



TO PROMOTE POLITICAL
RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH
INFORMED AND ACTIVE PAR-
TICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN
GOVERNMENT AND TO ACT ON
SELECTED GOVERNMENTAL
ISSUES.

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

TALLAHASSEE

VOLUME 17–NUMBER 7

SEPTEMBER 2009

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS
SEPTEMBER 2009**

7 Tuesday 7:00 p.m.

Local Government meeting
1501 Crestview.
Call Peggy Lannutti (224-1655)
for directions

8 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
Meeting
County Courthouse 5th floor

10 Thursday 4:00 p.m.

City Commission Meeting
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
Ramada Inn and Conference
Center
2900 N. Monroe Street

22 Tuesday 3 p.m.

County Commission Meeting
County Courthouse 5th floor

23 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

City Commission Meeting
City Hall 2nd Floor

23 Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

City Commission Meeting
Final Public Hearing on 2010
Proposed Budget
City Hall 2nd floor

HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON

Under the U. S. Constitution, Americans are free to disagree with and criticize government officials. Which amendment guarantees this right?

According to the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution, where does government get its power?

Who wrote most of the Declaration of Independence?

How are questions about interpreting the Constitution ultimately determined?

You may recall that in 2006, the Florida Bar conducted a survey and determined that 59% of Floridians could correctly identify the three branches of government. Hopefully, all League members were included in the 59%.

You can learn all about the state of Civics Education in Florida at our September Hot Topics Luncheon.

DATE: Wednesday, September 16
PLACE: Ramada Inn and Conference Center, 2900 N. Monroe Street
TIME: 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
LUNCH: **Burgundy Chicken**
Grilled Chicken Breast Served atop onions, mushrooms and peppers in a Burgundy Demi-glaze, seasonal vegetables, dessert, iced tea, coffee, and water.
COST: \$17.00 payable at the door.
RESERVATIONS: Please call the LWVT Voice Mail (309-3005) by Friday, September 11.

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

Well, we have had a lot going on this month. I hope you didn’t miss our last Hot Topics. Supervisor of Elections Ion Sancho gave us an update on the state database, early voting, auditing elections, among other topics.

On September 9, Fair Districts Florida will be having a one-day fundraiser; our League will be participating. If you have email, you will receive a message where you can make a pledge. Why is this important? We have been closing the gap on the number of petitions needed to insure that we have enough to make the ballot in 2010. Our next hurdle is raising the funds to pay for checking each of the petitions. It will cost ten cents per petition, and, while that doesn’t sound like much, remember that we will have over a million petitions to check. It is imperative that the redistricting amendment appears on the 2010 ballot. We want to stop gerrymandering before the 2010 census results are in.

Congressman Allen Boyd made an appearance in Tallahassee on Tuesday, August 25. The Capital Area Community Agency sponsored a forum on Health Care Reform, and Congressman Boyd was joined by Drs. Bellamy and Webster. CACAA Director Dorothy Inman presided and cautioned the audience to remain civil and polite at all time. Prior to the meeting, there were some demonstrations going on outside the building. While the short addresses the speakers made were informative, many of the “questions” from the audience were not; in fact, they were not usually questions at all. Names were drawn at random from a basket, and people were given an opportunity to make a statement or ask a question. Unfortunately, many of the statements made showed a complete lack of understanding of what Health Reform is all about. While the forum did not disintegrate into the type of shouting match shown on the national news, it was clear that many did not come to the meeting to gain an understanding of the health care bill, public option, or single payer.

Thank you to all who indicated their choices for legislative priorities. The top three vote getters in the Tallahassee League were Government in Florida, Social Policy in Florida, and Education. Information from the local Leagues will be taken into consideration at the September LWVF board meeting, where the final decision will be made.

We still need people to work on a committee that will study transportation in Florida. Please call me at 893-4104 or email me at marilynnwills@msn.com if you are willing to serve on the committee. The study has been given a four month time frame and will be over by the end of the year.

If you have the time, please consider attending some of the upcoming city and county commission meetings.

I hope to see you at our September Hot Topics. We will meet at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center on North Monroe.



OH TO BE GREEN!

Susie Caplow

More than 25 years ago, many of us were promoting the three (3) R's: Reduce, ReUse, Recycle.

