



TO PROMOTE POLITICAL
RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH
INFORMED AND ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN
GOVERNMENT AND TO ACT ON
SELECTED GOVERNMENT ISSUES

THE VOTER
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TALLAHASSEE
www.lwvtallahassee.org
850-309-3005

TALLAHASSEE

VOLUME 18–NUMBER 4

APRIL 2010

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
April 2010

15 Thursday

Local Government Committee
Ruth O'Donnell 668-6911

13 Tuesday 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Workshop on Charter Review Committee
Final Report & Proposed Amendments
Leon County Courthouse 5th floor

13 Tuesday 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Joint City-County Comp Plan Workshop
Leon County Courthouse 5th floor

13 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
Leon County Court House 5th floor

13 Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office, Beverly Court

14 Wednesday 8:30 a.m.

Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Commission
City Hall 2nd floor

14 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall

17 Saturday 10:30 a.m.

LWVT Annual Meeting
Hilton Garden Inn
1330 Blairstone Road

Annual Meeting Luncheon
Hilton Garden Inn
1220 Blairstone Road

22 Thursday 3:00 p.m.

Health Care Committee Meeting
Theresa Chase 2302 Trescott Drive

27 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor
28 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.
City Commission Meeting
City Hall

HOt topics luncheon
Wednesday, April 17

Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Get rid of the class size amendment! Get rid of tenure for teachers! Require citizens to vote on every proposed raise in taxes! Bring back "Leadership Funds" for legislators! No limits on campaign fundraising! No, this is not a rant; these are some of the bills proposed in the 2010 Florida legislature. If you are perplexed by the goings on this spring, you are not alone. We all need some enlightenment on politics in Florida, and we have the just the person to do this. Steve Bousquet, the Tallahassee Bureau Chief of the St Petersburg Times, covers the legislature and we are fortunate to have him as our speaker on April 17 at our annual meeting. You do not want to miss this meeting!



Time: 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Annual Meeting
11:30 a. m. – 1:00 p. m.

Place: Hilton Garden Inn
1330 Blairstone Road

Lunch: Grilled Lemon Chicken—grilled chicken with a creamy dill sauce. Salad, bread, mixed vegetables, chef's choice of starch, and chef's choice cake or pie.

Cost: \$25.00 payable at the door

Reservations: Please call the LWVT Voice Mail (309-3005) by Wednesday, April 4.

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**Since the League has to pay for all meals ordered, cancellations received after the deadline will be billed for the cost of the lunch.**  
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sterlingsilver@earthlink.net

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, we had great participation from our Tallahassee League in the Annual LWVF Legislative Seminar. Our group included board members as well as new members of our League. I know that attendees always come back inspired and ready to go; now we have to make sure that all of our fervor rubs off on the rest of our members.

It's been a good year for our League; we have increased our membership, helped to get the required number of petitions to put redistricting on the November ballot and raised money for Fair Districts Florida. We had League representation on the city charter review committee as well as the county charter review committee. Our lobby corps has been up at the Capitol during the legislative session, and we are gearing up for the statewide transportation study.

I hope that you will be attending the Annual Meeting on April 17 and are planning to attend the LWVUS National Convention to be held in Atlanta, Georgia in June.

Please renew your membership at our annual meeting, if you have not already done so; it saves our treasurer a lot of work and our League the cost of extra mailings.

On a sadder note, we would like to extend our condolences to Norene and Tom Chase on the loss of their grandson.

We also lost League member Dexter Easton; Dexter sent out reminders of our Hot Topics Luncheons for many years. He passed away last month. Both Dexter and Jean Easton were long time members of the Tallahassee League.

