maintain a strong finance and fundraising committee (fundraising, ethics, compliance, reporting) • Develop criteria for requesting funds by local Caucuses to support GOTV and other critical activities • Explore offering different levels or types of Caucus membership to increase membership and cash flow • Develop a funding plan for the PAC 	•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build/maintain a strong finance and fundraising committee (fundraising, ethics, compliance, reporting) • Develop operating budgets for each year and cycle, with specific fundraising goals tied to specific activities/strategic plan outcomes including candidate, scholarship, local caucus and GOTV support • Every year and bi-annual cycle, create and execute a fundraising plan that increases year-over-year funds and supports budgeted operations using a comprehensive fund development approach (i.e., individual/corporate giving, dues, etc., not just conferences) • Continue developing and delivering financially successful conferences twice a year with specific net revenue targets 	

Democratic Influence & Bench Strength

We will assist the Party in electing Democrats and developing its candidate bench to include strong members of the GLBT community.

By 2012	Committee Assigned	By 2016	Committee Assigned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy Caucus resources (financial, messaging support, grassroots activism) to assist in the election of viable GLBT candidates • Encourage local chapters to prioritize appointed and elected slots that could/should be filled by GLBT candidates • Set criteria for endorsements by both the PAC and the Caucus • Encourage members and local groups to become elected precinct chairs and to run for leadership positions in the local DECs • Exceed our diversity goal in electing GLBT delegates to the national convention 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a process for identifying people who may be interested in running for office and work with them to create a long range plan • Prioritize appointed and elected slots that could/should be filled by GLBT candidates • Recruit and place as many GLBT and equality-minded Dems as possible in non-elected positions (city, county, school district, committees, commissions, volunteer activist groups, etc.) • Create a statewide scholarship fund to help GLBT candidates and campaign managers get training • Achieve a 100% increase in the elected positions filled by GLBT Democrats in Florida (baseline is date plan is approved). 	

- Provide assistance to local caucuses so they can increase effectiveness and groom potential candidates
- Develop an approach for Board consideration regarding how to hold Democrats accountable when they take positions that are antithetical to Party or Caucus priorities

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Next Steps

Implementation

- Informational phone calls with Board Members (Officers)
- Determination: Call for Vote or Refer for Further Development (Officers)
- Full Board votes to adopt plan and committee assignments (Board)
- Committee chairs and committees develop tactical plans (Coms)
 - EB should provide guidance and deadlines
 - General overviews of these plans should be presented to EB for informational purposes
- Committee chairs provide reports against plan at each executive board meeting (Chairs)
- The plan is reviewed and updated after each bi-annual election (EB)

Communication

- Plan is presented to Caucus membership
 - Present Overarching Plan: Summer Meeting (Phillips)
 - Slide deck summary (Kos)
 - Specific Committee Objectives/Recruit (Committee Chairs)
 - Explain adoption/implementation process (Phillips/Fleming)
 - Request vote of support (Phillips)
- Present plan and coordinate with the Florida Democratic Party (Phillips)

Committees and Informal Networks

- **Getting Things Done**
 - Functioning committees will be asked to design and carry out the strategies in this plan.
 - Caucus members who wish to impact how things are done or what decisions are recommended should become involved in those committees.
 - Each committee will be charged with making their work transparent to the extent feasible, e.g., posting dates/times/locations of meetings, creating a process for seeking input on ideas that will impact the Caucus in some manner other than open discussion at meetings.

- **Interpersonal Communication**

- Each Caucus Member should seek first to understand, then to be understood in discussions related to Caucus business, priorities and tactics.
- When issues arise, Caucus Members should go directly to the person with whom they have the concern or issue before raising it with others

- **Written Communication**

- Make a commitment to deal with internal Caucus issues within the Caucus. When strife becomes known to outsiders, it weakens the Caucus/Party and its candidates' chances for being elected.
- Regardless of how safe a network might be or how trustworthy its members seem, Caucus members should consider that anything placed in writing/emailed/posted on the web can end up in wide circulation with the Caucus or Party's name attached.
- Discuss ideas, not people and their perceived motives.

Conclusion

The Board of the Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus has devoted considerable energy to creating this plan. We are acutely aware that it is not perfect – but we are reminded that a good plan enthusiastically executed will always produce better outcomes than a perfect plan that sits on a shelf. Therefore, we charge ourselves and any Caucus leaders that may come after us to being committed to two things: (1) development and execution of credible tactics that are highly likely to produce the outcomes we seek and (2) disciplined re-visiting and updating of the plan to reflect current realities. If these things are done, we cannot help but continue to bring about the massive changes we seek: the ones that will ultimately result in ***full equality in our lifetimes.***