Today we carry forward with our message of the 3 R's and add to the mix "compost & Extended Producer Responsibility"

Reuse, Reduce, Recycle, and Compost, has a wrapped itself around a term known as "Zero Waste". This is becoming a household jingle across the country as local elected officials realize the cost of disposal is too high. Landfills are filling up and the answer is not incinerators that burn garbage and emit cancer causing toxic pollution. In fact, all types of incinerators contaminate people and environment with cancer causing emissions. (National Institute of Health, 2001. Press Release: TDCC-Dioxin is listed as a "known human carcinogen" in federal government's ninth report on carcinogens. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 19. <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/news/dioxadd.htm> (accessed November 9, 2006)

We are all very aware that our Planet has finite resources. Our water, air, minerals, wildlife, wilderness are dwindling because of our current personal pattern of massive consumption of the "newest stuff" and irresponsible production and manufacturing trend to change products available for purchase every week in order to be competitive in the consumer market place, is colliding with the health of our planet. Our planet Earth/home is in jeopardy and showing signs of stress. Hurricane category 4's are on the rise, sea level is on the rise, our consumption is on the rise and our disposal of these materials is on the rise.



Here is a proven solution:

ZERO WASTE

Escape the "bury or burn" trap. Please join us in moving towards Zero Waste.

Through implementing zero waste practices both upstream (including reducing consumption, product redesign, clean industrial production and processes, reducing packaging waste, encouraging refillable containers, and toxics use reduction) and downstream (including reuse, composting, recycling, and materials recovery), many countries, cities and businesses are making significant progress towards zero waste.

Proven approaches that work: prevent waste and increase recycling and composting

- Zero Waste creates jobs and is good for the economy. For example, U.S. recycling and reuse establishments employ 1.1 million people and gross \$236 billion in annual revenues. Designing more recyclable, reusable and repairable products means more jobs for a vital industry.

- Zero Waste saves natural resources by reducing consumption and making new items from recycled materials. Ruining materials through thermal and combustion pro-

cesses means more materials need to be extracted from the earth to replace those resources.

- Zero Waste conserves energy through reducing demand for extraction and processing of raw materials, which is energy intensive. EPA analysis shows that recycling is more energy efficient than combustion.

For more information about zero waste approaches :

GrassRoots Recycling Network, www.grrn.org

Clean Production Action, www.cleanproduction.org

Institute for Local Self-Reliance, www.ilsr.org Eco-Cycle, www.ecocycle.org

A ZERO WASTE APPROACH IS ONE OF THE FASTEST, CHEAPEST, AND MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE. HERE IS AN OUTLINE TO FOLLOW:

At STATE, NATIONAL & GLOBAL levels: Changing product and packaging design through:

- Extended Producer Responsibility
- Washington state and many other states
- www.cleanproduction.org & www.productpolicy.org for reports and information

#1: New Rules and Economic Incentives

Local government has enormous influence to create economic incentives to eliminate waste, and to make a local zero waste economy

- Taxes & Incentives
- Permits and Zoning
- Contracts and Franchises
- Waste Plans
- Disposal Bans
- Product Bans
- Financing Agreements

#2: Extended Producer Responsibility & Local Producer Responsibility (LPR)

Based on the principle that garbage is not inevitable. It is the result of bad design.

Locally:

- Can push for EPR at a state level
- Can push local companies to be responsible for product waste

#3: The Power of Zero Waste Purchasing

- 1 of every 5 purchasing dollars are spent by government.
- Combined power of government & large contractor purchasing will dictate changes in product design and manufacture that we cannot legislate.

#4: Invest in Zero Waste Infrastructure

- No extra money needed - only a shift in spending
- Use New Rules to shift spending away from landfills and incinerators
- Focus on local companies, finding creative ways to use stuff locally to create good jobs



From National

PUBLIC OPTION IS ESSENTIAL TO HEALTH REFORM

League Urges Congress and President to Continue Support for Public Option

Washington, DC – “The public option in health care reform may not be essential to bureaucrats or insurance companies but it absolutely is essential to the almost 47 million uninsured Americans who live day to day without health care coverage,” said League of Women Voters National President Mary G. Wilson. Calling on Congress and the President not to succumb to the bullying tactics being used by special interest groups, Wilson urged Congress and the President not to waver in their support of the public option included in H.R. 3200, America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009, recently passed by three House committees.

