

THE VOTER June 2017

Dear League Members and Supporters,

Just because it's the "lazy days" of summer, it doesn't mean that we have slowed down. If anything, we are busier than ever!

Please take a few minutes to scroll down and read our June newsletter. You'll find lots of information about what we are doing and, more importantly, ways to get more involved in our advocacy and education efforts. This is not the time to sit back and let things just happen in our city, state, and country. It's time to be a part of WHAT is happening. Let YOUR voice be heard! Give a few minutes, hours, or days to the League to help make sure democracy continues to work!

*"We in America do not have government by the majority.
We have government by the majority who participate." Thomas Jefferson*

Campaign Finance Reform

ALL HANDS ON DECK!!! Last push for Defend Our Democracy Ordinance in St. Pete. We need at least one more city council member to support this ordinance on June 22nd! How can you help?

- [Email](#) and call [\(727-893-7117\)](tel:727-893-7117) City Council and the Mayor – tell them to VOTE YES on this ordinance.
- **Rally in the Morning – June 22nd, 7:30 – 9:30 am**– This is the morning City Council of St. Pete votes on proposed **Defend Our Democracy Ordinance** (Campaign Finance Reform). **Wear red, bring your signs and rally outside City Hall** with us to show your support for the ordinance!



The meeting starts at 8 am and we want City Council members to see the volume of support behind this ordinance so they will VOTE YES. Come join the crowd even if you don't live in St. Pete!

Join Our Leadership Team

2017–2018 League Leadership

Officers

President: [Julie Kessel](#)
First Vice President: [Sharon Winters](#)
Second Vice President: [Stephanie Owens](#)
Secretary: open
Treasurer: [Caroline Bloodworth](#)

Board of Directors

[Lydia Castle](#)
[Raechel Garafalo](#)
[Susan Mayer](#)
[Marty Shapiro](#)

General Member(s): open

[Visit our website](#) for more information about our local leaders.

Education and Advocacy Group Leads

Gun Safety: [Sharon Winters](#)
Immigration: [Karen Coale](#) or [Lydia Castle](#)
Healthcare: [Julie Kessel](#)
Reproductive Rights: [Amy Weintraub](#)
Campaign Finance Reform: [Julie Kessel](#)
Education: [Robin Jones](#) or [Iris Yetter](#)

Call for Leaders

We are off to a terrific League year. As part of our leadership program, we are looking to identify, mentor, and develop leaders within our organization and as successors for leaders within and outside of our Action Teams. We would like this activity to go on year round, and not just at the time of need, such as an Action Team Lead vacancy, or the annual nomination process.

At the present time, we have some specific board opportunities. There are two vacancies and some general board opportunities:

- the secretary role
- a two-year general board member
- optional other one-year general board member roles

We are also looking for people with specific skills, interests, and abilities. We don't just want to invite folks to the board who do a lot of work (though that is great), as we don't want people to get burned out or to just fill a seat. Rather, we are interested in those who may benefit from--and enjoy-- the experience of serving on the Board,

Voter Service: [Raechel Garafalo](#) or [Lindsay Murdock](#)
Voter Protection: [Stephanie Owens](#)
Sustainability: [Lisa Vanover](#)
International Relations: [Judy McSwine](#)
Voter Editor: [Susan Mayer](#)
Social Media/Promotion Lead: [Amy Weintraub](#)
Office Administrator: [Rachael Becker](#)

[Click here](#) for more information about our education and advocacy groups.

and who also may bring specific capabilities to the role. Specifically, we need folks to help in leadership roles in the areas of

- systems, database, list and process management
- membership engagement and development
- fundraising
- community outreach and public relations (different than external and event promotions)

If you have an interest in a leadership role either now or in the future, please talk to your Action Team leads, reach out to our board, or simply reply to this email.

