



The Constitution Revision Commission will be holding a public hearing on March 13 at USF St. Petersburg - and this is YOUR chance to make your voice heard on the "**Terrible 10" proposed constitution amendments** and a proposed assault rifle ban.



PLEASE NOTE: If you'd like to speak on behalf of the League, you MUST do one of the following:

- Attend the March 8 advocacy training at Allendale United Methodist Church (this is preferred);
- Speak with **LWVSPA President Julie Kessel** ahead of time;
- Sign up on the day of the hearing at a table that will be staffed by Amy Weintraub in the lobby of the USFSP University Student Center.

**If you speak on behalf of the League, you must use the League talking points.** You also have the option to speak on your own behalf.

You will have two minutes to speak during the public hearing, and you will only be allowed to speak once. You do not need to attend the entire event, but you should expect to stand in line before you will be able to speak in front of the CRC.



## *Short Documentary Shows How St. Petersburg Defends Our Democracy*



Last October, St. Petersburg became the first municipality in the country to ban super PACS and prohibit foreign investment in our local elections. On Jan. 1, that ordinance became law.

To document this historic journey, we created a documentary, which we presented along with our success story at a national good democracy advocacy conference in New Orleans in February.

### **WATCH: "Journey to Victory in St. Petersburg"**

Enjoy this hard-won labor of love, and thank you to all of you who had a hand in this big democracy win. YOU ARE MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK.

Please post the video and share it online with your friends and colleagues and show them what's possible when a group of citizens organize to take on big money in politics. You can find the video on **YouTube** and on **Facebook**.

A special thanks to Karen Lieberman for driving this project, and Theresa Darlington for hooking us up with documentarians, and to all of you! We will be submitting this initiative to the National League for award consideration at the national conference in June of 2018 in Chicago.



## *Meet Julia, Our New Office Manager*

Julia Sharp has been active in social and political causes throughout her life: raising the most pennies in the third grade to help save the rainforest, developing LGBTQ Safe Zone training at her local community college, and now supporting the creation of a comprehensive sex ed curriculum in Pinellas County.

Julia joined the LWVSPA as the Community Engagement and Office Manager and LWVFL as the Events and Travel Manager in January 2018.

Like most of us, she is a non-native Floridian, hailing from the DC area. Julia is also on the Board of Friends of North Shore Elementary and Temple Beth el's Preschool Society. When not tending to League activities, Julia can be found at Crescent Lake playground with her two small children, Olivia and Laurel, and her husband, Christian.



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## *Get Involved Ahead of the 2018 Elections!*



The 2018 elections will be here before long, and the LWVSPA's Voter Service team is already hard at work on two big projects aimed at helping citizens get ready to vote: a **new Voter Guide website for Pinellas County** and a **voter registration campaign**.

We're rebuilding our online Voter Guide to make it easier to use, more mobile friendly and more functional. We hope to launch it by late June, and **we need your help to make it happen!** We need people who are willing to do research on issues and resources, help us develop our candidate survey, administer and develop the WordPress site, and assist with communications and media promotions.

If you're interested in helping out with this project, contact Voter Services Chair **Raechel Garafalo** to sign up.

We're also kicking off our 2018 Voter Registration Campaign on March 19. This is a great opportunity to get involved with the League's goals of reaching underrepresented communities (including students.)

If you're interested in taking part, make sure to **RSVP for the March 19 meeting**. That meeting will be held from 5:30 to 7 at St. Petersburg College's Downtown campus, located at 244 2nd Ave. N in St. Petersburg.

We can use your skills and energy to prepare for this critical election year. Join us and help make democracy work!

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## *What's Happening Around the LWVSPA?*

### **Education**

Over 170 parents, teachers and citizens gathered on Feb. 27 at Allendale United Methodist Church to watch "Backpack Full of Cash," a feature-length documentary on

the privatization of public schools and the resulting impact on America's most vulnerable children.

The LWVSPA Education Committee will spend the coming months informing the parents and taxpayers of Pinellas County about the effects of charter schools and tax-credit vouchers on our district. With [HB 7055](#), the Florida Legislature is proving that we have a battle on our hands. [Read more...](#)

## Gun Safety

Over 100 participants attended our panel, entitled "Preventing Gun Violence: A Community Conversation," on Feb. 13. Led by moderator Ryan Mitchell, the panelists - St. Petersburg City Council Chair Lisa Wheeler-Bowman, pediatrician Dr. David Berman, and licensed psychologist Dr. Amanda Raitano - shared their perspectives on gun violence and actions the community can take.

