

THE VOTER

December 2025

Celebrating Community

By Jackie Azis, LWVSPA President



Dear Leaguers and LWVSPA Friends,

And just like that, the holidays are upon us.

Even as we at LWVSPA take time to celebrate the season with loved ones, we also celebrate community through our tireless work on social justice, voting rights, and more.

To protect our community's voting rights, we are meeting with several of our representatives in St. Petersburg and in Tallahassee to discuss the mid-decade redistricting initiative that is beginning to move ahead in the state legislature, despite being in violation of Florida's own state constitution.

Several Tampa Bay League members and community allies will be making a special one-day trip up to Tallahassee on Thursday, December 4 to listen to committee discussion and stand in solidarity in opposition. As Jessica Lowe-Minor, president of the state League, has said, we intend to make them see the light rather than feel the heat.



In partnership with the Pinellas/Hillsborough Interfaith Coalition, we have stood up for immigrant rights and advocated for an end to disruptive, traumatic detentions and deportations of our nonviolent, law-abiding immigrant community neighbors, friends, and family members. At peaceful weekly vigils attended by spiritual leaders representing local faith groups from several denominations and concerned community allies, we stand in solidarity with immigrants, their families, and allies.

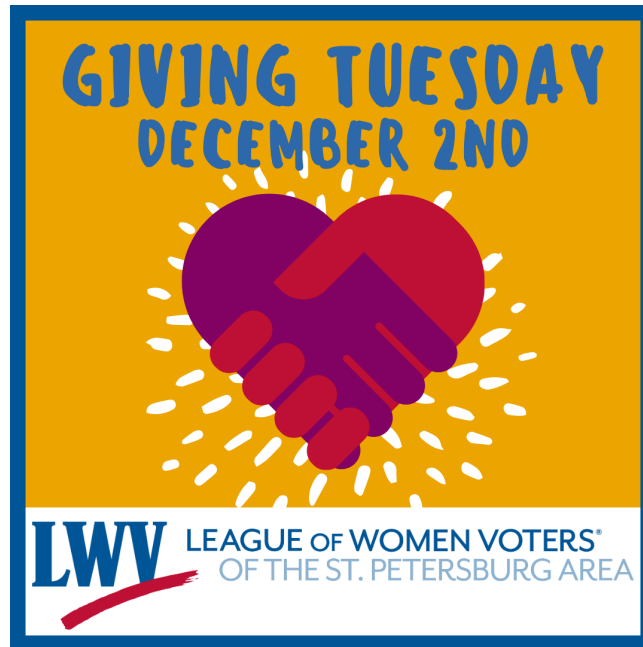
Our League's Social Justice Action Team has also been closely involved in the Historic Gas Plant Redevelopment project for the past three years. This 80-acre property is owned by us, the residents of St. Petersburg, and we strongly believe that decisions around its future configuration and the role of public expenditures in funding it must be made by city residents and business leaders.



We are vigilantly monitoring the situation and meeting with several council members to glean and inform their perspective on the issue. We plan to vigorously communicate our goals for this vitally important project.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support of our local League. I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events, and hope that the remainder of the holiday season brings you peace, rest, and joy.

In League,
Jackie



This Giving Tuesday, Defend Democracy!

Your support enables the League to carry forward the essential work of empowering voters and protecting our democracy.

Your generosity fuels voter registration outreach, educational programs, advocacy initiatives, and so much more. Every contribution — no matter the size — strengthens our ability to inform, engage, and uplift our community.

Every dollar you give to LWVSPA stays right here in the St. Petersburg community.

With a major election year ahead, your support is more crucial than ever.
Help us defend democracy at every step.

[Donate Here](#)



Across the country, at the behest of the current presidential administration, state legislatures are being pressured to make mid-decade changes to their voting maps. These initiatives violate the standard procedure of revising maps to reflect population changes identified by the U.S. Census, which occurs every decade in years ending in the number 0.

Reconfiguring voting districts for partisan purposes—in effect, letting politicians choose their voters instead of the other way around—is not only unethical and disruptive. **It is actually unconstitutional in Florida.**

Back in 2010, Floridians passed the Fair Districts Amendments with 63 percent of the vote. The Florida State Constitution now explicitly states:

“No apportionment plan or individual district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent; and districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice.”