America is facing a health care crisis caused by a combination of skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves millions of Americans without any coverage. “The current health care system is endangering our economy, our health, and our national security,” Wilson said. “Last fall, voters elected a Congress and President that promised to reform our health care system. Voters made it clear that they want a change in our health care system, a change that puts the brakes on the excesses created by a system dominated by large insurance companies,” she continued.

“It is universal coverage that will determine the humanity of our system and a public option will make that possible for Americans who cannot obtain coverage through the traditional employer-sponsored plans,” noted Wilson. “We believe that health care reform legislation must guarantee access to comprehensive and essential benefits to all U.S. residents.”

“But the possibility of universal coverage is not the only advantage of the public option,” warned Wilson. “We must control costs and the public option is the best chance to bring costs into line with reality. As a nation, we are spending \$1 out of every \$6 we earn on health care. Over the last three decades, increases in the amount we spend on health care have consistently risen faster than wages and inflation. Health care reform must provide effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services and allow for efficient and economical delivery of care. Offering everyone the choice of a government administered health insurance plan like Medicare that would compete with private health insurance plans is key to lowering costs.”

“The public option is critical to health care reform,” Wilson concluded. “Now is not the time for politicians to get cold feet just because a handful of special-interest-backed protesters spread lies and make noise at public forums. Congress and the President need to demonstrate real

leadership and move forward with true health care reform.”
FOR THE LEAGUE’S COMPLETE POSITION ON HEALTH CARE VISIT:

<http://www.lwv.org> and click on HEALTH CARE

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### LWV/T DOES THEIR BIT FOR TO EXPRESS OPINIONS ON HEALTH CARE



*Marilynn Wills, Peggy Ramsey, Norene Chase, Theresa Chase and Jan Quinton at Health Care Town Meeting on August 25 at City Hall. Erin Edwards, Janet Findling and Ruth O'Donnell also attended*

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JANET FINDLING’S PRESENTATION

HEALTH CARE TOWN HALL MEETING

Tuesday, August 25

I left a state job 4 ½ years ago to become a full-time caregiver for my mother who has dementia and is deaf. Insurance companies will not take me as a client unless I am part of a large group because 40 years ago I had over 100 seizures a day and had brain surgery for a tumor that was causing the seizures. My only option was to continue with my group HMO but pay individual rates, which are now \$12,000 a year. While I am saving the federal and state governments much Medicare and Medicaid by caring for my mother at home, I am being penalized regarding insurance and using money I was saving to supplement my future small social security and retirement funds. My whole life I have had positions and have been a volunteer assisting persons with disabilities, who are poor or elderly, which has meant low salaries, despite my master’s and law degrees.

I believe the public option may keep us dedicated citizens and caregivers from ending up in the poorhouse.

Representative Boyd, please reconsider.

Thank you.

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# OUR FADING HERITAGE

Americans Fail a Basic Test on Their History and Institutions is the third major study conducted by ISI (Intercollegiate Studies Institute) on the kind of knowledge required for informed citizenship. In 2006 and 2007, ISI published the first ever scientific surveys of civic learning among college students. Each year, approximately 14,000 freshmen and seniors at 50 schools nationwide were given a 60-question, multiple-choice exam on basic knowledge of America's heritage. Both years, the students failed. The average freshman scored 51.7% the first year and 51.4% the next. The average senior scored 53.2%, then 54.2%. After all the time, effort, and money spent on college, students emerge no better off in understanding the fundamental features of American self-government.

This year, ISI sought to learn more about the real-world consequences of this collegiate failure. ISI crafted a study to measure the independent impact of college on the acquisition and maintenance of civic literacy over a lifetime. First, a random sample of 2,508 American adults of all backgrounds was surveyed, allowing comparisons to be made between the college and non-college educated. They were asked 33 straightforward civics questions, many of which high school graduates and new citizens are expected to know. Respondents were also asked several questions concerning their participation in American civic life, their attitudes about perennial issues of American governance, and other behaviors that may or may not contribute to civic literacy. Finally, the results were run through multivariate regression analysis, allowing ISI to compare the civic impact of college with that of other societal factors.

