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# THE VOTER

April 2026

## Springing Into Action

By Jackie Azis, LWVSPA President



Dear Leaguers and LWVSPA Friends,

It's the most exciting time of the League year! This month is our **Annual Meeting and Luncheon**, at which we will honor our dedicated volunteers, celebrate our accomplishments, elect our new leaders, approve our '26-'27 priorities and budget, look forward to the work ahead, and hear from one of the most influential women in the voting rights space, **Dianna Wynn, President of the League of Women Voters of the U.S.** This is our biggest event

of the year, and you do not want to miss it. It is on Saturday, April 18, and you can get your tickets at the link just below this letter. We look forward to seeing you all there.

March was also a busy month for our local League. Our **Voter Services team** was out in the community educating voters on the March elections, and is now gearing up for the August elections. Voter Services team lead Heidi Davis presented at Nerd Nite about the History of Voting Legislation in St. Petersburg. Our **Social Justice team** hosted multiple events including a vigil and bus trip to the Everglades Detention Facility, a forum on community land trusts, a tour of the Embracing Our Differences art exhibition, and sent a letter alongside national, state, and local leaders and organizations to the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections to advocate for an additional early voting site in South St. Petersburg. Our **Reproductive Rights and Parent Advocacy League teams** presented at the Museum of Motherhood conference. We ended the month organizing and leading a **No Kings protest**, which drew thousands of demonstrators who stood up for the rule of law and democracy.

As a final thought, it is with immense gratitude that I reflect on my last three years as President of LWVSPA. Serving as President has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. I am deeply grateful for our team leads, board members, volunteers, community partners, and supporters. Your passion and commitment are what make democracy work in St. Petersburg and beyond. As I move into my new

role as our first immediate past president, I do so with great confidence in the incoming leadership and excitement for the future of our League. **Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President. It has been an honor of a lifetime.**

In League,  
Jackie



## ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON

**Saturday, April 18th 2026, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**  
**Banquet Masters: 13355 49th St N, Clearwater**



**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER:**

**DIANNA  
WYNN**

**PRESIDENT  
LWV OF THE  
UNITED STATES**

The League's work to build democracy has never been more needed or crucial. Let's dig into that at our Annual Meeting and Luncheon on Saturday, April 18th.

Our keynote speaker is [Dianna Wynn](#), President of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Please join us as we recognize all that we accomplished from 2025-2026, honor our incredible action teams and volunteers, and celebrate our ongoing efforts to make democracy work.

The Annual Meeting, held just prior to the Luncheon, is where members conduct League business.

**Buy your luncheon ticket today!**

**Everglades Detention Center Vigil**



On Sunday, March 22, LWVSPA co-sponsored an eight-hour roundtrip bus trip for 50 faith leaders and people of conscience, including 15 LWV members, to join 175 people in a vigil outside the cruelly dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" detention facility in the Everglades.

Florida has made more immigrant arrests than any other state; about one-third of all the detainees nationwide are in Florida. About 1,500 men are being kept at this concentration-like camp in the middle of the Everglades within a fragile natural ecosystem that is home to the Miccosukee tribe's ancestral lands. The conditions at this facility are so horrific that they have been labeled as torture by Amnesty International.



Faith leaders, tribal leaders, activists, organizers, and family members of detainees addressed the crowd. Incoming LWVSPA Immigration Justice Co-Chair Courtney Prokopas gave the vigil's call to action: Pressure your local city council or commission to end its 287(g) agreements, the primary driver of mass detention in Florida.

Read more about the trip [here](#).

Weekly vigils in protest of these inhumane detentions are held **every Sunday** from 4 to 5 pm in front of the Pinellas County Justice Center. Stay tuned for the next bus trip in the coming months. Click [here](#) if you'd like to contribute to the Workers Circle fund for powering buses to vigils at "Alligator Alcatraz."





**LWVSPA members and friends were out in force at the March 28 No Kings event at Tyrone Mall in St. Petersburg.**

They were among thousands of people who participated in more than 30 demonstrations across the Tampa Bay region that were in turn among some 3,000 actions nationwide.



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**Building Affordability With Community Land Trusts**

Our League recently sponsored an educational seminar and community discussion focusing on the potential for Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in St. Petersburg. Dayna Lazarus, a technical expert with the Florida Housing Coalition, provided a comprehensive overview of CLT benefits and how they are being successfully implemented around Florida and across the nation.



