



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE ST. PETERSBURG AREA

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

FY 2017-2018

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WELCOME TO THE LEAGUE

Welcome to the League

Congratulations on your decision to join the League of Women Voters! We are happy to welcome you as a member of our local League, the League of Women Voters of Florida, and the League of Women Voters of the United States. You now belong to one of the nation's most widely recognized, respected, and effective citizen organizations.

In the League, we are not all academics or professional organizers. We don't all think alike or support the same political party. Most of us have little spare time and we are not all bundles of energy. At different periods in our lives we have different assets to offer. When we combine our brains, energy, talents, and time, we create a powerful force that supports the mission of our grassroots organization.

Here is the basic information you need to be an active, vital member. By being a member you help the League. In turn, the League can help you be an interested, informed, and effective citizen.

This is your League. The more time and talent you are willing to invest, the more you will gain from being a member. There is no shortage of opportunities. Be active. Get involved.

League Principles

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

- The League believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- The League believes that a democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.
- The League believes that the right to vote for every citizen should be protected; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.
- The League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

HISTORY OF THE LEAGUE

History of the League

Carne Chapman Catt organized the League of Women Voters of the United States in 1920 shortly before the Women's Suffrage Amendment was ratified. Its principal aim was to help the newly enfranchised women become politically educated, responsible voting citizens. The League operates at national, state, and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues in all 50 states as well in DC, the Virgin Islands, and Hong Kong.

In 1939, three city Leagues, St. Petersburg, Winter Haven, and Winter Park-Orlando, formed the Florida League. Now there is League presence in 38 counties with more than 4,000 members and supporters in the state of Florida.

Over the years, the League has opened a door to intellectual activity and involvement in political life. The League has studied many issues and has been active in calling for changes and reforms to public policy. It has served as a training ground for many community leaders and is determined to continue to be a pertinent and meaningful collective voice in local governance.

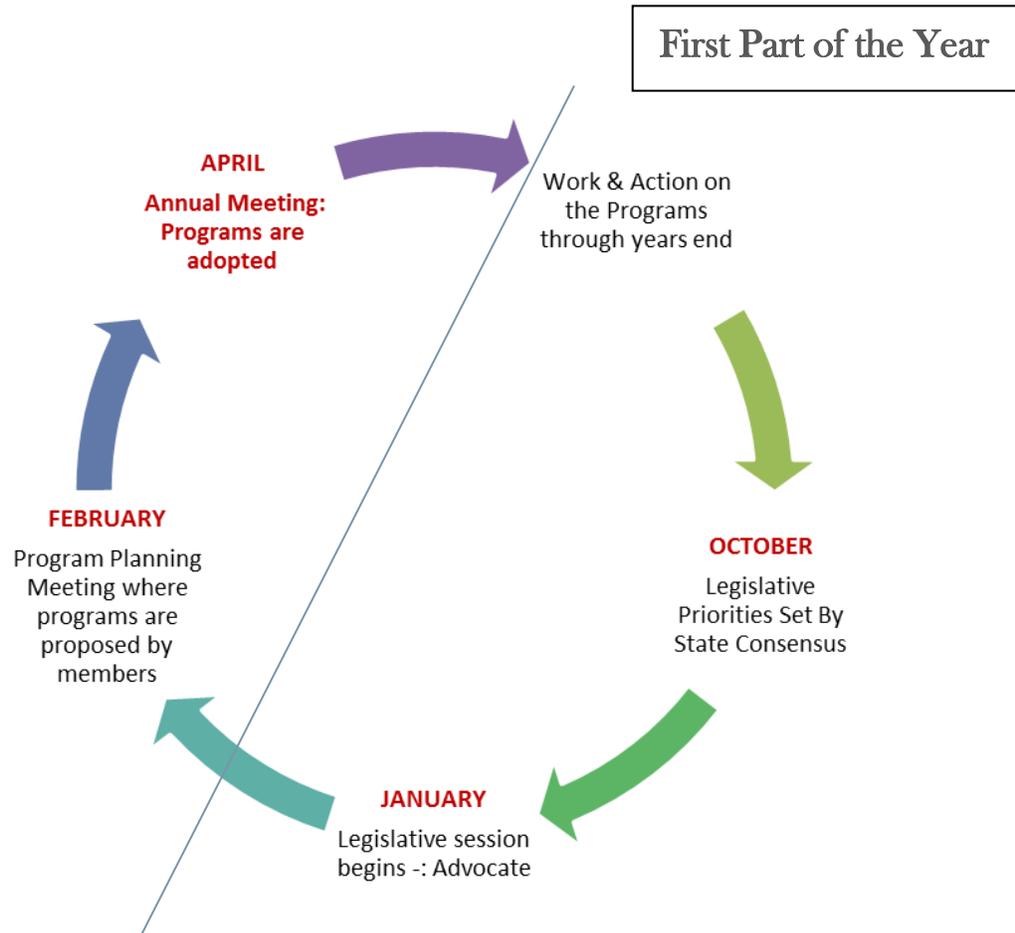
The mission of the League is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government, to act on selected governmental issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Nonpartisan Policy

The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate for office. However, individual members are urged to be as active as possible in the political process.

LEAGUE YEAR AND TIMELINE

League Year and Timeline



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PROGRAM

League of Women Voters Program

ADMINISTRATIVE GROUPS

Office Support

Rachael Becker	office@lwvspa.org	727-896-5197
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Media & Website

Amy Weintraub	amyw@gmail.com	304-541-9027
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Membership

Jaime Dixon	jaimed2012@gmail.com	407-925-5707
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EDUCATION ACTION GROUPS

Voter Services: This longstanding educational group is at the heart of the League. Its tremendous scope of activity includes candidate forums, registering voters, publishing an online voter guide, and educating the citizenry about proposed amendments and the voting process. The committee speaks to the core of the League Mission, which is to engage people in democracy and to do so in a nonpartisan way.