Do Americans possess the knowledge necessary to participate wisely in the affairs of the nation? Read below to find out. The following is a summary; for details, go to [Americancivilliteracy.org](http://Americancivilliteracy.org).

## MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Americans Fail the Test of Civic Literacy
2. Americans Agree: Colleges Should Teach America's Heritage
3. College Adds Little to Civic Knowledge
4. Television—including TV News—Dumbs America Down
5. What College Graduates Don't Know About America: Only 54% can correctly identify a basic description of the free enterprise system, in which all Americans participate.

## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

### ELECTED OFFICIALS SCORE LOWER THAN THE GENERAL PUBLIC



Nancy Ryan, 1st Vice President, LWVF, 2009-2011, grew up in Winter Park and graduated from the University of Florida in 1981 and 1988, with degrees in political science and law. She has worked for the last twenty years in state government, first as an Assistant Attorney General prosecuting criminal appeals and then as an Assistant Public Defender, defending similar cases. She lives in New Smyrna Beach with her 11-year-old son, Neil, where she serves on the Historic Preservation Commission and has been legal adviser to the Volusia and Flagler County ACLU. She joined the League of Women Voters in 2000 and served as vice-president of the Volusia County League from 2004 to 2007. Voter Service and transparency in government are League issues of particular interest to her.



Chris Straton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, LWVF, 2009-2011, has lived in Naples since 1986 and has been involved in a wide range of community activities which include President of Collier County Audubon Society, President of American Association of University Women, Chair of Collier County Environmental Advisory Board, Vice Chair of Citizen's Advisory Committee to Metropolitan Planning Organization, member of Collier County Citizens Advisory Committee on Evaluation and Appraisal Report of Comprehensive Plan, Executive Director of Southwest Florida Land Preservation Trust, Vice Chair of Second District Association, Recipient of Naples Women's Club Environmental Award, and Vice Chair of Affordable Housing Commission. Chris retired as an Executive with Michigan Bell Telephone Company where her career began as a long distance operator and ended as Access Charge Coordinator; a \$500 million revenue source. She holds a BA in Economics and an MS in Management. She is Past President of the League of Women Voters of Collier County.

# Summary of Supervisor Ion Sancho's Presentation at August Hot Topics

Information about eligible voters is kept in the state database. Supervisor of Elections Ion Sancho discussed the problems that the state database presented in the 2000 election.



Evidently, the list released in August, 1998 was flawed and supervisors were instructed to not use the list. The database had been merged with those of the Clerk of the Courts and FDLE; these were not designed to be used with other databases. Supervisor Sancho chaired the database committee for the State Elections Supervisors Organization at this time. While the supervisors were happy with a 90% accuracy rate, Mr. Sancho pressed for a 95% accuracy rate. Unfortunately, this flawed data base was used in the 2000 elections, distributed to all the counties in Florida, even though it had a 94% error rate when checked prior to the election. Up to 50,000 legal voters were denied the right to vote; at that time, there were no provisional ballots.

Supervisor Sancho feels that the Florida Voter Database, today, is a good example of "best practices for databases." He stated that the voter turnout in 2008 was the highest since 1992—one of the largest turnouts with the fewest number of errors. The system cost \$23.5 million and maintenance runs to \$2.5million per year.

During the past legislative session, an attempt was made to pass an elections bill that would have stifled voter turnout; if the bill had passed, Mr. Sancho stated that his office would have had to process 17,800 provisional ballots within 48 hours.

Another change in the bill would disallow a change of address at the polls. If a voter had moved within 29 days of the election, he/she would have had to cast a provisional ballot. The bill would have also stripped supervisors of power; decisions would come from the Division of Elections at the Florida Department of State.

Supervisor Sancho, along with many of the state's supervisors, would like to have additional flexibility for early voting; while this was asked for by the Secretary of State in the last session, it was ignored by the legislature. Mr Sancho feels that voters who have a problem during early voting have ample time to rectify the situation before the ballots are counted. Absentee voters are not notified of any problems with their ballot, even if it is discarded. Early voters have a "100% ability" to correct an error and cast their ballots.

