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THE VOTER

February 2026

This Election Year Gets Into Gear

By Jackie Azis, LWVSPA President



Dear Leaguers and LWVSPA Friends,

As you know, 2026 is a busy election year, and we have wasted no time getting into action.

A contingent of LWVSPA members were among the 72 League members who journeyed to Tallahassee from around the state for advocacy training and meetings with representatives during the League of Women Voters of Florida **Lobby Days** on January 20 and 21.

We have organized a record-setting five **candidate forums** for municipal elections around the St. Petersburg area.

We registered voters, inspired young minds, and spearheaded **awareness initiatives and letter-writing campaigns** on topics ranging from redistricting and Historic Gas Plant District development plans to bills currently under consideration in the Florida Legislature that would severely restrict women's reproductive rights.

And **we showed up in force** to champion reproductive rights, honor the legacy of Martin Luther King, and more.

Going forward, we offer opportunities aplenty for engagement and involvement in initiatives that are crucial to the well-being of our community, state, and nation. I invite you to stay tuned by visiting our [website](#), [signing up](#) for this newsletter if you are not yet a subscriber, supporting our work with a [donation](#), and [joining us](#) if you are not yet a member! Together, as the League of Women Voters' proud history and tireless efforts vividly demonstrate, we can defend democracy; protect the rights of voters, citizens, and immigrants; and effect real, beneficial societal change.

In League,
Jackie

In several St. Pete area municipalities...

Election Day is March 10, 2026!

Check out our Candidate Forums, below.

And this just in...

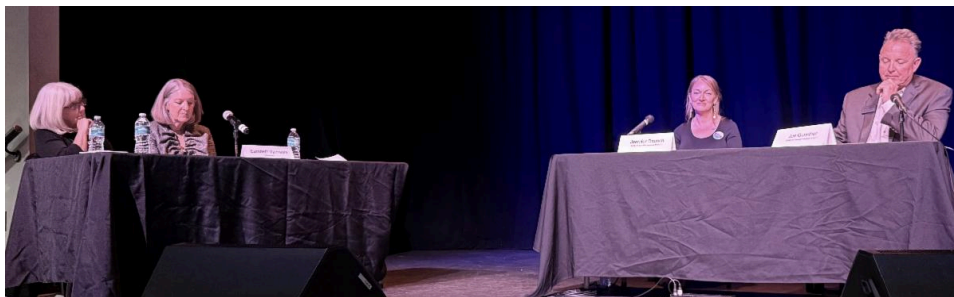
The League's [Vote411](#) website is now live! Check your registration status and get answers to your voting questions.



Voting FAQs



Municipal Elections Candidate Forums



LWVSPA's schedule of five municipal candidate forums kicked off with candidates for Gulfport City Council Wards 1 and 3 on the evening of January 29 at the Catherine Hickman Theater in Gulfport.

Attendees shared how pleased they were to meet the candidates and hear their views and responses to residents' concerns. "The organization's professionalism and impartiality were evident throughout the event, which served as a model for community-driven discussions," wrote one.

Free and open to the public, the forums provide voters an opportunity to hear from candidates about the issues that matter most to their communities ahead of the upcoming **March 10** municipal elections. All follow a nonpartisan, unbiased, and impartial format, in keeping with League principles. Voters are invited to submit questions in advance of the forums and during the events.

If you live in one of the following municipalities, and/or have friends and family who do, join LWVSPA at one of these upcoming forums. Remember to check your voter registration by February 9.

Indian Shores Council Member

Monday, February 2, 2026
Candidate meet and greet: 5:30 pm
Candidate forum: 6:00 - 7:00 pm
Indian Shores Town Hall
19305 Gulf Blvd., Indian Shores, FL 33785
[Submit Indian Shores Forum questions ahead of time here.](#)
[RSVP on Facebook](#)

Kenneth City Mayor

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 @ 6:00 pm
Kenneth City Community Hall
4600 58th St. N., Kenneth City, FL 33709
[Submit Kenneth City Forum questions ahead of time here.](#)
[RSVP on Facebook](#)



Madeira Beach Commissioner District 2

Thursday, February 5, 2026 @ 6:00 pm
Madeira Beach City Hall
300 Municipal Dr, Madeira Beach, FL 33708
[Submit Madeira Beach Forum questions ahead of time here.](#)
[RSVP on Facebook](#)

St. Pete Beach Mayor and City Commissioner for District 3

Monday, February 9, 2026
Commissioner candidate forum: 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Mayoral candidate forum: 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
St. Pete Beach City Hall
155 Corey Ave, St. Pete Beach, FL 33706
[Submit St. Pete Beach Forum questions ahead of time here.](#)
[RSVP on Facebook](#)

Couldn't make it to the Gulfport City Council Candidate Forum on 1/29?

