



THE VOTER

June 2019

LWVSPA Honored at the State Convention

The LWVFL State Convention happened earlier this weekend in Naples, and we are thrilled to announce that the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area was recognized with the Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy Award!

The award specifically calls out our efforts to spur civic engagement in the community and promote comprehensive sex education in public schools. You can learn more about some of our major initiatives in support of these goals by checking out the websites for [Engage St. Pete](#) and the [Empowering Pinellas Youth Collaborative](#).



And congrats to all of you for helping to make this happen! It takes team work to make the dream work!



March With the LWVSPA at St. Pete Pride!



The St. Pete Pride Parade is happening June 22, and we're excited to be taking part this year! St. Pete Pride is the largest LGBTQIA++ event in Florida, and the parade is also the largest, with more than 5,000 marchers taking part. We want to see as many of you as we can out there with us!

The parade will begin staging at Vinoy Park at 4 p.m. and all participants must be in place by 6 p.m. We are working to secure a vehicle for marchers to ride in so that even people who are not capable of walking the entire length of the route can participate with us.

We've also designed tank tops featuring a quote by legendary gay rights activist [Marsha P. Johnson](#), who was a prominent figure in the Stonewall riots 50 years ago and a key figure in the gay liberation movement. Those will be available for \$20 on a first come, first serve basis.

RSVP by signing up at [this link](#). If you have any questions, reach out to event organizer [Melanie Sheehan](#).



Volunteers Needed: Plant Power & Voter Services

Looking for a way to help out with all of the work the League is doing? We've got a couple of volunteer opportunities available right now.

The **Plant Power** team needs five volunteers to help with its screening of "Cowspiracy" on Friday, June 14. Volunteers will be asked to help staff a membership table, set up a food table, usher attendees to their seats and assist with whatever needs arise.

The movie begins at 7 p.m. at the Madison, located at 100 4th Ave. S. in St. Petersburg. If you're interested in helping out, email [Julie Kessel](#) and [Jen Underhill](#).

The **Voter Services** team is still recruiting people to help out with the following projects:

- our award-winning online Voter Guide
- the companion blog for the online Voter Guide
- the candidate forums (a training will be held later this month)

These activities are key to the mission of the League of Women Voters, and we need people to step up to help. If you're interested, please email [Raechel Garafalo](#).



Hundreds Turn Out at 'Stop the Bans' Rally



The LWVSPA partnered with Progress Florida and Pinellas NOW to organize a "Stop the Bans" rally in downtown St. Petersburg on May 21. About 250 people attended the rally, which was held in conjunction with similar rallies throughout the United States.

The rallies were organized in response to the concerted attacks on abortion and reproductive rights happening throughout the United States, with near total abortion bans passing in Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi and Ohio, as well as a total ban in Alabama.

Florida did not pass similar legislation during this past legislative session, but it was not for a lack of effort. Several lawmakers have already signaled their intent to try again next year. If you're interested in joining the efforts to organize against laws that restrict reproductive rights, email [Reproductive Rights](#) team lead [Stacey Kroto](#).

You can read more about the rally at the [Tampa Bay Times](#) and the [Tampa Bay Reporter](#).



Action Team Spotlight: Gun Safety

In 2017, the Gun Safety Action Team was formed but needed leadership. For Sharon Winters, who was relatively new to the area and had just joined the League a year earlier as a way to get involved in the community, taking on the chair role was an opportunity to get involved, meet League members, and tackle a very complex issue. We are so glad she did!



Since its inception the Gun Safety Action Team has been committed to education. They have coordinated and hosted several community events, including discussion forums and a film screening, to advance the public's understanding of the toll gun violence takes on society and the benefits associated with better gun laws.

The team's work over the past 2.5 years recently inspired in a new initiative sponsored by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg. The Foundation is convening a group of community stakeholders to discuss how we might effectively prevent gun violence in

our community. The first convening was in mid-May and will be followed by a series of broader conversations.

Here are the Gun Safety Action Team's main issues for 2019:

- Expand red flag laws to include family & household members.
- Implement universal background checks and strengthening licensing requirements
- Oppose dangerous legislation like arming teachers (SB7030) and open carry.
- Support assault weapons & high capacity magazine bans.
- Support removal of state pre-emption on local firearm regulations.