Co-Chair: Raechel Garafalo	raesg@msn.com	727-452-3563
Co-Chair: Stephanie Owens	sowensro@aol.com	727-639-1243

International Relations: The International Relations Group organizes a speaker series based on the Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions* series. In partnership with the North Pinellas League, group members rotate organizing the events and facilitating the discussion. The committee meets monthly from September to May.

Chair: Judy McSwine	jmcswine@gmail.com	727-447-5493
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Social Justice: This educational group focuses on bringing films to screen and organizing panel discussions to promote public awareness of topics including money in politics, poverty, and the death penalty.

Co-Chair: Julie Kessel	jbkessel@verizon.net	813-351-0518
Co-Chair: Karen Lieberman	karen.lieberman@telemachuspress.com	727-289-3973

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PROGRAM

ADVOCACY ACTION GROUPS

Campaign Finance Reform: The campaign finance reform action group is working to get “big and dark” money out of our local St. Petersburg municipal elections through the passage of the Defend Our Democracy Ordinance. The ordinance strives to ban SuperPacs and ensure that corporations with significant foreign ownership cannot contribute in excess of \$5,000 to local elections.

Co-Chair: Julie Kessel	jbkessel@verizon.net	813-351-0518
Co-Chair: Karen Lieberman	karen.lieberman@telemachuspress.com	727-289-3973

Education: The Education Group will study critical issues at the state and local level, use findings to mount an educational campaign to increase awareness among citizens, and engage in advocacy work aligned with LWVF legislative priorities during the 2018 legislative session.

Co-Chair: Iris Yetter	iyetter@tampabay.rr.com	727-550-0417
Co-Chair: Robin Rae Jones	robinraejones@gmail.com	813-245-8075

Gun Safety: The Gun Safety Group started during the advocacy work against Campus and Open Carry legislation that was unexpectedly defeated in the Florida Senate Judiciary in February 2016. This group will continue to educate the citizenry, monitor the introduction of any new dangerous gun-related bills, continue to build a coalition of gun safety advocates both in and out of the LWVF, and be ready to move the group to advocacy and full Program status if new bills are introduced.

Chair: Sharon Winters	swinters@tampabay.rr.com	727-276-3837
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Health Care: The Health Care Group works to ensure that Floridians have access to health care that covers as much as possible, with as few out of pocket expenses as possible. The goal is to educate the citizenry, public officials, and health care administrations about the human impact for those uninsured, and the financial consequences to the Florida economy.

Chair: Julie Kessel	jbkessel@verizon.net	813-351-0518
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Immigration: The Immigration Group works to monitor state legislative issues and to keep the general membership informed about immigration issues at the local, state, and national levels. In 2016, the Immigration Working Group launched a voter education campaign to enhance awareness about current immigration issues and the importance of understanding candidates’ positions on related topics.

Co-Chair: Karen Coale	kcoale@tampabay.rr.com	727-592-2148
Co-Chair: Kay Lahdenpera	kaylahdenpera@gmail.com	727-592-2148

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PROGRAM

Reproductive Rights: This group affirms and advocates for equal and safe access to the full range of reproductive health care, including abortion, birth control, and evidence based sex education for all. The group works to increase participation in the reproductive rights movement in the Tampa Bay area through visibility events, letter-to-the editor campaigns, educational films, discussions, book studies, and forums.

Chair: Amy Weintraub	amyw304@gmail.com	304-541-9027
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Sustainability (Environmental and Solar Issues): This group focuses on environmental sustainability for clean water, air, and land.

Lisa Vanover	Lisa.yacso.vanover@gmail.com	727-253-1530
Co-Chair: Claire Karas	ckcrnfa@aol.com	615-714-9945
Co-Chair: Susan Tuite	susantuite@gmail.com	727-424-1430

2017-2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2017-2018 Board of Directors

LEAGUE CONTACTS	CONTACT	EMAIL	PHONE
President	Julie Kessel, MD	Julie.Kessel@cigna.com	813-351-0518
1st Vice President	Sharon Winters	swinters@tampabay.rr.com	727-954-6024
2nd Vice President	Stephanie Owens	sowensro@aol.com	727-639-1243
Treasurer	Caroline Bloodworth	carolineb@aol.com	727-224-4735
Secretary	Randi Hilleso	randihilleso@yahoo.com	206-909-2420
Board Member	Raechel Garafalo	raesg@msn.com	727-452-3563
Board Member	Susan Mayer	g8rsooz@gmail.com	727-560-8094
Board Member	Iris Yetter	iyetter@tampabay.rr.com	727-550-0417
Board Member	Marty Shapiro	mshapiro48@gmail.com	727-452-8116
Board Member	Lydia Castle	lydiagls@hotmail.com	727-688-3318
Office Support	Rachael Becker	office@lwvspa.org	727-896-5197

LEAGUE CONTACT INFORMATION

League Contact Information

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

Website: <http://www.lwvspa.org/>

Facebook Page: League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

<https://www.facebook.com/LWVSPA>

Address: 233 3rd Street N, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Office mailing address: PO Box 11775, St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Phone Number: 727-896-5197

Email: office@lwvspa.org

League of Women Voters of Florida

<http://thefloridavoter.org/>

League of Women Voters of the United States

<http://www.lwv.org/>

Florida Study and Action Guide

<http://thefloridavoter.org>