Dayna Lazarus of the Florida Housing Coalition and LWVSPA's Robin Davidov with Jameka Anna Williams of LWVSPA and Faith in Florida.



Land designated as a CLT remains in community ownership while being leased to private and nonprofit developers that can then build single-family homes, multifamily housing, and commercial spaces.

The City of St. Petersburg owns approximately 80 acres at the Historic Gas Plant site, offering an extraordinary opportunity for the creation of one or more CLTs that would foster affordability, community control, and shared economic benefit. Thanks to our co-sponsor, Faith in Florida, and to the USFSP business school for hosting the event. Click [here](#) to learn more about CLTs. [Email](#) us stay informed about the LWVSPA Community Centered Development Action Team's work on this issue.

## Reproductive Rights Team and Parent Advocacy League Present at MoM Conference



**The Parent Advocacy League:  
Civic Infrastructure Built Around Care**

- Built within the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg area—grounded in an existing institution
- Meets at playgrounds, parks, and family-friendly spaces
- Kids are expected, not just tolerated—arrive late, leave early, nurse, be distracted
- Every meeting includes a real action: a call, a letter, a sign-up

[www.lwvstpet.com](http://www.lwvstpet.com)

**LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE ST. PETERSBURG AREA**

**Meet the LWVSP:**

- Nonpartisan organization working to improve voters' lives by educating, organizing, and advocating for government
- Member-led and volunteer-driven
- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization

**Reproductive Rights Action Team:**

- Committed to connecting and supporting reproductive freedom in the community
- Member-led, volunteer-driven, and nonpartisan
- Focuses on issues that affect reproductive freedom, and works to make reproductive freedom a reality
- Member-led and volunteer-driven
- Focuses on issues that affect reproductive freedom, and works to make reproductive freedom a reality

**Parent Organization:**

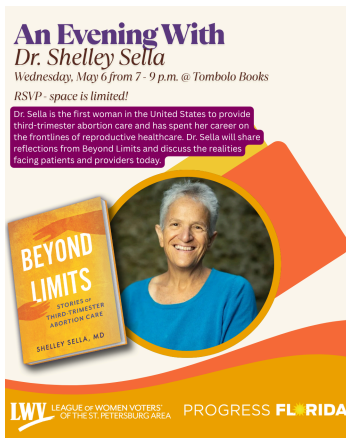
- Keep the Member Card
- Attend and Share the News
- Participate in Reproductive Freedom
- Provide Parental Engagement for Members
- Parental Engagement of Parents
- Support the Cause
- Share the News

LWVSPA Reproductive Rights Co-Chairs Lindsay Polega and Stephanie Sembler, and Nicole Jones, our Parent Advocacy League team lead were featured presenters at Museum of Motherhood's Annual International Academic and Arts Conference on March 27. The conference, Reproductive Identities and Resistance: Mothers and Others in Culture, Community and Collaboration, celebrates the work of maternal scholars, artists, and world changers.

Lindsay's and Stephanie's panel, titled "If, When, and How We Participate: Reproductive Freedom and Democratic Life," examined how reproductive decision-making is fundamentally tied to democratic participation, civic power, and collective care, showing how policies, laws, and judicial decisions around reproductive access and care shape real lives.

Nicole's presentation was called Parent Power: Reclaiming Civic Engagement in the Caregiving Years.

## An Evening with Dr. Shelley Sella



Join us at Tomolo books with Dr. Sella, physician and author of Beyond Limits.

Dr. Sella is the first woman in the United States to provide third-trimester abortion care and has spent her career on the frontlines of reproductive healthcare. Dr. Sella will share reflections from Beyond Limits and discuss the realities facing patients and providers today.

Tickets are free, but registration is required. Due to limited capacity, please only register if you are certain you will attend. Space is very limited, and we expect this event to fill quickly.

For security and capacity reasons, only registered attendees will be admitted, and anyone not on the list will be turned away at the door.

**[RSVP here! Space is limited.](#)**

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## LWVSPA Joins Call for New Early Voting Site in South St. Pete

All Voting is Local, Black Voters Matter, LWVSPA, and a broad coalition of elected officials and civic engagement organizations recently sent a letter to Pinellas Supervisor of Elections Julie Marcus to urge her to open an early voting site in South St. Petersburg.