 We've got you covered! 

Watch the videos here:

[Ward III](#)

[Ward I](#)

For more information, please visit lwgspa.org or email office@lwgspa.org.

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

HOT GIRLS



WALK

*So Repro Rights
Can Run*

**FEBRUARY 21 * 11 AM - 1 PM * ST. PETE
RSVP FOR ADDRESS**

Join the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area for a nonpartisan **reproductive rights business crawl!** We'll hit local shops and cafés to share educational materials and QR codes that make it easy for people to learn about current reproductive health legislation, contact their elected representatives, and **take action to protect reproductive freedom.**

WWW.LWVSPA.ORG

Feb 21

*Hot Girls Walk So Rights Can Run: Hot
Girls Repro Rights Walk - (All genders
welcome!)*

Various St. Pete locations!

Join the LWVSPA for a nonpartisan repro rights business crawl! We'll hit local shops and cafés to share educational materials and QR codes that make it easy for people to learn about current reproductive health legislation, contact their elected representatives, and take action to protect reproductive freedom.

We'll walk, talk, and connect — and yes, we'll also stop for coffee, beer, mocktails, or whatever fuels your civic engagement along the way. Protecting reproductive

rights is serious work, but that doesn't mean we can't have a little fun while we do it!

Register

Free

Voter Registration Training

LWVSPA member? Want to help register voters? It's a fun and rewarding way to engage with our community and help our community members discover how to use their voice as voters. Opportunities (such as the recent USF event LWVSPA members participated in, at right) are plentiful!

On February 24, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., LWVSPA's Amy Keith will lead LWVSPA members through voter registration training, LWVSPA practices, and key facts needed to pass the LWVFL Quiz so that you can be certified to table at events. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED – LWVSPA members only.** (Not a member yet? [Join](#) us!) [Register here.](#)



Rallying for Reproductive Freedom

To commemorate the 53rd anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, LWVSPA cohosted a major Reproductive Freedom Visibility Event on January 22.

Organized by Pinellas NOW (National Organization for Women) as one of several such events nationwide, the rally took place from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm at the corner of Central Avenue and 3rd Street in downtown St. Petersburg.



To learn more about LWVSPA's advocacy for reproductive rights, visit lwvspa.org/reprorights/.

Marching in Honor of MLK

LWVSPA members celebrated the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and distributed voting information at the MLK Day parade on January 19. Our Social Justice and Voting Services teams are hard at work on initiatives that align with that legacy. For more information and to learn how you can get involved, check out our upcoming events below and visit lwvspa.org.



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF FLORIDA

LEAGUE LOBBY DAYS

Every year, League members travel to the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee to observe lawmakers in action and meet with our representatives on key issues. LWVSPA members joined the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL) and more than 65 members of other Leagues around the state at this year's event, held January 20 and 21.

Extensive advocacy training preceding the legislator visits was led by LWVFL President Jessica Lowe-Minor; Dr. Jeff Starkey, LWVFL lobbyist; and Monica Elliott, LWVFL Voter Services chair, who walked attendees through legislation basics and highlighted current legislation on which LWVFL has taken positions. LWVSPA members met with Tampa Bay-area legislators including Representative Lindsay Cross and Senator Darryl Rouson and legislative aides for Representatives Linda Chaney and Susan Valdés.



A primary LWVFL focus this year is opposition to plans to redraw the state's voting districts, which violates the Fair District clauses of Florida's Constitution and goes against the will of voters. Governor DeSantis has called for a special session in April to consider this move, so Florida residents should keep up pressure on their representatives to vote against it.

LWVFL also strongly opposes HB (House Bill) 991/SB (Senate Bill) 1334. Ostensibly seeking to prevent ineligible residents from voting, the move would place undue bureaucratic burdens on citizens, infringing on their constitutional right to vote.



