



## THE VOTER

April 2018

### *Join Us for a Day of Celebration and Conversation with ESPN's Jemele Hill*



Mark your calendars for April 21! **The annual meeting and luncheon will take place at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club**, where we'll celebrate our successes for the past year, elect our new board, vote on the upcoming program and ring in the new League year.

We'll also kick off the **first of three incredible events happening throughout the day, each featuring and celebrating Jemele Hill**, journalist, former co-host of SportsCenter and present chief correspondent at [The Undeclared](#), ESPN's microsite that fuses sports, race

and culture.

Ms. Hill's comments elevated the national debate about the **role of the media, freedom of expression, personal responsibility and civility in personal discourse**. She'll join us as our Making Democracy Award winner for the luncheon, then she'll host a Talk Back for youth looking to engage in democracy at the Studio@620, and then later that evening she'll be our featured speaker at a cocktail benefit at the St. Petersburg Museum of History.

#### Event & Ticket Information

##### **Annual Meeting & Luncheon**

Members: \$45

Non-members: \$97 (includes 1-year membership)

[Register here before April 15](#)

Note: Please review [the agenda](#) before attending.

##### **Talk Back: Community Conversation With Jemele Hill**

Students/Seniors: \$15

General Admission: \$25

[Get your tickets here](#)

##### **Cocktail Benefit With Jemele Hill**

Tickets: \$75

[Get your tickets here](#)

More information about all three events can be found at [lwvspa.org/jemelehill](http://lwvspa.org/jemelehill).

#### Sponsorship Opportunities

We're looking for people and organizations to sponsor these events! We have three levels of sponsorship available:

- A bronze sponsor (\$500) receives two tickets to the luncheon or the cocktail benefit;
- A silver sponsor (\$1000), 4 tickets, and a photo opportunity with Ms. Hill;

- A gold sponsor (\$2500), 8 tickets, and a VIP luncheon reception.

Each sponsorship level is accompanied by digital media space. Your sponsorship will support all of the day's events, voter education, registration and advocacy efforts.

If you're interested in sponsoring the League's efforts to make democracy work, please get in touch with **President Julie Kessel** and **Office Manager Julia Sharp**.



## *Looking Back at the 2018 Legislative Session*



The 2018 Legislative Session officially ended on Sunday, March 11, with the passage of a \$88.7 billion state budget. A lot happened during the session, most notably **the speedy passage of the most significant gun legislation passed in the state of Florida in the last 20 years.**

Our legislative advocate Stephanie Owens has the [full rundown](#) of the winners and losers when it comes to our [legislative priorities](#) in her Capitol Report. She notes that our efforts in advocating for the League's priorities helped her work resonate with legislators:

"My best meetings start when a legislator or staff says "League members are lighting up my phone!" **Please know that your phone calls make a difference.** Your support and engagement are key to our legislative triumphs. The session has ended, but our advocacy continues."



## *The 2020 Census Citizenship Question*

Last month, the Commerce Department announced a plan to include a question pertaining to citizenship in the 2020 Census. LWVUS President Chris Carson has responded, saying the question is "**designed to frighten immigrants—citizens and noncitizens alike—so they won't participate in the Census.** It's a blatant political maneuver meant to disenfranchise these groups and deny them equal representation."

The national League has released [talking points and actions](#) we can take to push the government to remove this unnecessary and potentially dangerous question from the 2020 Census. Take action now so we can fix this before it's too late.



## *Volunteer Opportunities*

We're always looking for volunteers to help us make a difference in our community. Right now we need volunteers who can help with the following:

### **Annual Meeting/Luncheon & Events With Jemele Hill**

We need volunteers to help out at the April 21 meeting and luncheon at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. If you're available, please fill out [this spreadsheet](#) with the shift and role you'll volunteer to take. We also need 3 volunteers to help at "Talk Back: Community Conversation With Jemele Hill" at the Studio@620. Please [fill out the form](#) if you're available to volunteer.