[Read more](#) about the action team's legislative advocacy, community and educational activities and how you can get involved.



What's Happening Around LWVSPA?

Election & Voter Protection

The action group will discuss plans to recruit and train poll monitors ahead of the St. Petersburg municipal election, as well as a campaign to encourage voters to check their registration to ensure they haven't been purged from the voting rolls.

The team will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 26 at the LWVSPA office, located at 233 3rd St. N in St. Petersburg. Please contact [Caitlin Constantine](#) or [Stephanie Owens](#) for more information.

Gun Safety

The team is focused on urging the Pinellas County School Board to reject the arming of teachers and staff. Last month, Sheriff Bob Gualtieri urged the school board to allow the arming of teachers, which was aligned with his recommendation to the Florida Legislature, which recently passed a law permitting the arming of teachers and school staff, despite vehement opposition from parents, students, teachers and the LWVFL. The team is working with Moms Demand Action to meet with school board members about this issue.



The team is also taking part in the City's [Not My Son initiative](#), and is collecting petitions in support of a ban on assault weapons. Petitions are available at the League office for those who wish to sign them in support of such a ban.

The team's next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, June 24 at Allendale United Methodist Church (Wesley Room), located at 3803 Haines Rd. N in St. Petersburg. Contact Team Lead [Sharon Winters](#) for more information.

To learn more about the issues and how to take action, visit lwvspa.org/gun-issues. The team also recommends reading "[How to Reduce Shootings](#)" by the New York Times' Nicholas Kristof.

Immigration

The team sends gratitude to all who participated in the Mothers Day Rally to End Family Separation and Child Detention, which attracted 170 people. Now the team is signing petitions to elected Congressional officials asking them to pass legislation that outlaws detaining families while they wait for their court dates and to close for-profit detention centers.

If you'd like to get involved with the Immigration Action Team, email Team Lead [Karen Coale](#) for more information.

Media/Publicity

This action group is always looking for effective ways to get the word out about our efforts through traditional, social and digital media. If you have experience with this - or you're just interested in learning more and helping out - then attend the committee's next meeting on Thursday, June 13 at 5:30 p.m. at the LWVSPA Office, located at 233 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg.

Email Team Lead [Amy Weintraub](#) for more information about joining this action group.

Membership Services

If you're interested in helping out with the Membership Committee, contact co-chairs [Stacey Jurewicz](#) or [Kathi Garrity](#).

National Popular Vote

NPV FL had a caucus at the Ritz-Carlton in Naples on June 7. The guest speaker was Jonathan Perloe, who was instrumental in passing the NPVIC in CT in 2018. Jonathan shared best practices for getting legislators on board with the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, what worked with constituents and how to lead the charge to accomplish the same thing in Florida.

If you have a local group who would like a speaker, contact [Marty Shapiro](#). If you are interested in learning more or joining the local committee, please reach out to [Deb Mazzaferro](#) or [Marty Shapiro](#).

Plant Power

This action group is preparing to hold its first event on June 14, with a screening of "[Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret](#)." The shocking - yet humorous - movie follows an aspiring environmentalist as he searches for a solution to the most pressing environmental issues and a path to true sustainability. Food will be served! RSVP by clicking [this link](#).

For more information, email [Julie Kessel](#) or [Jen Underhill](#).

Reproductive Justice

The team's next meeting is Thursday, June 13 at 7 p.m. at the LWVSPA Office, 233 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg. The action team will be discussing relevant updates from the state convention and plans for an upcoming social for team members, as well as other updates on reproductive rights.

Email Team Lead [Stacey Kroto](#) for more information about getting involved with this action group.

Sustainability

The team is launching a new format for their monthly meetings! Instead of holding a monthly meeting for the team, they will hold a meet-up at eco-friendly community organizations and businesses.

The first one will happen at 6 p.m. on June 27 at [Sans Market](#), located upstairs from Baum Avenue Market at 1113 Baum Ave. N. Sans Market is downtown St. Petersburg's first zero-waste lifestyle store, and it aims to help people live healthier lives without plastic or single-use packaging. Owner Eniko Olah will talk about about pursuing her passion for sustainability and demonstrate products that can help individuals reduce waste in their daily lives. Attendees will also have an opportunity to tour the space to browse and shop for zero-waste essentials.