Lobby attendees also expressed opposition to SB 164, an "abuser's rights" bill that would allow anyone to sue a woman who has an abortion or loses a pregnancy, and anyone associated with the event.



League members provided legislators with reader-friendly "leave-behinds" summarizing several bills we DO support, including the latest effort (HB 57/SB 232) to allow Florida to join the National Popular Vote movement, and HB 73/SB 132, which would create a statewide public database so that people with past felony convictions can verify if their voting rights have been restored.

A gala celebration dinner at the Women's Club of Tallahassee on January 20 was highlighted by a keynote presentation by award-winning journalist Mary Ellen Klas, who spoke compellingly on the systematic undermining of representative democracy in Florida. "Show people what's at stake," she urged. "Practice democracy like pickleball or yoga. We have power, and if we don't use it, we will lose it."



Feb 07

Program Planning 2026

Every year, we solicit advocacy and educational issues from our members to set our "Program", or priorities, for the next League year (May - April). This process happens during Program Planning, where teams present their issue, its importance, and their plan. Members vote on programs to be presented at our Annual Meeting.

We will circulate the workbook and Action Team Proposals ahead of time for your review.

Light refreshments served.

We will provide childcare for those needing it - please fill out the form in the confirmation email.

Register

Free

History Enlightens the Future

On January 30, LWVSPA's Voter Services team had the honor of presenting the History of Voting in the United States at [SailFuture Academy](#) in St. Pete. Approximately a dozen high school seniors listened to the informative presentation by Heidi Davis and asked thoughtful questions. Afterwards, the students spoke with Heidi and Voter Services colleagues Laura Williamson and Victoria Rexer and received information on the importance of voting and using [vote411](#).





Creating a Road to Somewhere

Previous decisions on the Historic Gas Plant District and the building of the Interstate 175 corridor did not put the community first. St. Pete now has a once-in-a lifetime chance to reimagine and reinvigorate this vital part of our city!

Discover how this opportunity is closely linked with the redevelopment of the Historic Gas Plant District [here](#). Learn about LWVSPA's support of the creation of a CLT ([community land trust](#)) to guide development of the area.

ACTION ALERT

**Act Now to Protect
the Right to Vote**

**CALL OR EMAIL TODAY: . The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee meets
Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.**

**Two dangerous bills have been introduced in the Florida Legislature that
would block thousands of eligible U.S. citizens from voting in our elections.**

**We need to tell our representatives in the Florida Legislature to OPPOSE
the election bills HB 991 and SB 1334.**

These bills would:

- Require all Florida voters to re-verify their citizenship status in order to keep voting
- Run all voter records through error-prone government databases
- Make you submit specific documents to prove your citizenship if the database gets it wrong — even if you've been voting for years.

These bills will prevent thousands of eligible U.S. Citizens from registering to vote in Florida, and kick thousands of current voters off the rolls.

It is already illegal for non-citizens to vote in Florida, and the consequences of doing so are extremely harsh. That is NOT what these bills are really about. This is about making voting harder for Floridians so that our elected officials aren't held accountable for things like our affordability crisis.

**Knowing how busy we all are, we've made it easy to either email or call the
members of this committee! [Click here](#) for their contact information.**

To access and reference the approved LWVFL talking points, [click here](#).

We must start protecting the mid-term elections now!

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!*



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: <https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/>

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: <https://www.lwv.org/take-action>

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Indian Shores Council Member Candidate Forum

February 2 @ 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Indian Shores Town Hall, 19305 Gulf Blvd, Indian Shores. The candidate meet & greet is from 5:30 – 6:00 p.m., followed by the candidate forum from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Voters will be invited to submit questions both in advance of the forum and during the event. [Submit questions ahead of time here.](#)

**National Popular Vote Committee
February 3 @ 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](#)

**Kenneth City Mayoral Candidate Forum
February 3 @ 6:00 - 8:00 pm**

Kenneth City Community Hall, located at 4600 58th St. N., Kenneth City, FL 33709. [Submit Kenneth City Forum questions ahead of time here.](#)

**Social Justice Action Team Meeting
February 5 @ 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](#)

**Madeira Beach City Commissioner Candidate Forum
February 5 @ 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

Madeira Beach City Hall, 300 Municipal Dr Madeira Beach. Voters will be invited to submit questions both in advance of the forum and during the event. [Submit questions ahead of time here.](#)

