



## THE VOTER

February 2018

### *The Voting Rights Restoration Amendment Will Be on the Ballot!*

After months of hard work, the amendment to restore non-violent felons' right to vote is on the ballot! The League was one of several organizations that collected ballots from more than 1.1 million Floridians, ensuring **the amendment will appear on the November 2018 ballot as Amendment 4.**

Thanks to everyone who took part in this effort, whether that was by attending meetings, educating your friends and neighbors or collecting signed ballots from your community. You've truly shown what it means to make democracy work!

We still have more work to do, as we need to continue educating our community about this critically important issue. Head over to the [LWVSPA website](#) to learn more about this amendment and how you can get involved with the push to restore voting rights to people who have been convicted of non-violent felonies.



### *Want to Go Solar... But Not Really Sure How?*

If you've ever wanted to take advantage of solar power but aren't really sure how, you're in luck - the LWVSPA has teamed up with the City of St. Petersburg, [Solar United Neighbors of Florida](#) and the [Suncoast Sierra Club](#) to launch solar co-operatives in St. Petersburg.

Solar co-ops make it easy and affordable for Floridians to take advantage of our most abundant energy source - the sun!



We're helping put on three info sessions to help you learn more about the benefits of going solar and to demystify the process of [getting involved with a solar co-op.](#)

The first info session will take place Feb. 7 at 6 p.m. at the Sunshine Senior Center, located at 330 5th St. N., St. Petersburg. [Please RSVP if you plan to attend!](#)

We need volunteers to help us spread the word by speaking at neighborhood associations and tabling at the info sessions. If you're interested in helping out, send an email to [Lisa Vanover](#), Sustainability Action Group Co-Chair.



# *Gun Violence: What Can We Do?*

Gun violence affects people in every part of our city and our country, and it remains a persistent public safety issue. The LWVSPA Gun Safety Action Team believes we must **"think globally and act locally."**



We invite you to hear St. Petersburg City Council Chair Lisa Wheeler-Bowman, Rev. Manuel Sykes, licensed psychologist Amanda Thalji-Raitano, Dr. David Berman, and facilitator Ryan Mitchell as they share their personal stories and professional insights on the subject of gun violence.

Afterwards, join us as we explore how we as a community can be effective advocates for preventing gun violence. This event is purposefully scheduled during the 2018 Florida legislative session and will be outcome- and action-oriented.

**"Preventing Gun Violence: A Community Conversation" will take place Feb. 13 at 7-8:30 p.m. at Allendale United Methodist Church, located at 3803 Haines Rd. N, St. Petersburg.**

Our community partners include the Unitarian Universalist Church of St. Petersburg, Allendale United Methodist Church, American Civil Liberties Union of Pinellas, Bethel Community Baptist Church, City of St. Petersburg, Leif Nissen Foundation, Lakewood United Church of Christ, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America/St. Pete, Pinellas County Urban League, St. Petersburg Quakers and Zonta Club of Pinellas County.

Learn more about this issue by reading our [Gun Safety Action Guide](#) and watching our recent [community conversation](#) with St. Petersburg Police Chief Anthony Holloway.



## *Heads Up: The Annual Program Planning Meeting Is This Month*

The annual LWVSPA Program Planning meeting is coming up and we need you to participate! During this meeting, we'll discuss all proposed initiatives for the 2018-2019 year, gauge support for those initiatives, and form action groups.

**Your involvement is critical, because it helps the LWVSPA select the initiatives that will be most meaningful for our members.**

The initiatives developed during this meeting will be presented for final approval at the annual general meeting on April 21.

**The meeting will be held Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. at the Quaker Religious Society Meeting House, located at 130 19th Ave. SE., St. Petersburg.**



## *How Are You Making Democracy Work? We Want to Know!*



Democracy is not a spectator sport - it takes all of us coming together to make it work. We want you to tell us: **How are you making democracy work?**

Have you helped register voters? Are you talking to your neighbors about issues that matter to your community? Have you spoken to your legislators about the issues you care most about? [Tell us how you're making democracy work!](#)

Please note that we may share your story in future LWVSPA newsletters and social media posts.