ACTION ALERTS

During the legislative session, you receive action alerts from LWVF. Are you responding to those alerts??? Remember that the League is a non-profit organization, and we depend on our members to influence legislation. Lawmakers are more apt to respond to their local constituents than to outsiders lobbying them. That is why we count on our members all over the state to contact their legislators when asked. You have received alerts about campaign finance, the education bill, a nurse practitioner bill, among others. The League needs your involvement; sometimes you will be asked to notify committee members, and email addresses are provided. If we can't kill a bad bill and it is sent to the Governor, we ask you to contact the Governor's office. Lawmakers and the Governor keep track of all phone calls and emails on legislation. The League and forty other like-minded organizations were able to kill a very bad elections bill during the 2009 session, because our members flooded the Capitol with calls and emails. So, don't ever think that your phone call or email doesn't matter; IT DOES.



Legislative Seminar Wrapup

Our legislative seminar days were filled with many committee meetings, visits with legislators, and topped off by a proclamation from the Governor. Monday's events began with a dinner held at the top of the Capitol. LWVF presented Secretary of State Browning with a "Making Democracy Work" award for running a near flawless election in 2008. There were many challenges in Florida—new voting machines, educating supervisors and staff on how to use them, and thousands of voters lining up to vote early. Secretary Browning traveled to every county in the state and held mock elections to make sure that all supervisors' staffs knew how to use the new equipment. And, as he told the legislature last year, if we hadn't had early voting, the election process would not have gone so smoothly.

We also heard from Ben Wilcox, LWVF lobbyist, who educated the group on the bills that are coming up during the session. Among them are the Campaign Finance Bill which brings back "Leadership Funds," an Education Bill that will grade teachers on the test scores of their students, and TABOR, a bill that would require citizens voting on every proposed tax raise. Think Proposition 13 in California.

After dinner, Leaguers caucused on Redistricting back at the Hilton Garden Inn. One of the topics discussed was educating the voters on the importance of the redistricting process in Florida.

On Tuesday morning, we met for breakfast at the Governors' Club and heard from many legislators. Senator McBurney discussed the Susan B Anthony Civics Education bill that the League is supporting; some of the others we heard from included Representative s Skidmore, Pafford, Senators Gelber, Dockery, and Justice. Wayne Blanton, Executive Director of the Florida School Boards Association and John Hall, Executive Director of the Florida Economic Center for Fiscal and Economic Policy also addressed the group.

Then, it was "On to the Capitol." As you entered the rotunda, you saw the LWVF table holding copies of our commemorative journal, voter registration forms, copies of our State Voter, and information about the League. Felisha Reyes of our state office and state board members were at the table greeting people and answering questions about the League. The Sen-

ate and House were in general session that morning, and the League was recognized in each of the sessions. League members met with members of their local delegations during the remainder of the day. Some attended meetings with the aides of the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House. Many attended the Community Affairs committee meeting where SB2420 was introduced; this bill would require all tax increases to be voted on by the public. In order to reduce opposition to the bill, local governments were removed from the legislation. However, that does not preclude the reintroduction of the local requirement later in the session. Many groups spoke in opposition to the bill, including the LWVF. Discussion was cut off after twenty minutes and the bill was passed out of committee.

Leaguers who did not attend the Community Affairs meeting attended a session with the Cabinet and the Governor where the LWVF was presented with a proclamation celebrating the 90th birthday of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

We later met at the Paradigm Restaurant for a "Touch of Cuba" dinner and a presentation on Amendment 4, the "Hometown Democracy Amendment." Tallahassee attorney Ross Burnaman, co-author of the amendment, and Lynn Tipton, Director of Membership Development for the League of Cities, were our speakers. Amendment 4 will be on the November ballot; if passed, amending a local government's comprehensive plan would require the consent of the voters. After the dinner, many Leaguers met back at the hotel for a caucus on voter service.