Program Planning

February 7 @ 10:15 am – 12:00 pm

Every year, we solicit advocacy and educational issues from our members to set our priorities for the next League year (May – April). At this annual event, teams present their issue, its importance, and their plan. Members then vote on programs to be presented at our Annual Meeting. [RSVP](#)

**Deadline to register to vote in March Municipal Elections
February 9 (for online submission or postmark on paper forms)**

**St. Pete Beach Mayor and City Commissioner Candidate Forum
February 9 @ 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

St. Pete Beach City Hall, 155 Corey Ave, St. Pete Beach. Voters will be invited to submit questions both in advance of the forum and during the event. [Submit questions ahead of time here.](#) The Commissioner candidate forum is from 6 pm – 7 pm, followed by the Mayoral candidate forum from 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

**Education Committee (With LWVNPC)
February 23, 2026 @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

Monthly LWVNPC/LWVSPA Education Committee Meeting via Zoom. For an invitation or to attend, contact lwnnpc.info@gmail.com to receive an agenda. Open to all current LWV members only.

Pinellas County School Board Meetings

February 10 @ 10:00 am

February 24 @ 5:00 pm

301 4th St. SW, Largo, FL

LWVSPA Board Meeting

February 16 @ 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

If any LWVSPA member wishes to address the board, they should email the president at president@lwvspa.org

**Communications Committee Meeting
February 17 @ 11:00 am – 12:00 pm**

The LWVSPA Communications Committee meets monthly via Zoom. Email office@lwvspa.org for the link if you'd like to get involved.

**Voter Services Committee
February 18 @ 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. Please contact office@lwvspa.org for info on joining our meetings via Zoom.

**Hot Girls Walk So Rights Can Run
Hot Girls Repro Rights Walk
February 21 @ 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

Various St. Pete locations! All genders welcome! Join the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area for a nonpartisan reproductive rights business crawl. This event replaces our regularly scheduled February meeting. [RSVP and details](#)

Education Committee (With LWVNPC)

February 23 @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Monthly LWVNPC/LWVSPA Education Committee Meeting via Zoom. For an invitation or to attend, contact lwnpc.info@gmail.com to receive an agenda. Open to all current LWV members only.

Voter Services Voter Registration Training – LWVSPA Members Only

February 24 @ 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Amy Keith will lead us through Voter Registration training, LWVSPA practices, and key facts needed to pass the LWVFL Quiz. LWVSPA members who are interested in Voter Services must pass this quiz to be certified to table at events. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED – LWVSPA members only. [Register here.](#)

Committee on Membership

February 25 @ 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Contact chair [Amy Weintraub](#) for more teleconference link or for more info.

Reproductive Rights Action Team Meeting

March 2 @ 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Join us! We meet monthly on the 1st Monday. [RSVP for Zoom](#)

National Popular Vote Committee

March 3 @ 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](#)

New Member Orientation

March 4 @ 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Held at Allendale UMC, this event is designed to orient LWVSPA members who have joined within the past year as well as community members who would like to learn more about the League. Discover how we're working toward goals that you share and find out how to get involved. [RSVP](#)

Social Justice Action Team Meeting

March 5 @ 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](#)

Vigils for Immigrant Justice

Every Sunday, @ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Pinellas County Justice Center

14250 49th St. N., Clearwater, FL 33762

Join us as the Pinellas/Hillsborough Interfaith Coalition, LWVSPA, and our allies 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!



NOTE: No Cocktails & Conversation in February; stay tuned for the next one in March, date/venue TBD!

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



We're hitting the ground running this election year with your support. Thanks to

the following generous supporters who made gifts to LWVSPA in January.

Amy Anderson

Ruth & Jim Barrens

Lauren Barry

Sheila Barry-Oliver

June Bedford

Patti Blair

Lori Bremer

Susan Castleman

Greg Davidson

Bonnie & Stephan J. Freeman

Jen French

Meredith Gaunce

Polita & Peter Glynn

Jean Johnston

Jan Lella

Pat Lucas

Shelley Manes

Gerni Oster

Sarah Peacock

Lindsay Polega & Tyler Quigley

Mary Ann Renfrow

Cathy Rome

Gina Rothlein

Naomi Rutenberg

Eileen & William Sacco

Bonnie Sklaren

Marguerite Thomer

Emily Timoner

Laura Williamson

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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.



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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