Please note we will not be comping the volunteers who help at the annual meeting and luncheon, but the volunteers who assist at the talk back will be comped.

### **Solar Co-op Information Tables**

We need volunteers who can help table at events throughout the month of April. You'll be handling the information tables to let members of the community know about the St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op. If you are interested in helping out, please fill out [this form](#) or contact [lisavanover.league@gmail.com](mailto:lisavanover.league@gmail.com).

### **Voter Guide Marketing Team**

We've been hard at work redesigning our online voting guide to make it more user- and mobile-friendly, and we'll need your help to promote it. We'll soon have several opportunities available for people to help with this project, so stay tuned.



## *Heads Up! Changes to Action Group Meetings*

### **Voter Services**

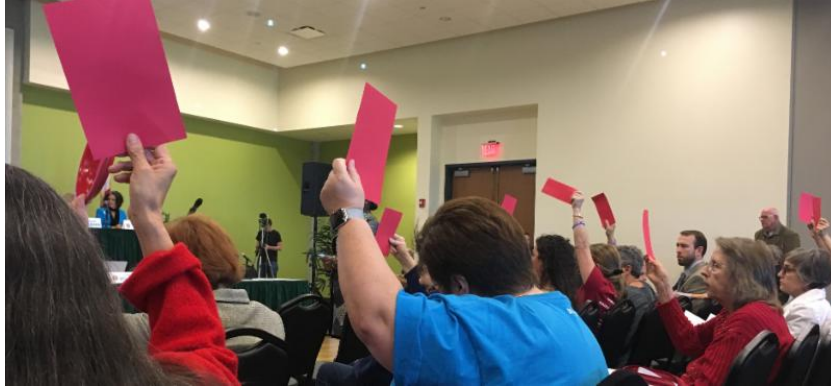
Starting this April, the Voter Service committee will be meeting at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of every month at the League office, located at 233 3rd St. N. in St. Petersburg. We'll be working on projects to help Pinellas County voters get ready for the 2018 election. The next meeting will be April 24. If you have any questions, please contact **Voter Services Chair Raechel Garafalo**.

### **Gun Safety**

The monthly Gun Safety action team meetings are moving to the fourth Monday of every month at 7-8:30 p.m. at the Wesley Room in Allendale United Methodist Church, located at 3803 Haines Rd. in St. Petersburg. The next meeting will be April 23.



## *What's Happening Around the LWVSPA?*



## Education

Although gun regulations and greyhound racing dominated the testimony at the St. Petersburg Constitutional Revision Commission hearing, several proposals challenged the core of our public education system, drawing impassioned testimony.

Two, which would have removed the existing constitutional barriers to directly funding religious schools (P4 and P45), have since been removed, but others remain that would take charter school approval approval and oversight away from local districts by creating a state authorizer (P71), impose term-limits on school board members (P43), or loosen regulations on "high performing" school districts (P93). [Read more...](#)

## Immigration

Though passage of the DREAM Act got lost in the negotiations of a federal budget for the current fiscal year, we expect the topic to come up again as part of budget negotiation for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, 2018. At that time we will resurrect our advocacy campaign. The good news is that only a small percentage of the funds that were requested for the wall with Mexico were approved.

The Trump administration has made several announcements about changing the focus and annual targets of the current immigration system, but Congress has not passed any changes. The family-based Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 remains the law of the land. [Read more...](#)

## Sustainability

More than 160 people have signed up to join the **St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op!** The third and last info session is April 17 at 6 p.m. at the Sunshine Center. We're steaming ahead with tabling at the Tiny House Festival on April 7-8, the Wilcox Nursery Eco-fest on April 14, Earth Day on April 21, and the Green Thumb Festival on April 28-29.

Plus, the St. Pete Summer Co-op is launching on May 3 at 9 a.m. at University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Please come, and bring your electric vehicle. Details will be posted on the LWVSPA calendar soon. [Read more...](#)

## Voter Service

The 2018 elections will be pivotal in some key areas. After several months of evaluation and deliberation, the **Constitution Revision Commission** will put forth several ballot amendments to the Florida Constitution.