Voting Rights Restoration Working Group

We Believe in 2nd Chances: Florida Voting Rights Restoration

by Stephanie Owens, 2nd VP and Chair, Voting Rights Restoration Action Group



In April 2017, the Florida Supreme Court [approved language](#) for an amendment that would automatically restore voting rights to felony offenders, except those convicted of murder or felony sexual offenses, upon completion of all terms of their sentence. The League fully supports this amendment and is reigniting our efforts to help collect the [petitions](#) needed to place the amendment on the 2018 ballot. It's a daunting task. The initiative requires 800K signatures by January 2018. **We need your help. Please join the Voting Rights Restoration Action Group and help lead us to success.**

The League is **Making Democracy Work** for Voting Rights Restoration, because:

- Florida is one of just three states that permanently bars ex-felons from voting unless they receive clemency.
- Today in Florida, the backlog for clemency applicants is over 20 years.
- 1.3 million Florida former felons have completed their terms of conviction. They will automatically have their voting rights restored when the amendment passes.

Join me for our first Voting Right Restoration organizing meeting and strategy session on **Wednesday, June 28th, 2017, from 6:30 – 8:00 PM** at the Downtown Campus of St. Petersburg College, 244 2nd Avenue North, Room DC202, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. [RSVP here](#) or email StephanieOwensFL@gmail.com.

Use the links below for more information on Florida Voting Rights Restoration:

- [LWV/ACLU Voting Rights Restoration Presentation](#)
- [Voting Rights Restoration Efforts in Florida | Brennan Center for Justice](#)
- [Florida Voting Rights Restoration for Felons Initiative \(2018\) - Ballotpedia](#)
- [Florida Department of State Division of Elections Initiative Information](#)
- [The Petition as a downloadable PDF - To maintain the League's accounting for participation, please return all signed petitions to LWVSPA, 233 3rd Street N, St. Petersburg, FL 33701](#)

PRIDE Month in St. Petersburg



June is Pride month--the month in which we celebrate our community members who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans [LGBT]! The St. Pete Pride team coordinates events all month, culminating in a [weekend long series of events](#), from June 23rd to June 25th, that includes the Pride Parade and Pride Fest! **We're excited to have several opportunities for League Members to get involved and support our LGBT family!**

The **Gun Safety Team** is partnering with Moms Demand Action to have a table at Pride Fest on Sunday, June 25th! If you're interested in engaging with them throughout the weekend, reach out to Gun Safety Lead Sharon Winters: swinters@tampabay.rr.com.

The **Reproductive Rights Team** is marching in the Pride Parade on Saturday evening with Planned Parenthood! If you're interested in marching with them, contact Reproductive Rights lead Amy Weintraub: amyw304@gmail.com.

Finally, the **Voter Service Team** will be canvassing to register voters at both the Pride Parade on Saturday,

Immigration Working Group



Homeland Security has Stepped-Up Enforcement

by [Karen Coale](#), LWVSPA Immigration Action Group Co-Chair & LWVF Immigration Committee Co-Chair

At our May planning meeting, we delved into two very relevant but complex issues regarding immigration: *due process and expedited removal*. With the travel ban and threats to sanctuary cities tied up in the courts, Homeland Security has stepped-up enforcement.

They have expanded the working definition of expedited removal from deporting recent arrivals (within 2 weeks) and within 100 miles of the border to anywhere in the U.S. and no time limits. This is why you are reading about so many arrests in the interior of the U.S. With the ramp-up in detentions, we question whether those being detained and deported are granted due process.

As a first step, we are trying to understand what due process is, who is entitled to it, and under what types of law, e.g. civil, criminal, federal, state, etc. The latter is a constitutional issue which adds another layer of complexity. We are educating ourselves in preparation for *Immigration Conversations* later this summer--with a larger audience--and expanding our educational campaign on our website and social media.

We are also tracking at least three House bills. Two are on funding, with sizable increases in the \$18B range for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, adding 10,000 personnel and strengthening enforcement with upgraded weaponry.

The third bill HR2431 would direct state and local law enforcement to divert their limited resources towards immigration enforcement, permit states and localities to pass their own immigration laws, and criminalize unlawful presence of undocumented people in the United States. At present our sheriff does not respond to detention requests from ICE. This proposed law would require him to not only detain the undocumented, but to find them and arrest them. This is a really bad bill with far reaching consequences. So far it has only passed the House Judiciary Committee, but we are tracking it. We will mount an advocacy campaign to oppose this and other anti-immigrant legislation via the LWVSPA weekly *Action Alerts*.