## *LWVSPA Member's Letter to the Editor Published in the Tampa Bay Times*

LWVSPA member Stacey Kroto wrote a letter to the editor in response to a Jan. 12 article published in the *Tampa Bay Times* ("[Florida House approves bill to help anti-abortion centers](#)"). [Her letter](#) was published on Jan. 16. Nice work, Stacey!

### **House approves bill to help antiabortion centers** | Jan. 12

#### **Bill violates basic tenets**

I was disturbed by this article on the Florida House's vote on HB 41, which would provide legitimacy and state funding using taxpayer dollars to what are called crisis pregnancy centers, or CPCs. Equally disturbing is that this measure is swiftly moving through the Legislature, with the Senate's corresponding bill, SB 444, to be heard in the Appropriations Committee on Thursday.

The problem is, CPCs do not provide pregnant women seeking help with medically accurate information, nor do they provide women with all of their options in order to allow them to make their own family planning decisions. CPCs practice religious-based counseling with the sole mission of steering women away from opting for abortion.

Given that the majority of CPCs in Florida are religious-based organizations rooted in Christianity, as a Jewish woman I am appalled at the unconstitutionality of the House and Senate bills on their face; these bills clearly violate the basic tenet of the separation of church and state.

While the basis for these bills is to reduce the number of abortions in the state, the best way to do that is to prevent unintended pregnancies by promoting medically accurate information regarding contraception and sexual health. I urge Floridians who believe in the separation of church and state, and those who believe pregnant women deserve to receive evidence-based information, to contact their state representatives and senators to voice their concerns.

**Stacey Kroto, Pinellas Park**

Letters to the editor are a great way to publicly advocate for the issues you care about. We've put together a [tip sheet](#) to help you write letters to the editor that are effective and meaningful -- and we've also included some strategies that will increase your chances of getting published.



## *LWVSPA & LWVF in the Media*

- [Dozens gather in downtown St. Pete to mark Roe v. Wade anniversary](#) (Creative Loafing)
- [St. Petersburg residents can take part in solar power program](#) (Fox 13)
- [Solar cooperatives launched in St. Petersburg to broaden support for solar power](#) (WUSF)
- [Proposed bill would allow concealed carry permits before completed background check](#) (WTSP)
- [Florida may issue gun licenses with incomplete background checks](#) (Tampa Bay Times)
- [Survey finds most Floridians support end of Electoral College to elect President](#) (Florida Today)
- [Florida gun violence prevention group releases PSA featuring Pulse community](#) (Orlando Weekly)



## *Support All Undocumented Immigrants*

This has been a busy month for our Action Group. On Jan. 24, we hosted an educational event where three DREAMers covered by DACA protections shared their stories. What a trio of talented and brave young people! After hearing their stories, attendees wrote postcards to their congressional representative and both U.S. senators from Florida.

This week we sent an Action Alert encouraging all of you to also contact your federal legislators and ask that they vote YES on a DREAM Act that will provide a path to citizenship. If you missed our notice, follow the instructions under "Take Action" on the **Immigration Action Guide**.

[Read more...](#)



## *Upcoming Events*

### **Feb. 5: International Relations Study Group: Latin America**

2 p.m. @ Barbara S. Ponce Public Library, 7770 52nd St. N., Pinellas Park

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

### **Feb. 7: St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op Info Session #1**

6-8 p.m. @ The Sunshine Center, 330 5th St. N., St. Petersburg

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

### **Feb. 8: Candidate Forum: South Pasadena Commission**

7-8 p.m. @ 7047 Sunset Dr. S., South Pasadena

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

### **Feb. 12: Candidate Forum: Redington Beach Commission**

7-8 p.m. @ Redington Beach Town Hall, 105 164th Ave., Redington Beach

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

### **Feb. 13: Preventing Gun Violence: A Community Conversation**

7-8:30 p.m. @ Allendale United Methodist Church, 3803 Haines Rd., St. Petersburg

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

**Feb. 17: Film Screening: "Tomorrow"**

**Feb. 21: Program Planning Meeting**

6-8 p.m. @ Quaker Religious Society, 130 19th Ave. SE., St. Petersburg

**Feb. 27: Film Screening: "Backpack Full of Cash"**

6:30-8:30 p.m. @ Allendale United Methodist Church, 3803 Haines Rd., St. Petersburg



