



TO PROMOTE POLITICAL
RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH
INFORMED AND ACTIVE PARTICI-
PATION OF CITIZENS IN GOVERN-
MENT AND TO ACT ON SELECTED
GOVERNMENT ISSUES

THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TALLAHASSEE

www.lwvtallahassee.org

850-309-3005

TALLAHASSEE

VOLUME 17-NUM-

NOVEMBER 2009

CALENDAR OF EVENTS DECEMBER 2009

01 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Local Government Committee
Linda Davis 878-7320

02 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall

3 December Thursday 3:00 p.m.

Health Care Committee Meeting
Theresa Chase 2302 Trescott Drive

08 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

08 Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office, Beverly Court

09 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall

10 Thursday 11:30 a.m.

County Charter Review Committee
County Court House 5th floor

12 Saturday 11:30 a.m.

Holiday Luncheon
Cypress Restaurant
320 E. Tennessee Street

15 Tuesday

Bill of Rights Day

17 Thursday 11:30 a.m.

County Charter Review Committee
Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2009

ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT FLORIDA POLITICS, AND THEN SOME!!



Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith is a Professor in the Reubin O'D. Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of 15 books on topics ranging from religion and political philosophy to Florida government and politics. He is our "go to" person for information on elections and growth trends in Florida. His latest book, published in 2005, is *The Battle for Florida: An Annotated Compendium of Materials from the 2000 Presidential Election*. He has appeared on Good Morning America, the Today Show, NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw, CBS Nightly News with Dan Rather, the Jim Lehrer News Hour, CNN, NPR, and other national TV and radio shows, including WFSU's 88.9. Make your reservations today.

Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Place: Cypress Restaurant
320E. Tennessee Street

Lunch Choice Of:

Grilled Steak Caesar Salad with Roasted Red Peppers, Herbed Croutons and Dry Jack Cheese

Grilled Chicken and Sherried Mushroom Cream Sauce over Linguini.

Dessert and Beverage included.

Cost: \$24.00 payable at the door

Reservations: Please call the LWVT Voice Mail (309-3005) by **Tuesday, December 8, 2009.**

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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  
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President's Message:

Thanks to all Leaguers who contributed to FairDistrictsFlorida when we "passed the hat" at the November Hot Topics. We collected just over \$200, and Treasurer Peggy Ramsey sent it on to FDF; that will pay for verification of 2000 petitions. We have just three more weeks to raise the funds for verifying over



one million petitions. Redistricting is one of the most important issues facing Florida. Legislators do not have to be responsive to constituents if there is no danger of losing their seats; we need competitive elections. If you want to contribute, go to <http://www.fairdistrictsflorida.org/donate>.

For those who have asked about the Transportation study, we will be getting started on that in the near future.

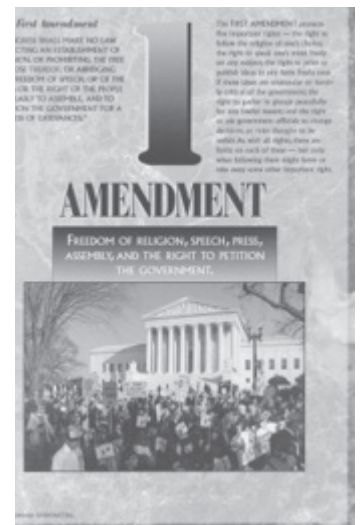
We are excited to have Tallahassee League Board Member Ben Wilcox as the Florida League lobbyist. If you are interested in joining the lobby corps, please contact Vice-President Rebecca Sager. Oil drilling off the coast of Florida, clean water, inadequate funding of schools, campaign financing—all are issues that will probably be addressed in the 2010 session. We need League members who can attend committee meetings, take notes, and report back to our lobbyist. There are many meetings, and one person can't cover all of them. Attending committee meetings at the Capitol is NOT dull; you will learn a great deal and further the cause of the League of Women Voters in the process.

At the local level, we still need observers for city and county commission meetings. Call board member Ruth O'Donnell for information.

There is also the county charter review committee, meeting three times in December. Leon County has been a charter county since 2002, and this committee will be making recommendations to the Commission.

Citizen input is welcomed.