On Wednesday morning, while some members left for home, others returned to the Capitol to meet with Representatives and Senators and attend commit-



BE SOMEBODY-HELP STILL WANTED

- **Committed Membership Chair**
- **Members for Education Committee**
- **Downtown Market**
- **Watchers for public meetings of interest to the League**

To volunteer contact:

Marilynn Wills President: marilynnwills@msn.com

Regecca Sager, Vice President: rsager@music.org

Prggy Ramsey, Secretary/Treasurer: remsey20@comcost.net

Health Care Committee Report

May Hot Topics

Please plan on attending our May 19th Hot Topics Luncheon to learn more about UNNATURAL CAUSES...is inequality making us sick? with our guest speaker Miaisha Mitchell, HEAT Co-Chair and Greater Frenchtown Revitalization Council Executive Director. We will have the opportunity to view an episode and discuss our participation as a partner in this exciting initiative.



A Call to Action

In celebration of National Public Health Week (April 5-11), a Town Hall Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 6 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Leon County Health Department, 872 W. Orange Avenue to involve the community in a discussion with community representatives about issues, recommendations, and actions that can impact the health of America. This very important event will include follow-up themes from the UNNATURAL CAUSES January screenings. Speakers and panelists from our Tallahassee community leadership will participate.



National Health Care Reform

Thank you Tallahassee members who have been advocating for health care reform--some for many years! Your dedication has paid off. For information on the details of the health reform legislation, please go to www.kaiserhealthnews.org and www.healthnews-florida.org.



Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2010

House Finally Passes Comprehensive Health Care Reform

“Monumental, Historic and Transforming,” Says League

Washington, D.C. – Statement from Mary G. Wilson, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States:

“Today’s votes by the U.S. House of Representatives mark an historic milestone in American political history. The path that began with Social Security and continued with Medicare is reaching fruition with this health care legislation. Comprehensive health care reform will begin to undo decades of neglect and inaction that has left millions of Americans uninsured and at risk.

“This legislation is a monumental step in the fight for social justice.

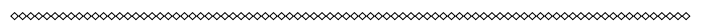
“Too many citizens lack adequate health insurance coverage and rising costs threaten everyone. Passage of comprehensive health care legislation greatly expands coverage to include millions more Americans; protects the coverage that currently delivers care to most; reduces costs over the long term; and accomplishes these goals at a reasonable cost.

“It would be difficult to overstate the importance of today’s actions, and we commend our elected representatives for standing up for Americans and having the courage to do what needs to be done to confront the health care crisis in our country. The League congratulates the House leadership on a closely-fought victory.

“We can expect transformational reform from these bills. Access to health care will be extended to all Americans. Mechanisms to control rising costs will be put in place. And the marketplace will be expanded and safeguards put in place to protect consumers.

“Truly, this legislation is monumental, historic and transforming.

“Today we took the critical step in dealing with the current health care crisis. Tomorrow, many Americans will wake up to a new week and a new future that looks a great deal more promising.”



State Of Florida

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS in 1920, the League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt during the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and was held six months before the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote; and

WHEREAS the League was designed to assist 20 million women to carry out their new voting responsibilities, encouraging them to use their power to participate in shaping public policy; and

WHEREAS the League's enduring vitality as a trusted force for change and good government comes from its unique structure, having potent partners at the grassroots level, 900 state and local leagues, comprising a vast grassroots lobby corps that can be mobilized when necessary; and

WHEREAS, today, the League of Women Voters works to effect change on a variety of issues including health care, climate change, election and campaign finance reform, land use and education; and

WHEREAS, for the last 90 years, the League of Women Voters has left its footprint on American history and our democracy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida do hereby recognize the

90th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

and thank them for addressing the important issues, challenging the status quo and demanding accountability.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida do hereby proclaim the week of August 22-28, 2010, as Voter Awareness Week in the State of Florida and commend her citizens of the importance of voting.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida have hereunto subscribed their names and have caused the Official Seal of the State of Florida to be hereunto affixed in the City of Tallahassee on this 23rd day of March, 2010.




CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR


BILL MCCOLLUM
ATTORNEY GENERAL


ALEX SINK
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER


CHARLES H. BRONSON
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

HISTORY OF THE FLORIDA LEAGUE

The League of Women Voters of Florida was established in 1939 in Winter Park/Orlando. The first program of work included a survey of state and county school systems, a study of state and local government, and the foreign policy of the United States.

The Florida League's first legislative impact occurred during a special session in 1945 addressing reapportionment. In addition to lobbying the legislators, state League president Ethel Melcher actually developed an equitable plan for senatorial redistricting, which was proposed for consideration. The Legislature ultimately adopted a compromise that at least fulfilled the letter of the law requiring reapportionment, which was more than had been done previously.

Florida League members have had a profound impact on state law and policy. The Florida Mental Health Act, which provides individuals with emergency services

and temporary detention for mental health evaluation and treatment, is also known as the Baker Act after its principal author, Maxine E. Baker. A prominent League member and leader for many years, Maxine Baker also served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1963-1972. Beth Johnson from Orange County was the first League member elected to the both houses of the Florida Legislature (House of Representatives 1958-62 and Senate 1963-67).

Since those early days the Florida League has continued to educate citizens and advocate on public policy issues. In conjunction with a number of other advocacy groups, in 2006 the League mounted a successful court challenge to new state rules that would have severely restricted voter registration efforts, thus preserving access to the democratic process for all citizens.

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

The national League of Women Voters began as a "mighty political experiment" in 1920. (The original Board of Directors is pictured at below.) It was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt during the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which was held just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle.

The League was designed to help 20 million women exercise their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League was an activist organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy -- and this includes all citizens, since the charter was modified in 1973 to include men.

One of League's most important hallmarks is its strict nonpartisanship; it neither supports nor opposes candidates for office at any level of government. League founders believed that maintaining a nonpartisan stance would protect it from becoming mired in party politics, and this holds true today.



Power is so apt to be insolent and Liberty to be saucy, that they are seldom upon good terms.

George Saville Halifax.

Education

SB0006

SB0006, Relating to Education Personnel [SPSC], has passed the Senate and is now in messages to the House. This is a long and complicated bill that, if passed, will drastically alter the way Florida schools are managed. This bill is opposed by LWVF because, among other things it:

- Requires that all teachers be retained, certified and compensated based on student test scores on standardized tests, not years of experience or degrees held.
- Penalize school districts financially if they consider length of service or degrees held when determining compensation.
- Excludes the salary schedule. The state will decide what categories of differential pay will be provided for.
- Takes away local control over teacher compensation.
- Mandates more high stakes testing for students (end of course exams for all subjects) and for graduation.
- Provides an underfunded mandate requiring school districts to develop hundreds of additional end of course exams to meet the mandates.

For further information about this bill and why the LWVF is opposed please contact:

Marilynn Wills: marilynnwills@msn.com

Members are urged to call their local representatives to register their opposition to the bill.



RACE TO THE TOP

As you probably already know, Florida is not among the first receivers of a *Race to the Top grant*. Tennessee and Delaware are the first winners to be announced. These two states had the backing of their teachers and the teachers' unions for the plans they submitted and this was mentioned as notable in the awarding of the grants.



Examinations are formidable even to the best prepared, for the greatest fool may ask more than the wisest man can answer

Charles Cabel Colton

Report of Local Government Committee

Ruth O'Donnell,
Local Government Co-Chair

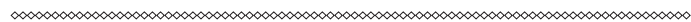


Hometown Democracy Amendment Debated at
Local Government Committee Event

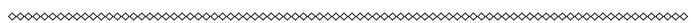
Proponents and opponents of Florida Constitutional Amendment 4 or the Hometown Democracy Amendment, scheduled to go before the voters in November, participated in a lively discussion on the evening of March 9 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tallahassee and heard a pros and cons discussion presented by the Tallahassee League Local Government Committee. About fifteen League members and others viewed a slide presentation made available by the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department and presented by Ruth O'Donnell, Committee Co-Chair, who also discussed some problems local governments find with the proposed amendment. Barbara Sterling, Ruth's Co-Chair summarized the case for the amendment as it is presented on the Hometown Democracy web site.

