



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 19–NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2011

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

08 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

08 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

Leon County School Board
Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola Street

09 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall, 2nd floor

15 Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office, Beverly Court

16 Wednesday 11:30 a.m.

Hot Topics Luncheon
Holiday Inn & Suites
2725 Graves Road

22 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

22 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

Leon County School Board
Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola Street

23 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall, 2nd floor

24 Thursday 3:00 p.m.

Health Care Committee
Theresa Chase, 2299 Trescott Drive

24 Thursday 7:00 p.m.

Local Government Committee
Ruth O'Donnell, 3509 Trillium Ct

HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON

Wednesday 16, 2011

EDUCATION 2011

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE??

No Child Left Behind! Race to the Top! FCAT! Vouchers for Private Schools!

These are just a few of the issues educators, parents, and students have had to deal with over the past ten years. Superintendent of Leon County Schools Jackie Pons will be on hand to discuss issues facing the school system and how Leon County strives to successfully address them. How does a school get ranked by the state? Is it fair to evaluate a teacher based on a single year of student test scores? What is the responsibility of parents in the education of children? Bring your education questions to our February Hot Topics and get some answers.



- Time:** 11:30 a. m. – 1:00 p. m.
- Place:** Holiday Inn and Suites
2725 Graves Road (Just north of I10 on N. Monroe)
- Lunch:** New York Deli Buffet, Soup du Jour, dessert and beverage included.
- Cost:** \$20.00 payable at the door
- Reservations:** Please call the LWVT Voice Mail (309-3005) by Friday, February 11.

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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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We had a great turnout of both League members and non-League members at our January luncheon. Dr. Kenneth Brummel-Smith gave a great presentation on the new health care bill. Thank you to LWVT board member Theresa Chase who made the presentation possible. If you missed it or just want more information, we are hoping that Dr Brummel-Smith will agree to do a workshop at Legislative Seminar.

If you have never been to Legislative Seminar or Convention, this is your big chance. For the first time ever, the two meetings will be combined and both will take place in Tallahassee. The registration fee includes a dinner on the 22nd floor of the Capitol with Ellen Freiden of Fair Districts Florida, a gala celebration in the Senate of the "old" Capitol, lunch with our state lobbyist Ben Wilcox and a barbecue at the League House on Beverly Court. Then, there is the opportunity to hear from legislators from Miami to Pensacola in the Cabinet Room. You will also have input in choosing the 2011-2013 LWVF program and the election of the State Board. You won't want to miss this opportunity to meet League members from all over the state; we are also hoping to have LWVUS President Elizabeth McNamara as one of our guests. Go to www.lwvfla.org, the LWVF website and register today.

We will also need local League members to help with the Convention; if you are interested, please contact me at marilynnwills@msn.com.

We have been gearing up for the legislative session. Tallahassee League members have the opportunity to watch the legislature in action; other League members have to make do with watching the Florida Channel or listening to the daily recap on NPR. There is a need for League members to attend committee meetings and take notes on legislation brought up in those committees. You can be a part of this very rewarding experience by joining our Lobby Corps. This does not mean that you will be taking on a full-time job; you can follow those issues that are most important to you and help our lobbyist at the same time. Contact LWVT Board member Rebecca Sager at for details.

Our annual meeting is fast approaching, and the board is asking for your input on proposed local studies as well as interest in serving on the LWVT board. Contact Rebecca Sager or Theresa Chase if you are interested in serving on the board; each term is for one year.

If you would like to support the Tallahassee League financially, you can become a Susan B. Anthony member.

Another way to support us is to underwrite an issue of the VOTER, or to share the cost with another member. Contact Peggy Ramsey if you would like to help.



HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

We are very thankful to Dr. Ken Brummel-Smith for his excellent presentation on /, and the Ugly to our well-attended Hot Topics luncheon group in January. Dr. Brummel-Smith highlighted aspects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), truly reflected in his presentation title and previously covered in our November VOTER. His slide presentation can be found at our website (along with links to health reform) www.lwvtallahassee.org. Questions and discussion followed addressing some challenges to good health care reform. Mentioned were misinformation, inflammatory partisan political rhetoric and the influences of some special interest groups whose profit goals result in uninsured citizens. As a final note, one attendee asked, "What can we do to help?" The Doctor responded to do what we were doing on that afternoon--become knowledgeable on health care reform, encourage truthful dialogue, and follow-up by contacting your legislators. Coincidentally, on the same day as our luncheon, the US House of Representatives voted to repeal the ACA. We must wait and see what follows in the US Senate. No doubt, it will continue to be the hot topic for politicians as they prepare for 2012 elections. Stay tuned!