Unfortunately, the Florida Legislature is now ramping up efforts to do that very thing.



LWVSPA, coordinating closely with the Florida League and sister Tampa Bay Leagues, is seeking to halt this process through educating and encouraging voters to contact their representatives, submitting newspaper opinion pieces, and meeting with state legislators who represent our region.

In November, several LWVSPA members met with Representative Michele Rayner, who represents District 62. Later in the month, that conversation was followed by one with Senator Darryl Rouson (above), who represents District 16.

On December 4, we are participating in a statewide bus trip to the State Capitol to show opposition at the first meeting of the Florida House of Representatives’ Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting. **Signup deadline is TODAY, December 1, and you don’t have to be a League member to join us!**

[Read more](#)

Sign Up for the Tallahassee Bus TODAY!

LLP1 Program Informs, Inspires Emerging Leaders

The first cohort of the LWVSPA League Leadership Program (LLP1) convened at the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections (SOE) in November for a tour and lively discussion with SOE staff. Then they supped on a chili feast at Jean Johnston's home with Voter Services Co-chair Heidi Davis to learn about that team's emerging needs in the coming election year.

The goal of the LLP is to build a strong bench of potential future leaders, broaden participants' understanding of and commitment to the League's mission, LWVSPA's relationship with our national and state organizations, and LWVSPA's unique position and responsibilities within our community. It also aims to strengthen relationships among participants.

Earlier in the year, LLP1 participants enjoyed sessions dedicated to topics such as the League's history, governance, advocacy positions, non-partisan stance, board duties, financials, and communications. Guest speakers have led presentations on the ERA and on courageous leadership.

The second cohort of LLP will form June 2026, with applications opening in March. Please contact LLP1 leaders [Jean Johnston](#) or Amy Weintraub for more information.



VIGIL *por la JUSTICIA para los* INMIGRANTES VIGIL *for* IMMIGRANT JUSTICE




every SUNDAY

TODOS *los* DOMINGOS
14250 49TH ST N, CLEARWATER

Inhumane attacks on our immigrant communities continue every day – but so does our resistance.

Every Sunday from 4 to 5 p.m., LWVSPA is partnering with the Hillsborough/Pinellas Interfaith Coalition at the Vigil for Immigrant Justice to expose the cruelty of mass detention and deportation. Please join us to raise the visibility of this vital issue and let those in power know that the community stands with its most vulnerable members.

 **Every Sunday**

 **4 pm - 5 pm**

 **Pinellas County Justice Center
4250 49th Street N (corner of 144 Ave N)
Clearwater, FL 33762**

REGISTER



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF THE ST. PETERSBURG AREA

[Register for Next Vigil](#)

Tapping Into Fun and Camaraderie November Cocktails and Conversation



LWVSPA's Cocktails and Conversation event was held on November 20 at The Study Wine & Bourbon Tasting Lounge in St. Petersburg. Members (including C&C organizer Shelley Manes, far left), and not-yet-members enjoyed the cheerful, intimate ambience and lively chats about League activities and life as we know it.



In addition to the engaging and stimulating conversation on hand at every C&C gathering, guests generously supported the Feeding Tampa Bay food drive, with a local pickup of donations organized by LWVSPA member Cassandra S.



New Member Orientation

Tuesday, December 2, 6 - 7 p.m.
Allendale UMC

LWVSPA is eager to welcome you to one of the most active advocacy and policy education groups in Pinellas County.