The Commission's final public hearing at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus on March 13 was the last opportunity for citizens to weigh in on the proposals before the Commission, which is now in the process of rolling their top 24 priorities into 12 amendments that will likely appear on Floridians' ballots in November. [Read more...](#)



## LWVSPA & LWVF in the Media

- [Pink wave? Women are running in record numbers in 2018](#) (Creative Loafing)
- [As CRC holds final public hearing, crusade for greater gun safety continues](#) (Tampa Bay Times)
- [Students across Tampa Bay join national walkout against school violence](#) (WUSF)



## Upcoming Events

### April 8: Leif Nissen Social Justice Lecture Series: Les Leopold

4:30-7:30 p.m. @ Temple Beth-El, 400 Pasadena Ave. S, St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#) | [Facebook](#)

### April 17: St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op Info Session #3

6-7:30 p.m. @ Sunshine Center, 330 5th St. N, St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#) | [Facebook](#)

### April 21: Annual Meeting & Luncheon With Jemele Hill

10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. @ St. Petersburg Yacht Club, 11 Central Ave., St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#) | [Facebook](#)

### April 21: Talk Back: Community Conversation With Jemele Hill

2-3:30 p.m. @ The Studio@620, 620 1st Ave., St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#) | [Facebook](#)

### April 21: Cocktail Benefit With Jemele Hill

6:30-8:30 p.m. @ St. Petersburg Museum of History, 335 2nd Ave. NE, St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#) | [Facebook](#)

### April 24: New Member Orientation

6-8 p.m. @ St. Petersburg Main Library, 3745 9th Ave. N, St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#) | [Facebook](#)



For Other  
Upcoming Events

Click here to visit our website for the latest updates on action group meetings and other events.



## Membership: Are You Up for Renewal?

**Join us. Renew your membership. We make a difference.**

*We need your support to continue our work in the community and at state and national levels. Whether you want to be an active member or a supporting member, your dues help advance the League's mission.*

We invite you to [renew today!](#)

Renew / Join Now

**We offer five levels of membership:**

Carrie Chapman Catt (Gold) for \$250\*

Susan B. Anthony (Silver) for \$125\*

Household for \$78\*

Individual for \$52

Student for \$26

\*Includes two members residing at the same address.

**Only \$6 of your basic membership goes to the support the activities of the local league; a large percentage of what you pay for an individual membership goes to support our state and national Leagues. By selecting the Gold or Silver membership level, most of your dues will help support the work of our local League.**

You can also offer your financial support by upgrading your membership, offering an additional monthly, quarterly or annual donation, and encouraging others to do the same.

**Please also consider including the League in your estate planning.** Your gifts allow us to continue our education, advocacy and leadership programs to forward our mission in Making Democracy Work in the St Petersburg area. If you would like to discuss an estate planning contribution or other gift, please **contact our office**.



## *2017-2018 League Leadership*

### **OFFICERS**

President: Julie Kessel

First Vice President: Sharon Winters

Secretary: Lisa Vanover

Treasurer: Caroline Bloodworth

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Caitlin Constantine

Raechel Garafalo

Linsey Grove

Susan Mayer

Marty Shapiro

### **EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY LEADS**

Gun Safety: Sharon Winters

Immigration: Karen Coale, Lydia Castle

Health Care: Julie Kessel

Reproductive Rights: Amy Weintraub

Campaign Finance Reform/Social Justice:

Julie Kessel, Karen Lieberman

Education: Robin Jones, Iris Yetter

Voter Service: Raechel Garafalo

Voter Registration: Lindsay Murdock

Sustainability: Lisa Vanover

International Relations: Judy McSwine

Social Media/Promotion Lead: Amy Weintraub

Office Administrator: Julia Sharp

**Visit our website** for more information about our local leaders.

**Click here** for more information about our education and advocacy groups.



League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

**Email | Website**

Telephone: 727-896-5197



**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.**

