

JANUARY 2024



Dear Members and Supporters,

Happy New Year! We are officially in an election year. I want to take this moment to express my appreciation for all of you and recognize the hard work ahead.

As I reflect on all that we accomplished in the last year, I feel immense gratitude. I am eternally grateful for our dedicated members, action teams, leadership, and supporters. I want to thank each of you for all that you've done to support your local league in the last year. We could not do our work without you.

Looking ahead, we recognize that our work is cut out for us this election year. We take that responsibility seriously. We will continue to ensure voters are registered, informed, and engaged. We will continue to work on important issues, such as reproductive rights and social justice, that impact our community locally and statewide. We will continue to make democracy work.

I invite you to join us, and I wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

In League
Jackie



REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS TEAM #1

MESSAGE FROM REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS CO-CHAIR AMY WEINTRAUB:



The St. Pete League truly exceeded expectations during the petition collection phase of the Floridians for Reproductive Freedom campaign. **As the #1 grassroots organization for petition collection in Florida**, LWVSPA was a huge part of the 1.4 million petitions collected statewide – well above the number needed to get the measure to protect reproductive freedom on the 2024 ballot.

Dozens of LWVSPA members jumped in to help collect petitions, both privately within their networks and at public events interacting with strangers. Other League members assisted during the Repro Team's weekly office hours or with contacting voters whose petitions had been rejected by the Pinellas County

Supervisor of Elections, urging them to complete a new form. LWVSPA members also donated thousands of dollars and other resources toward the campaign.

As a result of our (and others') dogged efforts, the two Congressional Districts that include Pinellas County were among the first few to hit the

threshold of validated petitions needed to count toward geographic diversity requirements for ballot initiatives. Amazing work!

It is extremely risky to start naming names as **SO MANY** League members and supporters were involved in this effort. However, the following rock stars dedicated **such an extraordinary amount of** time and energy to the campaign, they must be recognized and appreciated publicly. First, the QUEENS:



Heidi Davis identified Clearwater as an untapped source for securing petitions, mentored new volunteers, coordinated events, helped to fix problematic petitions, collected hundreds of petitions, and raised thousands of dollars! [Read more...](#)



Shelley Manes (right, with Janice Drinkwine) recently retired and jumped into League petition gathering. Shelley spent long days gathering petitions from places as varied as the beaches of the Gulf Coast to rowdy nightclubs. [Read more...](#)



Cara Olson is a teacher who used her free summer days to pour herself into the FPF petition collection in downtown St. Petersburg. Cara made generous donations to



Jamie Ross, a new member, is a traveling volunteer force for reproductive freedom. Jamie started petition collection in Pinellas County and moved on to Leon County,



Stacey Kroto recruited new volunteers and supported the FPF campaign at all levels. In her role as co-chair of the League of Women Voters of Florida's Reproductive

FPF local volunteers and supported the ballot initiative efforts at every opportunity.



Kris McTaggart joined the League in June and started to collect petitions in her hometown of Gulfport, quickly traveling to neighbor congressional districts as needed to meet thresholds. Kris spent countless hot summer and fall days collecting petitions.

Hillsborough County, and Manatee County, staying in each area until the threshold was met.



Elsie Gilmore printed 1,000 petition forms herself and, for many weeks, made collecting 100 completed petitions per week her goal. Elsie posted online invitations to a local coffee house saying, "Stop by for some coffee and sign a petition."

Justice Action Team, Stacey has kept the FPF campaign a top statewide priority for the League.



Deb West Weires is a new member who threw herself into the campaign since October. Logging many hours in Pinellas before we hit the threshold, she shifted her work across the bay dedicating days of volunteering, reaching voters in Hillsborough.

And thanks also to these League members and supporters who invested significant amounts of time and effort over the past seven months to ensure we met with success.

Barbara Baccari
Dianne Blyler
Deborah Burke
Martha Chapman
Karen Cremins
Lyn Dalzel
Julie Davis
Janice Drinkwine
Amanda Elend
Mary Fahy
Judy Gallizzi
Ellen Goldberg Weiner
Maryellen Greer
Vivian Haicken
Mary Hanrahan

Kris Hoagland
Jean Johnston
Amy Keith
Jessica Keith
Rachel Kent
Zoe Kopp
Judy Lybrand Kuhn
Brooke Newman
Emily Oster
Bethany Peabody
Helen Peeples
Stephen Peeples
Barbara Pierce
Lindsay Polega
Terry Rimer

Diane Rose
Jaimie Ross
Mary Russell
Yael Schauder
Stephanie Sembler
Connie Sergent
Allison Shulman
Jackie Swigler
Sarah Terry, Co-Chair
Drea Thew
Claire Vande Polder
Betsy Wells
Nancy Wildfeir-Field
Sue Woolsey
Denise Yettaw

Please forgive any oversights!