Reproductive Rights Working Group

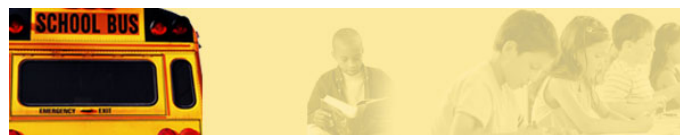
The next meeting of the Reproductive Rights Action Group will be at 7 pm on Thursday, July 2, at the League office where **we will meet with Joanne Lentino, a Pinellas County School Board member** and member of our own LWVSPA. We will have a discussion about how sex education is approached in our county and how we might work to broaden it to be more comprehensive to cover critical issues (e.g. pregnancy prevention) and work to better educate students of all sexual identities and orientation.



We remain on high alert as the ACA replacement bill makes its way in the U.S. Senate and its serious impact on women's health services. We urge continued pressure on Senator Marco Rubio to vote down any replacement bill that jeopardizes health care coverage for Floridians, especially those with few resources. **Phone his offices, participate in public protests, send faxes, letters, postcards, and emails -- anything to get Senator Rubio's attention.**

To receive updates on our activities and issues, join our email listserv (Google Group) at <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/lwvspareproductiverights>

Education Working Group



Despite strong opposition, Governor Scott signed the omnibus education bill 7069 as part of his grand deal with the Florida Legislature leadership. Our Education Working Group is poised to monitor the impact of the bill's Schools of Hope policy, which would close struggling schools and hand them over to private charter chains. We join the North Pinellas LWV Education Committee in our investigations

of Pinellas Schools and the Hillsborough County LWV in their in-depth investigation of for-profit charters.

We will also be monitoring the Constitutional Revision Commission and its seeming desire to vastly expand the Florida Tax Credit Scholarships, further diverting funds from public schools to unaccountable, largely religious schools.

At its recent State Convention, the LWVFL announced a state-wide effort to assist local chapters develop research and action plans that reach beyond our membership and form partnerships with parent groups, community groups, non-profits, etc.

If you would like to join us as we develop our local action plan, contact co-chairs Robin Jones (robinraejones@gmail.com) or Iris Yetter (yetter@tampabay.rr.com).

Spotlight on League Members

Meet new LWVSPA member Lindsay Murdock



What three traits define you? Relentless, Passionate, Giving

What is your favorite quote? "Always vote for principle, and though you may vote alone, you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost"
– John Quincy Adams

Where have you lived? I was born in Glacier National Park (Montana), lived there till I was 9, moved to Frederick County, MD until 18. Went to Montana State (Bozeman, MT – go cats!) for college and then moved to St. Pete in 2015.

What St. Pete neighborhood do you live in and what's your favorite part about it? Downtown – it's close to my office and my gym!

What is the best book you have ever read? *Bad Feminist* by Roxanne Gay

What cause are you most passionate about? Voting rights and fighting voter suppression

If you could witness any historical event, what would you want to see? Election night for Barbara Mikulski, the first female senator elected in her own right (and from Maryland!)

How did you find out about the League? When I lived in MT, I did a lot of community organizing, and we often partnered with the League on big events and initiatives.

Have you been a League member in another city? I haven't, but that hasn't stopped the LWVSPA from welcoming me with open arms – and putting me right to work :)

What advice do you have for prospective League members? Focus on quality over quantity – with so many exciting action groups, it's easy to want to get involved with everything, and then be overwhelmed. Focus your efforts where you can make the biggest impact.

What do you wish non-League members knew about the League? That we get stuff done – this is the group to join to make change!

What does true leadership mean to you? To me, true leadership is embodied by the leaders who stay after an event to tear down, or pick up trash. Those who lead by doing and make themselves effective in even the least glamorous of roles, will ultimately have the largest impact.