Thank you to all members and guests who attended the presentation.

(Note: Kenneth Brummel-Smith, M.D. is the Charlotte Edwards Maguire Professor & Chair in the Department of Geriatrics at The Florida State University College of Medicine, and a member of Physicians for a National Health Plan.)

What can you do to help? Check out the following resources and join the LWVT Health Care Committee:

Websites:

Commonwealth Fund: www.commonwealthfund.org

Families USA: www.familiesusa.org

Health Care for America NOW!: www.healthcareforamericanow.org

Health News Florida: www.healthnewsflorida.org

Kaiser Family Foundation: www.kff.org;

Physicians for a National Health Program: www.pnhp.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.healthcare.gov

Publications:

Analysis of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590), RAND Corporation, 2010 (http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9514.html)

A Second Opinion: Rescuing America's Health Care, by Arnold S. Relman, M.D., The Century Foundation, c2007

The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care, by T.R. Reid, Penguin Books, c2009, 2010

The New Health Care System: Everything You Need to Know, by David Nather, St. Martin's Press, c2010

If you are interested in borrowing the books mentioned above, HCC member Theresa Chase (chasteresav@yahoo.com or 850 383-1348) has copies to lend. Additionally, we have copies of *The New Health Care Law: How It Might Affect You*, a guide (both in English and Spanish) developed by the American College of Physicians and AARP, and provided by AARP for distribution. Information on *How the Affordable Care Act Helps Florida*, can be found at www.florida-chain.org. Another report which may be of interest to you is *The Cost of Repeal: Examining the Impact on Florida on Repealing the New Federal Health Care Law* at www.floridapirg.org/health-care.

Our committee met on Thursday, January 27. We discussed our role with local health care organizations, health care reform resources, annual program goals, and edited committee website and VOTER contributions. There are no reports from our committee regarding local health care activities at this time.

The next meeting is February 24 at 3 pm. If you are interested in becoming a member, or are a member who has been unable to attend the 3 pm meeting time due to conflicts, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. We are open to making time accommodations and updating our committee member roster.

Thank you.

Theresa Chase

(chasteresav@yahoo.com)

850 383-1348

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

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The publication of Education Week's report, *Quality Counts 2011*, has made the news around the country and there has been rejoicing in Florida because the report places Florida's schools 5th in the nation. But a closer look at the report is always good. What is measured and how it is measured is often more informative than just looking at cumulative scores. Florida earned an overall grade of 81.5, or a B minus.

The report analyzes and grades four areas that Editorial Projects for Education Research Center (www.edweek.org/rc/) consider critical to states and the nation: Chances for Success, K-12 Achievement, School Finances and Transition and Alignment. Data from all areas are combined to provide an overall grade. These categories were established and the methods used to measure them were set up by EPERC. The rankings were done by giving the highest scoring state 100% and calculating individual states' scores as a percent of the highest score. So all things are relative in these rankings and grades.

The data used for calculating the factors comes from such sources as the US Census 2010 (www.census.gov/2010census/), National Archives of Educational Progress (NEAP, nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/), US Department of Education (www.ed.gov/), and the EPERC itself, among others.

The four large headings are: CHANCES FOR SUCCESS which focuses on the links between education and beneficial outcomes at each stage in a person's life;

K-12 ACHIEVEMENT criteria are performance based, past, present and future;

SCHOOL FINANCES evaluate school spending patterns and the distribution of resources within the state;

TRANSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT tracks state efforts to better coordinate the connections between K-12 schooling and other segments of the educational pipeline.