Email [Carol Marks](#) or [Kal Marquise](#) for more information about joining this action team.

Voter Service

The Voter Service action group is working on strategies for voter registration for returning citizens, preparing for the launch of the online Voter Guide ahead of the St. Petersburg and Seminole municipal elections, and looking to train volunteers to help

run candidate forums. Volunteers are needed for all of these roles so if you are interested, please attend the June 25 meeting.

The committee's next meeting is Tuesday, June 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the LWVSPA Office, 233 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg. Email Team Lead [Raechel Garafalo](#) for more information.



Upcoming Events

June 12: General Membership Meeting

6-7:30 p.m. @ Empath Partners in Care, 3050 1st Ave. S, St. Petersburg
[Facebook](#)

June 14: Film Screening: "Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret"

6:45-9 p.m. @ Madison Condominiums (Community Room), 100 4th Ave. S, St. Petersburg

[Facebook](#) | [RSVP](#)

June 19: Cocktails and Conversation

6-8 p.m. @ Chief's Creole Cafe, 901 22nd St. S, St. Petersburg

[Facebook](#)

June 20: New & Prospective Member Orientation

6:30-8 p.m. @ Rising Tide Innovation Center, 433 Central Ave., St. Petersburg

[Facebook](#)

June 22: St. Pete Pride Parade

6-9 p.m. @ Vinoy Park, 701 Bayshore Dr. NE, St. Petersburg

[Facebook](#) | [RSVP](#)



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.

We invite you to [renew today!](#)

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.

Only \$7 of your basic membership goes to the support the activities of the

local league; 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.

You can also offer your financial support by upgrading your membership, offering an additional monthly, quarterly or annual donation, and encouraging others to do the same.

Please also consider including the League in your estate planning. Your gifts allow us to continue our education, advocacy and leadership programs to forward our mission in Making Democracy Work in the St. Petersburg area. If you would like to discuss an estate planning contribution or other gift, please **contact our office**.

The following memberships are up for renewal during this 3-month span. We invite you to **renew today!**

June 2019

Kathryn Adikes
Mary Lou Ambrose
Nina & Ken Bailey
Joe Barkley
Lisa DiPiero
Amanda Dodge
Timothy Dutton
Megan & Seth Firestone
AnneMarie Fraley
Ed Fraley
Haron Housman

Amy Keith
Kathleen Kingston
Jacqueline Ott
Mary Pinner
Dana & Scott Robertson
Keeley Sheehan
Jackson Stewart
Jackie Swigler
Amy Volpe
Kimberly Walker
Julie Weston

May 2019

Ingrid Bredenberg
Terry Citti
Beverly Cohen
Murray Cohen
Ken Degen
Carley Going
Jennifer Hewitt

Christine Lowrie
Dianne Morrow
Kelly Rouse
Da'juh Sawyer
Jane Thomas
Carol Ulmer

April 2019

Janet Augenbraun
Evelyn Baran
Theresa Darlington
Michael Drake
Eric Farmer
Celia Fite
Teresa Francis
Kris Hoagland
Daniel Hoekenga
Kay Lahdenpera

Gabrielle Lambert
Donna McRae
Leah McRae
Deborah Rinehart
Martha Sifnas
Nanette Walker
Sara Wallace
Linda Whitley
Kelly Wright



2019-2020 League Leadership

OFFICERS

President: Linsey Grove
First Vice President: Robin Davidov
Second Vice President: Maryellen Gordon
Secretary: Ken Wrede
Treasurer: Caroline Bloodworth

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ama Appiah
Caitlin Constantine

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY LEADS

Gun Safety: Sharon Winters
Immigration: Karen Coale
Reproductive Rights: Stacey Kroto
Census: Gina Gallo
Plant Power: Julie Kessel, Jen Underhill
Election Protection: Caitlin Constantine, Stephanie Owens
Voter Service: Raechel Garafalo

Amanda Dodge
Raechel Garafalo
Stephanie Owens

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

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

Sustainability: Carol Marks, Kal Marquise
National Popular Vote: Deb Mazzaferro, Marty Shapiro

International Relations: Judy McSwine
Media/Publicity Lead: Amy Weintraub
Membership: Kathi Garrity, Stacey Jurewicz
Office Administrator: Julia Sharp



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.