What might other League members be surprised to know about you? I'm desperately afraid of thunder (and writing this mid thunderstorm ahh SOS!)

What's one thing you couldn't live without? Exercising!

What question do you always ask people to get to know them better? Answer for yourself! :)
What do you do for fun outside of work? I like to do anything outside – hiking, kayaking, paddle boarding, etc!

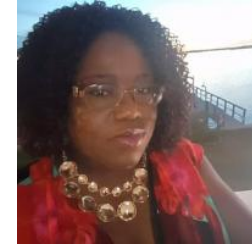
What would you most like to tell yourself at age 13? Being opinionated and bossy aren't bad things!

What is the one thing you cannot resist? Good chocolate

2017 Annual Meeting and Luncheon Update

The Babette Husick Community Action Award

In our May edition of *The Voter*, we incorrectly captioned a group photo as including **Demetrius Taylor**. We sincerely apologize for this mistake and would like to appropriately recognize Ms. Taylor, who is president of the 2017 winning organization, Pinellas County Urban League Young Professionals (PCUYLP).



This award recognizes the outstanding leadership of an individual or community organization who, in collaboration with the League, works for change in our community in line with the League's mission and principles.

The PCUYLP engages young professionals in activities geared toward achieving social and economic equality.

Demetrius Taylor accepted the award on behalf of PCUYLP for their collaboration with the League on gun safety, health care education, and advocacy work. The League looks forward to our continued collaboration with the Pinellas County Urban League.



Visit our [website calendar](#) for the most up-to-date information about upcoming events.

JUNE

Wednesday, June 21st, 6 – 8 pm

Cocktails & Conversation

Z Grille

104 2nd St S, St. Petersburg 33701

Thursday, June 22nd, 7:30 – 9:30 am

TURN OUT: Defend our Democracy Ordinance

Rally 7:30 am Outside City Hall

Discussion/Debate/Vote 8:00 am

St. Petersburg City Hall

175 5th St N, St. Petersburg 33701

Saturday, June 24th, 10 am – noon

Social Media 101 Workshop

EpiCenter at St. Pete College

13805 5th St N, St. Petersburg 33760

Monday, June 26th, 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Sustainability Action Group Meeting

Wesley Room

Allendale United Methodist Church

3803 Haines Rd N, St. Petersburg 33703

Wednesday, June 28th, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Voting Rights Restoration Action Group Meeting

St. Petersburg College Downtown Center

244 2nd Ave N, St. Petersburg 33701

JULY

Monday, July 10th, 12 noon – 1:00 pm

Reproductive Health & Justice Conference Call

[Click here](#) to register and receive call-in instructions

Monday, July 10th, 12 noon – 1:00 pm

City Council & Mayoral Candidate Forum

Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront Hotel

333 1st St S, St. Petersburg 33701

Monday, July 24th, 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Sustainability Action Group Meeting

Wesley Room

Allendale United Methodist Church

3803 Haines Rd N, St. Petersburg 33703

Tuesday, July 18th, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting

League Office Boardroom

233 3rd St N, St. Petersburg 33701

Wednesday, July 19th, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Cocktails & Conversation

Location TBA

Thursday, July 20th, 7 – 8:30 pm

Reproductive Rights Action Group Meeting

League Office Boardroom

233 3rd St N, St. Petersburg 33701

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, July 20th

Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence

Fundraiser

Feed Your Brain

Thinking about life on the "pale blue dot."

Albert Einstein on the Interconnectedness of Our Fates and Our Mightiest Counterforce Against Injustice:

"There is [a] human right which is infrequently mentioned but which seems to be destined to become very important: this is the right, or the duty, of the individual to abstain from cooperating in activities which he considers wrong or pernicious." To read more, use this link:

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2017/06/08/albert-einstein-human-rights/>

Membership

Join Us

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 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.



It's easy to join or renew. [Pay online using PayPal](#) (you do **not** need a PayPal account to pay us by credit card), or if you prefer, mail a check payable to LWVSPA to **POB 11775, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-11775**.

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.

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.



League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area
727-896-5197 | office@lwvspa.org | <https://lwvspa.org>