Barbara and Ruth, along with other Committee members, will be bringing more information to League members and the public as we get closer to election. If you weren't able to make the March 9 event, you can educate yourself by going to

- Proponents main web site which has very comprehensive information, including the full text of the amendment – <http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com/>
- Opponent web sites such as <http://florida2010.org/>



<p>The Tallahassee League of Women Voters Mourns the death of a loyal member</p> <p>Dexter Easton</p> <p>Dexter and Jean Easton were members of the Tallahassee League for many years.</p>
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League of Women Voters of Tallahassee
Summary of Board Meeting

The Healthcare Committee's Chair, Theresa Chase continues to represent LWVT at meetings of HEAT (Health Equity Alliance of Tallahassee). They will sponsor a Town Hall meeting on April 6 to further plan for the project Unnatural Causes, addressing health inequality issues. Ruth O'Donnell reported on the Hometown Democracy event and stated the Local Government plans to develop a PowerPoint presentation on the amendment for us

LWVT is recruiting poll workers for the 2010 elections to participate in our Adopt A Precinct fundraiser. Training will be provided by the Supervisor of Elections, and applications may be downloaded from their website.

Eight members of LWVT will participate in the Legislative Seminar Mar. 22-24. It will be a fun and educational event celebrating the 90th birthday of LWV.

Members should be on the alert for Action to make a call to the legislature to replace funding for public libraries in the state budget.

The LWVT Annual meeting will be April 17 at which time you may renew your membership, if you have not already.

The next Board meeting will be April 13 at LWVF office, 540 Beverly Ct., beginning at 6:30pm. All members are cordially invited to participate or otherwise provide input.

Hi Leaguers!

It is March and time for the City of Tallahassee Downtown Marketplace to begin! Every Saturday from March through November, the Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority sponsors a really fun event at Ponce De Leon Park located on Park Avenue between the Federal Courthouse and the Doubletree Hotel. The market is open from 9 am till 4 pm for a great variety of vendors selling food, vegetables, crafts, art, etc.

For a number of years the City has given LWVT space for registering voters, petitioning, and generally spreading the word about our fine organization. Most of our volunteers leave around noon, but you may stay as long (or short) as you like. Materials and training will be provided.

Any Saturday in March is available:

- March 6
- March 13
- March 20
- March 27

(Or if you want to reserve a date in another month, just let me know!)

Please let me know which Saturday you are available, or call me for more information. Thank you so much!

Peggy Ramsey
386-7589

New Members

Anita Favors Thompson
7056 Standing Pines Lane
Tallahassee, FL 32312
850 668-9742
talathompson@aol.com

Margaret F. Black
702 Duparc Circle
Tallahassee, FL 32312
850 297-0733



Reminder to all members!

It is time to renew memberships. You can save yourself a stamp if you bring your renewal application and check book to the Annual Meeting on April 17. There is much work to be done and we need your money and your support more than ever to carry out the work of the League.



Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of.

Benjamin Franklin



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TALLAHASSEE
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Phone (home) _____
 Address _____ Phone (cell) _____
 _____ E-mail _____
 (please, print legibly)

\$100 Susan B. Anthony Membership	\$ _____	
\$75 Household Membership	\$ _____	
\$50 Individual Membership	\$ _____	
\$25 Student Membership	\$ _____	
I am enclosing \$5 for the LWVF Lobby Fund	\$ _____	
Additional Gift to the LWVUS Education Fund	\$ _____	(tax deductible)
TOTAL	\$ _____	

Please make all checks payable to LWV of Tallahassee.
 Mail to: LWVT, P.O. Box 10216, Tallahassee, FL 32302
 (You may also renew/join online at www.lwvtallahassee.org. (There is a \$2.00 charge for using PayPal.)