I hope you are planning to attend our Holiday Luncheon on December 12. Our speaker will be Lance deHaven Smith. In 2004, he was identified by Florida Trend Magazine as one of Florida's 100 most influential people and 5 most influential scientists. He's also a great speaker. Don't miss it. And, finally, December 15 is Bill of Rights Day. How many rights are in the First Amendment?



Bill of Rights

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property

be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.





From State

The League of Women Voters of Florida today announced they've retained the well-known and widely respected Ben Wilcox as the League's new lobbyist in Tallahassee. Known as the "People's Lobbyist" by many close observers of the Florida Capitol, Wilcox was formerly executive Director for Common Cause of Florida, where he remains as Board Chair, and spent years as the News Director for Florida State University Public Radio.



Florida League President Deirdre Macnab says, "From Pensacola to Palm Beach, Jacksonville to Tampa, members across the state are thrilled that Ben has joined our dedicated advocacy team. A time-tested professional, Ben strengthens our ability to make Florida government more effective, accountable and responsive.

A native Floridian, Wilcox brings his statewide reputation and expansive knowledge of government and ethics to work in partnership with the League in their work to protect the voter's choice and ensure full representation for the people of Florida.

"It's an honor to represent the League of Women Voters of Florida before the Florida legislature," said Ben Wilcox. "The League is a well respected and effective nonpartisan advocate for the public interest in the halls of the Capitol. As a longtime member of the League, I'm excited to be working with them to accomplish their goals," says Wilcox.

The League is a nonpartisan grassroots organization committed to encouraging an active and informed citizenry. Next year it will celebrate 90 years of empowering voters nationwide. Florida has 29 Leagues around the state with thousands of volunteer members who are interested and active in local, state, and national issues.

From a news release Thursday, November 19, 2009.

LWVF Officers Board of Directors



Pamela S. Goodman
Palm Beach County



Kit Pepper
Orange County



Ruth Schecter
Space Coast

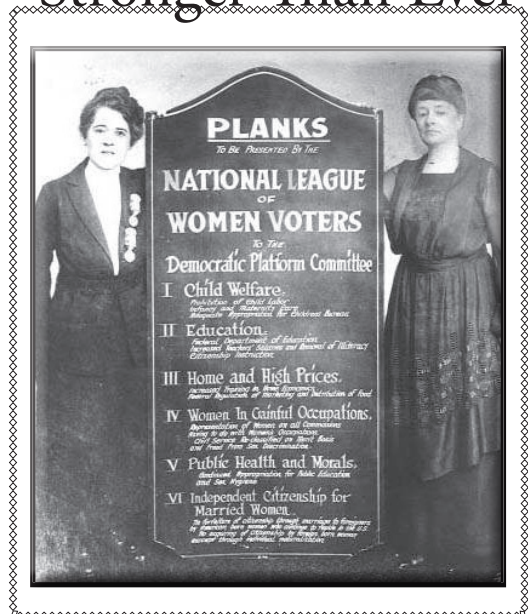


Marilynn Wills
Tallahassee



Margaret Wolter
Broward County

90 Years Stronger Than Ever





From National

The League of Women Voters .. Campaign Legal Center .. Campaign Legal Center .

Common Cause .. Public Citizen .. U.S. PIRG .. Democracy 21

Ethics Committee Must Launch Investigations or Release OCE Fact Finding Reports by Week's End [October 27th 2009, Washington DC]

A report released today reveals that the House Ethics Committee has until Friday October 30, 2009 to empanel investigative subcommittees or to release reports compiled by the independent Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) related to ethics questions raised about Members of the House. The third quarter report issued by the OCE revealed the impending deadline for action by the Ethics Committee.

According to the report, the recommendations to the Committee may include "among other things, findings of fact and citations to laws, rules or regulations that may have been violated."

In a statement, the reform groups, U.S. PIRG, Public Citizen, Common Cause, Campaign Legal Center, The League of Women Voters, and Democracy 21 said: "Friday is the first benchmark of the new transparency that was promised in the creation of the OCE on the heels of Speaker Pelosi's commitment to 'the most honest, most open, and most ethical Congress in history.' We look forward to this milestone in

the OCE's brief history.

The independent OCE was created by the house to increase transparency and accountability in the House ethics process. It first began operating during this Congress. The quarterly report issued today explained that the OCE had referred several of its preliminary investigations into potential ethics violations to the full House ethics committee ("Standards Committee"). The report further indicated that the deadline for ethics committee action in several cases would be Friday.