He also addressed the local issue of replacing a city commissioner who recently resigned.

If the city were to hold a special election, it would cost \$700,000 to do so. Because of the cost of running elections such as this one, many supervisors want to "vote by mail."

Some of the other topics covered were the importance of redistricting and its relation to the "one person, one vote" legislation in the 1970s. In Florida, according to Mr. Sancho, this legislation gave birth to a "golden age of politics", where issues like water management, education, and the modernization of transportation were addressed. Unfortunately, the "golden age" ended in 1982. We were also informed of the desire of the Supervisor to have a central location with plenty of parking for the office, the expense of buying special voting machines for the disabled (those currently available do not meet the requirements of persons with disabilities), and the unsatisfactory auditing laws in the state.

An update on election laws in Florida is extremely important to the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee; we are fortunate to have a supervisor like Ion Sancho, who can keep us informed and let us know what changes need to be made.



## From National

### **PUBLIC ADVOCACY FOR VOTER PROTECTION PROJECT**

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project has been created to help to bolster its capacity of continuing and expanding its critical state-based advocacy to prevent disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2002, in the wake of the tumultuous 2000 election, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to modernize the nation's election processes and to help ensure that eligible voters are no longer deprived of the franchise due to administrative errors.

Unfortunately, in many states, politicians have seized on this opportunity as a means of disenfranchising targeted voters through changes in election laws. These new measures have the potential of disenfranchising more Americans than any Election Day problems that we have seen in the past.

In an effort to fight back, the League of Women Voters is focusing on five specific issues:

1. Oppose ID and documentary proof of citizenship
2. Improve administration of statewide database systems
3. Guard against undue restrictions on voter registration
4. Improve polling place management
5. Improve poll worker training and strengthening poll workers



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TALLAHASSEE  
SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 18, 2009

The Executive Board met at 6:30 pm Tuesday, August 18 at 240 Beverly Ct.

The following items were discussed:

The search for an appropriate and convenient location for monthly Hot Topics continues.

Items to update the website should be sent to Erin Edwards, Webmaster, at [erinedwards22@comcast.net](mailto:erinedwards22@comcast.net). An ad hoc committee was appointed to review the budget categories and make suggestions for next year's budget.

The Health Committee plans to attend the Town Hall meeting on Aug. 25. Peggy Lannutti has resigned as Local Government chair. Suggestions were made for her replacement. Those on the committee who monitor City and County Commissions are urged to attend the meetings so that the commissioners are aware that the League is watching what they do.

LWVT website will provide a master calendar for scheduling candidate and ballot initiative forums by all groups so that conflicting dates can be avoided.

1 1/2 million redistricting petitions have been gathered at this point. The next event is to raise funds (\$.10 per form) to process and verify these forms. LWVT will co-host one of several statewide events on 9.9.09 designed to raise these funds.

The statewide Transportation Study headed by Charlene Walker is moving forward. Anyone interested in being point person from LWVT should contact Marilyn Wills.

The Executive Board meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 6:30 pm at the LWVF office on Beverly Court. Any member may attend or submit agenda items for consideration by the Board. The next meeting will be Sept. 15.

Peggy Ramsey, Secretary

**The League of Women Voters urges all of its members to contact their Senators and Representative by mail, email or telephone to express their opinion about Health Care Reform.**

**NEW MEMBERS**

Charlotte Hand  
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Tallahassee, FL 32301-3324  
850 877-1756

Lori Gormin  
2417 Dundee Drive  
Tallahassee, FL  
32308  
850 251-8305

In January, 2010 we are going to try to do a special edition of the Voter focused on poll workers. If you have served as a poll worker and would like to tell your fellow Leaguers about it please write it up and submit it to [mlbaker@fsu.edu](mailto:mlbaker@fsu.edu). The write up may be long, short, sad, funny ...we want to hear all the stories.

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 LWV Lobby Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Gift to the LWV Education Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (tax deductible)

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to LWV of Tallahassee.

Mail to: LWVT, P.O. Box 10216, Tallahassee, FL 32302-2216

(You may also renew/join online at [www.lwvtallahassee.org](http://www.lwvtallahassee.org). There is a \$2.00 charge for using PayPal.)



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