And we're eager to get to know you, introduce you to our many activities, and find out what you're most passionate about. So please do join us at our orientation event, whether you're a new member or just thinking about joining and want to learn a bit more! [RSVP here!](#)

Stepping Out, Leaning In LWVSPA Members Enjoy a Theatrical Road Trip to Remember with Cadillac Crew

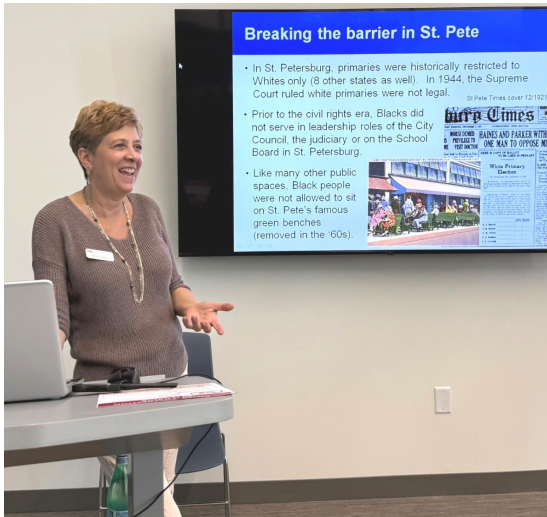
Eight lucky League members gathered recently for an inspiring afternoon at Studio@620 to experience *Cadillac Crew*, the acclaimed play by Tori Sampson. Set on the day Rosa Parks is set to give a pivotal speech during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, the play follows four women working in a Virginia civil rights office as they question whether the promise of equality truly extends to women, particularly Black women.



With poignance, sharp insight, and moments of unexpected humor, *Cadillac Crew* shines a light on the unsung women who powered the movement for desegregation and gender equity.

Bridging past and present, the eventful drama was brought to life by four superb Tampa Bay actors, Ivy Sunflower, Marjorie Joseph, Jai Shanae, and Andresia Moseley. Their chemistry, emotional range, and command of the theater-in-the-round stage drew the audience fully into the world of the play, honoring the strength and complexity of the women at its center.

For League members, *Cadillac Crew* offered a meaningful reflection on the interconnected struggles for voting rights, civil rights, and women's equality. Sparking thoughtful conversations and renewed appreciation for women whose stories have too often been left out of the narrative, the play is a powerful reminder that this work is not only rooted in the past, but very much alive in the present.



Voting Then and Now

On November 29, LWVSPA Voter Services Co-Chair Heidi Davis of presented a talk on the history and evolution of voting at the President Barack Obama Main Library in St. Petersburg.

She began by explaining that, despite the egalitarian language of the Declaration of Independence, the United States initially denied voting rights to numerous populations for a variety of reasons. As a result, fewer than 20 percent of the entire American population voted in the early years of the young country.

Tracing the fight for voting rights for Blacks, women, and Native Americans on a national scale across the centuries, Davis then focused on St. Petersburg—which, like many other cities, discriminated against Black citizens for decades until civil rights leaders succeeded in their tireless fight for greater equity. Dramatizing the importance of voter turnout amid fluctuating participation in the democratic process, she highlighted several elections that were decided by a relative handful of votes. She also described LWVSPA's varied voter services, discussed current threats to voter access, and urged attendees to encourage neighbors of every age group and ethnicity to take advantage of their precious right to vote.

Informed voters are engaged voters! Interested in having the League speak to your organization on voting rights or other voting-related topics? Reach out to us at voting@lwwspa.org.

There's No Time Like the Present to Get Ready to Vote!

Now that we're in the heart of the holiday season, we're also on the cusp of 2026, with municipal elections on March 10, followed by state and federal primary elections in August and general elections in November.

Are you ready to vote? You may need to take one or more of the following steps to make sure. Click [here](#) for more information on how to get election ready!

- Re-request your Vote By Mail ballot (to be active for all 2026 elections)
- Register for the first time
- Update your Voter Information, such as your address
- Check your voting status



MLK DAY PARADE



MARCH WITH US!

**Join the League on January 19
as we help our community celebrate
the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
during the MLK Dream Big Parade!**

The parade route is approximately 1.5 miles and travels through the heart of Downtown St. Petersburg on 1st Avenue South. Step off will be at 11 AM sharp.

More information will be provided as we get closer to the parade. Stay tuned!



Education Committee Updates

Schools of Hope

Check out the October 28 School Board [meeting](#) and fast forward to minute 59:00.

Chair Laura Hine does an excellent job explaining the Schools of Hope history and current co-location challenge. She also acknowledges the work and support of organizations like the LWV, which strongly support public schools. She encourages community members to contact their legislators.