Florida's rankings for the four categories listed were:

Chances for Success - 75.8%; C
K-12 Achievement - 78% C
School Finances - 71.9% C minus
Transitions and Alignment - 82.1 % B

Under each of the large categories there are varying numbers of sub-categories. Some of the more interesting are:

K-12 Achievement
Status D
Equity A

School Finance
Equity B plus
Spending F

Standards, Assessment and Accountability - 99% - A plus

Early Childhood Education - 100% A
College Readiness - 60% D

Their ratings for the Teaching Profession:

Accountability for Quality - 94.1% A
Incentives and allocations - 88.5% B plus
Building support capacity - 70% C minus

Some of the apparent inconsistencies are, I suspect, due to the complicated way in which data is used and results calculated. I am still reading the report and working on just what this all means.

To read the report go to: www.edweek.org/rc/ If you have any clarifications or questions please contact: M. L. Baker
mlbaker@fsu.edu



"Cutting the deficit by gutting our investments in innovation and education is like lightening an overloaded airplane by removing its engine. It may feel like you're flying high at first, but it won't take long before you'll feel the impact."

President Obama



REDISTRICTING UPDATE

In a meeting of the Senate Reapportionment Committee on January 25, Senator Gaetz again announced that there will be about twenty public hearings held around the state. Citizens will be able to give their input on new district lines. Representatives from both the House and the Senate will be at each meeting. Software will be made available to the public so that citizens will have an opportunity to draw new districts. Senator Gaetz stated that the job of legislators is to “listen and learn from Floridians, legal authority, and court precedent.” There is some question as to where prisoners should be counted--in the county where they resided or in the county where they are imprisoned. Where will college students be counted? Right now, they will be counted where they are housed.

The census counted total population with no regard to status of citizenship; one of the questions that arose was, “How do you deal with Congressional districts if you choose to just count American citizens?” Florida gained two seats after the 2010 census; if only citizens were counted in assigning Congressional districts, there might not be any gain of seats or maybe a loss of seats would be the result.

Meanwhile, the House has not named a Reapportionment Committee, and House Speaker Cannon has joined the lawsuit challenging Amendment 6. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act requires that in some states, including Florida, any changes to the law dealing with the rights of voters must be pre-approved by the U.S. Department of Justice to insure that the change doesn't make things less fair for racial minorities. In the final days of his administration, Governor Crist sent a plan to the Department of Justice outlining what these constitutional changes would mean in the determination of new district lines. When Governor Scott took office, he recalled this action and the result is a slowdown of the whole process.

So, as we said after the election, the passage of Amendments 5 and 6 did not mean that our work is over; we will have to be vigilant in our pursuit of fair districts in Florida. The St Petersburg Times has a new website that will track the progress of redistricting: *InsideTheLinesFLA.com*.

Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.
Richard Hooker

From State

Have Florida Leaders Lost Sight of Who They Serve?



Not two months ago, in the November election, with a broad turnout of roughly 50% of Florida's electorate, the people in overwhelming numbers called for setting rules for how political districts are drawn.

This week newly elected Governor Scott instructed his Secretary of State to halt, and actually recall, the first steps to put the voters' mandate into action.

Voters should be angry. Very angry.

“Governor Scott sent a clear message to voters in Florida with this action - that he knows better than voters, and is in no rush to heed their mandate,” says state League president Deirdre Macnab, adding: “The League calls on Florida leadership to follow the will of the voters and not their own self interest in protecting their reelection.”

A clear pattern by leaders suggests they are putting their own interests in getting reelected before the vote of the electorate. Take a look at the pattern:

Secretary Kurt Browning, the spokesman for the opposition efforts, which fought passage of amendments 5 and 6, is now in charge of its implementation. This week he sent a letter to the Department of Justice recalling the start of the formal review process.

House Speaker Dean Cannon has resisted appointing members to the House Redistricting Committee, and earlier this month opted to join the lawsuit contesting the amendment that deals with Congressional Redistricting.

The irony of these actions in contrast to Senator Don Gaetz's (chair of Senate Reapportionment Committee) quote “The people have spoken,” shows the truth of the phrase: “actions speak louder than words.”

The League notes that this combination of events presents a clear movement by leadership.

The Florida League along with our 30 local chapters across the state will continue to monitor closely the process over the next several months as we continue our call for timely and open progress on implementing the people's voice.

http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/news_local_namesblog/?p=3269

From National

This month has been a turbulent one with the tragedy in Arizona, a stark reminder of how fragile life can be.