Nearly our entire League was instrumental in making this happen.

WHAT'S NEXT WITH THE FPF CAMPAIGN?

We should know exactly how many petitions were validated by February 1 and clear that required hurdle. We will then wait for the Florida Supreme Court's review of our petition language which must be completed by April 1. In the meantime, LWVSPA will support FPF's efforts to reach out to voters to encourage them to confirm their Vote By Mail order is in place. Once the initiative is 100% cleared for the 2024 ballot, we will move a multi-pronged, researched-based "persuasion campaign" where we will work to educate the electorate on the importance of reproductive freedom and amplify that voters must vote "yes" on the FPF initiative on their ballot

YEAR END APPEAL EXCEEDS GOAL!

Thanks to the following generous donors, we've raised \$10,625 since November 21, 2023.

Thank you to the following who joined or renewed their membership at the Silver or Gold Level of Membership

Patti Blair
Aleta Fisher
Beate Marston
Deborah Toth
Elizabeth Wells

Thank you to these generous donors who gave to the LWVSPA Year-End Donation Campaign

Marsha Baker
Evelyn Baran & Daniel Hoekenga
Ruth Barrens
Ingrid Bredenberg & Berkeley Grimball
Dorothea Cappadona
Susan Castleman
Deborah Darrah
Janice Drinkwine
Pamm Ferguson
Judy & Edmund Gallizzi
Gina Gallo & Cameron Carr
Andrew Gaunce
Polita & Peter Glynn
Helen Huntley
Jean Johnston
Julie Kessel
Stacey Kroto
Diane Lajoie
Patricia Lucas
Shelley Manes
Beate & Edward Marston

Barbara McLain
Beverley McLain
Mary Olson
Keith Otten
Sarah Peacock
Alison Quinn
Breen and Reavis Family Fund
Charles Rodriguez
Beth Settle
Carolyn Sinclair
Megan Smolenyak
Barbara Spofford
Lyn Taylor
Laura Turley
Sherri Valdes
Amy & Caroline Weintraub
Elizabeth Wells
Deb West & Johjn Weires
Nancy Wildfeir-Field
Deborah Williams
Laura Williamson
Sharon Winters & Kendall Reid

Note: Donations as of December 28, 2023

MEMBER NEWS AND EVENTS





**MARTIN
LUTHER**
KING DAY
I HAVE A DREAM

**MARCH
WITH
US!**

SIGN UP TODAY
TO MARCH WITH THE
LWVSPA
IN THE
MLK DAY PARADE!
MON. JAN. 15TH

Represent the League at the MLK Day Parade

We will have a truck available so that participants will not have to walk the entire parade route.

Email **Stacey Kroto** enhancedvibes@gmail.com if you have questions, or sign up below and we will provide you with info.

SIGN UP



MIX, MINGLE, & MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

 **COCKTAILS &
CONVERSATION**

**James Museum's "\$10 Tuesday"
Tuesday, January 23
\$10/person**

Save the date!

Cash bar with live music, followed by gallery tours
(hopefully with docents from our LWVSPA)

League members will gather starting at 5 pm

RSVP



Making friends in League

by Beate Marston



Sisters Across the Straits is a unique project initiated by LWVFL in 2010. Read Beate Marston's account of her 2023 SOS experience building "in League" Cuban/American friendships. Any League member can get involved.

[Read Beate's article](#) and contact her if you'd like to know more.
beatetude@earthlink.net



FINANCE TIP FROM AVA



JANUARY'S TIP:

2024 IRA contribution limits have increased to \$7,000 if under 50 years old, and \$8,000 if over 50 years old - income limits apply. Reach out to see how to maximize the contributions.

Ava Elkins, AAMS®, Financial Advisor and Investment Management Consultant,
Raymond James & Associates,
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raymondjames.com/avaelkins



LEAGUE SWAG



T-SHIRTS, TOTES, MUGS AND MORE!

Yes, there is defending democracy "merch" available at the new LWVSPA online store. [Check it out!](#)



- [January Calendar of Events/Meetings](#)
- [Explore Issues](#)
- [Check Out our Blog Archives](#)
- [Engage!](#)
- [LWVSPA Store](#)

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area
[Email](#) | [Website](#)
Telephone: 727-295-5255



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.

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