Coming Up...

The next **Education Committee Meeting** will be at 4 p.m. on December 15 via Zoom; open to LWV members only. For an invitation or agenda, contact lwwnpc.info@gmail.com.



Pinellas County School Board Meeting
301 4th St. SW, Largo, FL
December 16, 10:00 am

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!

- 1) Several LWVSPA and community 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 to give it a try: [Android](#) / [iOS](#)
- 2) Our partner organization, Common Cause, has an easy tool to find the phone numbers for your representatives at every level of government: <https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/>
- 3) 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, like opposing the SAVE Act: <https://www.lwv.org/take-action>

**Thanks to the following generous donors
for their support of the League of
Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area
in October and November!**

Linda Bergen-Losee
Elizabeth Braden
Stephanie Cain
Loren Corrieri
Suzanne Courtney
Lyn Dalzell
Sara Flaherty
Valerie Garfola

Helen Huntley
Kristin Lindow
Terry & Elizabeth Lowe
Rachel Peterman
Marilyn Pocius
Ann Rascoe
Gina Rothlein
Jessica Shimberg
Sydni Ann Shollenberger
Linda and Emily Tanner

Smart Money Tip for December

Revisit your asset allocation. When you rebalance your investments (ideally, at least annually), you'll want to reassess your risk tolerance so you can feel comfortable and confident with your investing.

Reach out for a comprehensive financial review.

Ava Elkins, AAMS®, Financial Advisor and Investment Management Consultant
Raymond James & Associates
ava.elkins@raymondjames.com 727.551.5254 office,
raymondjames.com/avaelkins



Borrow, Don't Ban: Our Little Free Library

The League supports the freedom to read! We have a Little Free Library at the entrance to Allendale UMC, and we've stocked it with banned and challenged books. If you'd like to donate books, we have a **wish list at the wonderful local book store, Tombolo Books.**

Questions? Please email office@lwvspa.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

National Popular Vote Committee: December 2 @ 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Do you believe every vote should count? We do too! First-timers and interested allies are encouraged to join as we talk about the strategy, status, and next steps. **RSVP** for Zoom discussion.

New Member Orientation: December 2 @ 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm
This event is designed to orient folks who are curious about the League, as well as those who've been members for less than a year. As one of the most active advocacy and policy education groups in Pinellas County, our League's current issues include voter engagement, education, and protection; reproductive rights; public schools/education; the National Popular Vote; redevelopment of the Historic

Gas Plant District; immigrant rights; expansion of Early Voting sites; and opposing mid-decade redistricting. RSVP [here](#).

LWVFL Bus Trip to Tallahassee for FL House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting: December 4.

All who care about this issue, not just League members, please join us if you can! Up and back in one day. [Register](#) by December 1!

Vigils for Immigrant Justice: December 7, 14, and 21 @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm
The Pinellas/Hillsborough Interfaith Coalition, LWVSPA, and our allies host a peaceful Freedom Vigil to 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. Every Sunday at the Pinellas County Courthouse. RSVP for vigils [here](#).

In the wake of robust advocacy training activities this past autumn, LWVSPA efforts focusing on an array of key mission-driven objectives are ongoing. These include our work to:

- **Stop** unconstitutional mid-decade redistricting
- **Promote** fair and equitable development of the Historic Gas Plant District
- **Urge** Pinellas Law Enforcement to stop colluding With ICE
- **Support** reproductive rights by halting funding to deceptive anti-abortion pregnancy centers
- **Add** an early voting site in South St. Petersburg
- **Convince** our state legislators to support the National Popular Vote Compact.

For more information on all of these initiatives and how you can get involved, click [here](#).

Discover more events at www.lwvspa.org/events.



LEAGUE ONLINE

- [Calendar of Events & Meetings](#)
- [Explore Issues](#)
- [Check Out our Blog Archives](#)
- [Engage!](#)
- [LWVSPA Store- Get Your LWVSPA Gear!](#)

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Please send your news and updates one week in advance of the 1st of the month directly to communications@lwvspa.org



League of Women League of 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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