Throughout our 90-year history, the League has worked to facilitate the civil exchange of different points of view and improve the functioning of government. And our work is needed now more than ever. This month, we continued our reform efforts by speaking out against attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and Presidential Public Financing. There is much to do in the coming months, so keep up the good work in your communities!

Elisabeth MacNamara
President, LWVUS

League Seeks to Stop Efforts to Repeal the Affordable Care Act

Following the U.S. House of Representative's vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the League sent a letter to the Senate urging the body to oppose repeal of the Act. The League's Lobby Corps visited Senate offices this month to reinforce our message. Read our blog post and Facebook update on this hot issue. Also, thanks to all of you who responded to our action alert before the House vote! While a majority supported repeal, the margin was closer than expected.

League Fights to Protect Public Financing System

The League fought against the efforts this month to eliminate the public financing system for presidential elections. Although the House voted in favor of repeal, prospects in the Senate are a bit better. The League spoke out by issuing our letter to the House, joining a coalition, blogging on our views and urging League members and citizens to take action in opposing the elimination of this system.

League Urges Senate to Reform Rules

With proposed rules changes being considered in the U.S. Senate, the League urged members to reform their rules to ensure openness, accountability, decision-

making capability and effective performance. In addition to discussing these reforms on our blog, the League sent a letter to the Senate and joined another with coalition partners urging its members to make transparency and accountability a priority and end needless obstruction that threatens the vibrancy of our democracy. The Senate agreed to stop "secret holds," cut down on the number of executive branch appointments that need confirmation, and cut back on post-cloture dithering, while leaders pledged to reduce the use of the filibuster.

Leagues Promote Fair and Open Redistricting

Leagues in many states are actively promoting transparency and public participation in the upcoming redistricting process. As state leaders undertake the complex and often intensely partisan task of redrawing congressional and state legislative district boundaries, Leagues are hosting public events, preparing testimony, educating the media, engaging key allies and leveraging new technology to ensure districts are drawn in the open and that the public has meaningful opportunities to weigh in. The League believes that open and participatory redistricting will lead to a more representative and accountable democracy and empower communi-



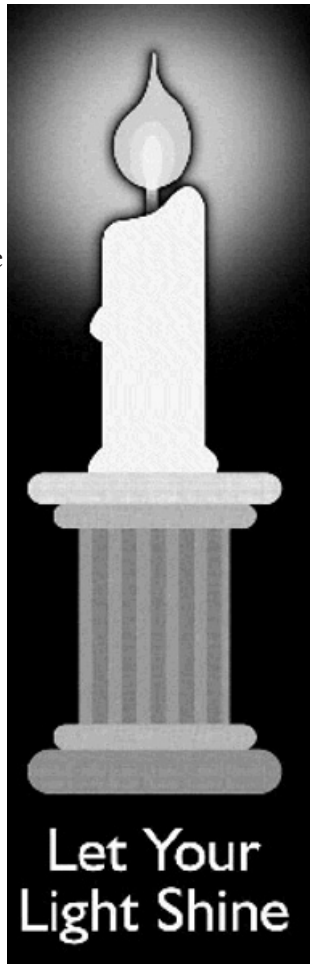
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Hi All,
Once again the Tallahassee LWV will be helping WFSU radio with their Spring pledge drive. Our date is Thursday, February 10 and the time slots available are:

7am-8am
8am-10am
10am-12pm
12pm-2pm
2pm-4pm
4pm-6:30pm

If you can fill one or more of these slots, please email marilynnwills@msn.com and let her know when to schedule you.

Remember, it is RADIO so no need to dress up! The script is provided and all you have to do is answer the phone and fill in the blanks on the form.



LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR AND COVENTION 2011



**REGISTER NOW!
AND BEAT THE MARCH 4 DEADLINE**

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTRATION
CONTACT
JESSICA LOWE-MINOR
850-224-2545**



NEW MEMBERS

Pat Simmons
2870 Settler's Blvd. N
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-386-7221

Linda H. Brainard
4639 Autumn Woods Way
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-562-5862

Richard Polangin
1300 N. Duval St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-224-4206

And if education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it in the bettering of man's future. For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual's total development lags behind.

Maria Montessori





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\$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)
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