"Under House rules, the House ethics committee has two options upon reaching this deadline: it can release the OCE reports or it can formally open an investigation of the referred cases," or empanelling a subcommittee, the statement continued. "The OCE was created as part of an effort to restore integrity and public credibility in the House ethics process. We hope this October deadline will be the beginning of a new level of transparency of the ethics process."

This is the entire text from www.lwv.org: *League and Partners Release Statement on Impending Ethics Crisis.*

In his own way each man must struggle, lest the moral law become a far-off abstraction utterly separated from his active life.

Jane Addams

First Call to Convention 2010 From LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson

WHAT: The LWVUS 49th National Convention

WHEN: June 11-15, 2010

Friday, June 11	Pre-Convention Training	2-5 pm
Saturday, June 12	Briefings	10 am-Noon
	Call to order Convention starts	1 p. m.
Sunday, June 13	All Day	
Monday, June 14	All Day	
Tuesday, June 15	Adjourn	Noon

WHERE: Atlanta Marriott Marquis
265 Peachtree Center Ave, Atlanta Georgia

Summary of November Hot Topics

Professor William Weissert, Director of the Master of Public Health degree program at FSU, gave us some insight into the massive Health Care bill that is being debated in the U.S. Senate. He thinks that the public option will probably be passed into law. There are several levels of coverage in Senator Baucus's bill ranging from the best coverage or platinum to the least amount of coverage or just catastrophic coverage. The House bill has four different coverages.

The bill states that everyone must be covered by insurance. However, there are exemptions for financial hardship. All others would be fined for not carrying insurance. There is an employer mandate for those companies with incomes over \$500,000. Companies who are not exempt will be fined if insurance is not offered. Smaller businesses that offer insurance will get a tax credit.

If a person takes a job with a company that offers insurance, the employee will have to take the insurance offered. There are also reinsurance policies for early retirees.

The gap in Medicare will be done away with over a ten year period, and Medicaid and Children's Health insurance will be expanded; the federal government will also pay a higher percentage of the cost of the latter programs.

Both houses have committees working on Medicare reform. Some areas of the country receive much more in Medicare payments than others; Medicare costs in Miami are much greater than those in Minnesota. A study done at Dartmouth college recommends that the Medicare payment system be changed so that places like Miami would lose money; it also recommends that the Secretary get the best prices from drug companies for Medicare patients. While Medicare used to get good prices, Congress changed the procedure after a court ruling against Medicare.

Some positive aspects of the bill include no exclusion for pre-existing conditions and no rescinding of a policy after you become ill. There are still several other areas of disagreement including abortion, immigration, and medical malpractice.

Professor Weissert also spoke of the need for more primary care physicians. His presentation was most informative.

Report of the Local Government Committee

Ruth O'Donnell,

Local Government Co-Chair

"We need to reorganize and recruit," said the group of Local Government Committee denizens who have been making the county and city commissions sit up and take notice for many years. Barbara Sterling, long a member of the group, agreed to take on the task of finding new leadership. Ruth O'Donnell agreed to co-chair with Barbara this year. Some new members have begun to attend meetings and we are off and running! This reorganizing thing isn't so hard after all.

Next step – repurposing the Committee. The time-tested and important role of monitoring City of Tallahassee and Leon County Commissions continues, of course, but our group is also looking around for other useful work. President Marilyn Wills is serving on the Leon County Charter Review Committee and will be reporting to us on a regular basis. Expect to see some action as proposals come out of that group and your Local Government Committee supports Marilyn's work.

We are also representing the League at Sustainable Tallahassee meetings. Barbara Sterling, who has been attending, is orienting Linda Davis so she can take on this responsibility. At this point, Linda will not be an official League representative but will monitor and report this "green" group's activities.

Another area of interest for the Committee is the Hometown Democracy constitutional amendment that will be on the ballot in the fall of 2010 as Amendment Four. The proposed amendment will require public voting for changes in local government comprehensive plans – those important documents that set what can and what cannot happen with development and land use as well as describing the nature of all kinds of services provided by the governing entity. You will be hearing more about this from the Local Government Committee as we get closer to the election.

The Committee meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm. We are still recruiting League members who can observe a county commission meeting once every two or three month, so ya'll come!

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 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

(tax deductible)

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.)



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