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.*

The following memberships are up for renewal during this 3-month span. We invite you to [renew today!](#)

**FEBRUARY**

Tami Elizabeth Acosta-Urban  
Jan Allyn  
Jennifer Andreani  
Lise Beane  
June Bedford  
Mary Berglund  
Peter Betzer  
Susan Betzer  
Karen Burns  
Susan Burr  
Denise Chezek  
Dave Coale  
Karen Coale  
Caitlin Constantine  
Vicki Cooper-Naughton  
Kathleen Cote  
Tracy Crabtree  
Marilee Cunningham  
Martha Curran  
Ruth Dady  
Linda Darin  
Theresa Darlington  
Jemea Douglas  
Kristie Dowling  
Kimberly Drake  
Kathleen Duffy  
Linda Edington  
Jennifer Findley-Fox  
Carol Fisher  
Karen Flannery

Caroline Lanford  
Dwight Lawton  
JoAnne Lehrfeld  
Karen Lieberman  
Barbara Linder  
Diane Lohr  
Marilyn Maginley  
Mary Mahoney  
Karen Marder  
Mary Ann Marger  
Diane McKinstry  
June Mohns  
Beth Murphy  
Janet Murphy  
Patricia Nardozzi  
Nina Nicholson  
Dorece Norris  
Leah Ogren  
Floy Lynn Olsen  
Stephanie Owens  
Lisa Pagnotta  
Mary Jane Park  
Marcia Piacentino  
Alyssa Premru  
Lydia Rector  
Elizabeth (Betsy) Reynolds  
Kathleen Robinson  
Sharon Rose  
Lucille Ruga  
Lucille Ruga  
Mary Sanders

Brigitte Foster  
Elizabeth Fountain  
Cynthia Fox  
James Fox  
Judy Gallizzi  
Raechel Garafalo  
Diane Gardner-Rhoden  
Rachel Gelbmann  
MaryAnn Goodrich  
Linsey Grove  
Kathy Gustafson-Hilton  
Catherine Hamel  
Cathy Hansen  
Holly Hartman  
Melissa Hopkins  
Deborah Howard  
Connie Hubbard  
Helen Igar  
Consuelo Ingledue  
Sally Israel  
William Israel  
Dianne Johnson  
Gail Johnson  
Theresa Jones  
Debra Justus  
Karen Knop  
Sara Knotts  
Stacey Kroto  
Sarah Kruse  
Kathy Kulaas  
Barbara Lagasi  
Kay Lahdenpera

Julia Saunders  
Katharine Saunders  
Sherry Sexton  
Melanie Sheehan  
Margaret Siembieda  
Francia Smith  
Zayne Smith  
Carolyn Spears  
Nancy Stein  
Nancy Tait  
Bridget Taylor  
Donna Terrence  
Ahna Thaxton  
Theresa Timmick  
Susan Tuite  
Charles Vanover  
Lisa Vanover  
Susan Vincent  
Alexander Wagenaar  
Yvonne Walden  
Scott Willis  
Patricia Wood  
Susan Yormark  
Livia Zien

[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.

**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.**



## *2017-2018 League Leadership*

**OFFICERS**

President: Julie Kessel

First Vice President: Sharon Winters

Secretary: Lisa Vanover

**EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY LEADS**

Gun Safety: Sharon Winters

Immigration: Karen Coale, Lydia Castle

Health Care: Julie Kessel

Treasurer: Caroline Bloodworth

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Caitlin Constantine

Raechel Garafalo

Linsey Grove

Susan Mayer

Lindsay Murdock

Marty Shapiro

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.**