"We are proud to join this coalition of local, state, and national leaders and organizations to advocate for an additional early voting site in South St. Petersburg," said LWVSPA President Jackie Azis. "Adding an additional early voting site will expand voter access to the ballot and help address racial disparities in voter turnout in Pinellas County."

**[Read the Letter Here](#)**





Embracing Our Differences is a Southwest Florida nonprofit celebrating individuality and shared humanity through art and education.

The organization's annual juried exhibition features thought-provoking artwork from around the world, sparking conversations about understanding and acceptance to promote inclusion, kindness, and respect.

The exhibition, on display in St. Petersburg's Poynter Park as well as Sarasota's Bayfront Park, consists of 50 billboard-sized works of art, each accompanied by a thought-provoking quotation.

This is the third year that LWVSPA's social justice team has had a private tour of the Embracing Our Differences exhibition. The exhibition will be on display in St. Petersburg until April 12. It's free and open to the public. [More info here](#)

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## Voter Services Presents at Stetson Law School

On March 24, Voter Services tabled at the school's Career Fair and engaged with many young people seeking to get registered to vote in Pinellas County, update their voter registration, or learn how to request a mail ballot.



The next day, Voter Services Co-Chair Heidi Davis presented to a group of approximately 20 students on two topics: identifying misinformation and disinformation and the history of voting legislation in the US and Florida. The students were very engaged and collected information from our table after the presentations.

[Email](#) us to find out about upcoming trainings and how you can join the Voter Services team!

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## Update on Florida's Election Integrity Act

Republican lawmakers in the Florida House and Senate passed legislation in March that would require verification of U.S. citizenship for people registering to vote in the state.

[HB 991](#), Florida's version of the SAVE America act, makes several changes to Florida's election laws, including new requirements for voter registration and identification.



Since the EIA is not effective until Jan 27, it will not affect upcoming August and November 2026 elections. This is a major victory for Florida voters, and everyone who called and emailed about this legislation helped make that happen. Stay tuned for details on how to protect your right to vote in 2027.

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### **Members - Get Your Favorite Local Vendors Involved Our Raffle and Silent Auction!**

Have a favorite restaurant, salon/spa, boutique, museum, or entertainment venue? Please consider chatting them up for a donation to the raffle we'll hold during our annual meeting.

[Here's a PDF statement](#) about the League that will answer the most common questions about the League and our raffle. This is a great conversation opener when you request the donation of a raffle item.

Be sure to request a logo or photo from the vendor. [Use this form](#) to send the prize info and attach a logo.

The absolute **deadline** to provide items and information is **Friday, April 10**, but sooner is better! Items can be dropped off at the LWVSPA office.

If you are considering asking for a **Silent Auction** type of donation, contact Shelley Manes or Gina Burchenal at [raffle@lwvspa.org](mailto:raffle@lwvspa.org) for important guidance BEFORE you make the request.

**Thank you!**



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### **Registration for LWVUS 2026 National Convention is now open!**

Save the Date: The 57th Biennial League of Women Voters National Convention will take place in June 25-28, 2026!

Join us in Columbus, Ohio, or virtually, for this powerful multi-day event where League members from across the country come together to network, learn, and chart the course for the next biennium.

National Convention is a League experience unlike any other, as delegates representing state and local Leagues attend dynamic presentations, practical trainings, and receive inspiring content that supports our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy. Attendees will also vote on the LWVUS Board of Directors, Nominating Committee, bylaws amendments, budget, and League priorities.

In-person attendees will have full access to plenary sessions, trainings, and networking opportunities. Virtual attendees can fully participate in live-streamed plenary sessions from anywhere.

[Register here](#)

[Let LWVSPA know you're going](#)



**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup>  
OF THE ST. PETERSBURG AREA

**TAKE ACTION TODAY!  
AND GET YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
TO TAKE ACTION TODAY TOO!**

*Looking for ways to take action?  
Calls are the best way to make your voice heard and  
tell your representatives how you feel about issues.*

*There are tools available to make  
calling your representatives as  
easy as possible!*

A stylized illustration of a megaphone in shades of blue and white, pointing towards the right.

Several LWVSPA members find the **5 Calls app** helpful for contacting their senators and representatives in Congress on issues like reproductive rights, voting rights, and education. Download it here: [Android](#) / [iOS](#)

Our partner organization, Common Cause, offers an easy [tool](#) to find the phone numbers for your representatives at every level of government.

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. has a ["Take Action"](#) page where you can learn about priority League actions at the national level.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Zoom Events in Black In-Person Events in Red

### **Social Justice Action Team Meeting**

**April 2 @ 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

We believe in secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. We promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans. [RSVP for Zoom](#)

### **Reproductive Rights Action Team Meeting**

**Community Voices: April 6 @ 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm**

Join the LWVSPA Reproductive Rights Action Team via Zoom to hear from Chelsea Quaglia. She will speak about her work in public health, striving to expand access to care for uninsured and underinsured patients across the lifespan. She will also speak about how her personal experience as a carrier of the breast cancer (BRCA) gene mutation further informs her advocacy for preventive care, patient education, and evidence based decision making. [Register for Zoom](#)

### **National Popular Vote Committee**

**April 7 @ 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

Join us as we talk strategy. First timers are welcome and all levels of experience are encouraged to join. [RSVP for Zoom](#)

### **Voter Services Committee**

**April 15 @ 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

Join with the Voter Services Leadership Team to hear about our Voter Guide, Candidate Forums, Voter Registration, & Election and Voter Protection. [Join via Zoom](#)

### **More Than Orange Blossoms: Feisty, Fabulous Females of Florida**

**April 17 @ 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm**

Hosted by the Gulfport Historical Society. Though not always in the history books, the women who helped build, form, shape, and develop the state have inspired hope and possibility. This presentation highlights stories of strong, courageous women. [RSVP and details here](#)

### **2026 Annual Meeting & Luncheon**

**April 18 @ 11:00 am – 2:30 pm**

With keynote speaker Dianna Wynn, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States. You won't want to miss this! [Buy tickets here](#)

### **Communications Committee Meeting**

**April 21 @ 11:00 am – 12:00 pm**

The LWVSPA Communications Committee meets monthly via Zoom. [Email office@lwwspa.org](mailto:office@lwwspa.org) for the link if you'd like to get involved.

### **Candidate Forum Training**

**April 29 @ 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

Want to learn more about our upcoming candidate forums and how to get involved? Voter Services is hosting a training and informational session. We will go over the volunteer roles available and what each requires, as well as updates on our plans ahead of the August primaries and November midterms. We can't wait to build on our successful February municipal forums, and welcome members to join us in making democracy work! [RSVP for Zoom](#)

### **2026 FL Legislative Session Outcomes: Laws That Passed Impacting State and Local Citizens**

**April 29 @ 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**Enoch Davis Center, 1111 18th Ave S.**

Join the NAACP and LWVSPA to learn about the outcomes of the 2026 Florida Legislative Session. Featured speaker Amy Keith, Executive Director of Common Cause Florida, will break down key legislation from the session—including bills that passed, those that stalled, and what it all means for Florida residents. [Read more](#)

[about key issues from the 2026 Florida legislative session. \*\*RSVP on Facebook\*\*](#)

**Vigils for Immigrant Justice**  
Every Sunday @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Pinellas County Justice Center  
14250 49th St. N.  
Clearwater, FL 33762

Join LWVSPA, the Pinellas/Hillsborough Interfaith Coalition, and community allies as we stand in solidarity with immigrant families and demand an end to the detention and deportation of our nonviolent, law-abiding immigrant community neighbors, siblings, and friends.



[Join our Social Justice team](#) for updates on this and other urgent issues. Your involvement can help make a difference!

Discover more events at [www.lwvspa.org/events](http://www.lwvspa.org/events).



**Thanks to the following generous supporters who made gifts to LWVSPA in March:**

Wendy Durand  
Terry and Elizabeth Lowe  
Linda Maney  
Linda McGeehan  
Kristen Robinson  
David Stokes  
Elizabeth Vanneste

Donate to LWVSPA

## LEAGUE ONLINE

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## Have news to share?

Send your news and updates one week in advance of the 1st of the month directly to [communications@lwwspa.org](mailto:communications@lwwspa.org).



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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