Key recommendations included the need to address the root cause and look at the role of poverty and race; the need for families to take an active role in monitoring children's mental health and be good role models; the need to keep guns locked, store ammo separately, and lock cars with locked guns; the need to humanize victims in order to most effectively tell the story; and the need for each of us to get involved.

[Read more...](#)

## Immigration

Our focus is in two areas: passage of the DREAM Act and monitoring local impact of the Trump administration's increased emphasis on the detention and deportation of law abiding undocumented immigrants.

We continue to partner with the DREAMer-founded #ClearwaterHereToStay, helping them arrange for an immigration lawyer for their educational panel held on Feb. 26 and providing a table for so attendees could write postcards to U.S. senators, asking them to vote for a DREAM Act. [Read more...](#)



## *LWVSPA & LWVF in the Media*

- [Parkland shooting seen as turning point in gun control debate](#) (USA Today)
- [Hundreds rally against gun violence in downtown St. Petersburg](#) (TBO)
- [Gun safety advocates slam most plans by Rick Scott & Florida Legislature](#) (WMNF)
- [Florida governor proposes new gun sale limits after school shooting](#) (Reuters)
- [Scott: Keep guns from dangerous people](#) (Florida Times-Union)
- [Demands for action intensify at huge rally at Florida's Capitol](#) (Tampa Bay Times)
- [League of Women Voters of Florida demand gun reform at last local CRC public hearing](#) (Orlando Weekly)
- [Florida lawmakers did nothing after Pulse. Will this time be different?](#) (Huffington Post)
- [Florida's solar industry sees sunny future despite Trump tariffs](#) (U.S. News and World Report)
- [Report on solar in Florida shows progress](#) (Public News Service)
- [Florida wants to spend more money to talk women out of abortions](#) (Vice)
- [Commission hopefuls share - mostly - same vision for Redington Beach](#) (Tampa Bay Newspapers)
- [Opinion: Florida cities are fighting for home rule](#) (Tallahassee Democrat)



## *Travel and Learn with the LWVF*



### **Natural Florida: Paradise Found April 14-20**

Join the League of Women Voters of Florida on a getaway along the pristine rivers in the Blackwater Forest, Conecuh National Forest and Eglin Range in Escambia County, which is part of the world's largest long leaf pine forest. Experience the flora, fauna, stillness, and solitude from your kayak.

Get more info and reserve your space here: <http://www.lwvfl.org/natural-florida-paradise-found/>



### **Civil Rights Immersion May 14-19**

LWVF invites you to join law professor emeritus Robert Bickel and three veterans of the Civil Rights Movement to explore three Alabama cities - Montgomery, Birmingham and Selma - and learn the history of the campaign that led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Get more information and register here: <http://www.lwvfl.org/history-lessons-legacy-civil-rights-campaign-1955-1965/>



## *Upcoming Events*

### **March 8: International Women's Day Advocacy Training**

6-9 p.m. @ Allendale United Methodist Church, 3803 Haines Rd., St. Petersburg

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

**March 13: Press Conference: Terrible Ten, Assault Rifle Ban & CRC**

11:45-12:30 p.m. @ USFSP University Student Center, 200 6th Ave. S., St. Petersburg

[Facebook](#)

**March 13: Constitutional Revision Commission Public Hearing**

1-7 p.m. @ USFSP University Student Center, 200 6th Ave. S, St. Petersburg

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

**March 19: Voter Registration Campaign Kickoff**

5:30-7 p.m. @ St. Petersburg College Downtown, 244 2nd Ave. N, St. Petersburg

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

**March 21: St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op Info Session #2**

6-7:30 p.m. @ West St. Petersburg Library, 6700 8th Ave. N, St. Petersburg

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

**March 21: Cocktails and Conversation**

6-8 p.m. @ Pia's Trattoria, 3045 Beach Blvd. S, Gulfport

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

**March 24: March For Our Lives Tampa**

10 a.m. @ Kiley Garden, 400 N. Ashley Dr., Tampa

[Facebook](#)

**March 26: Democracy 101**

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

[Calendar](#)

**March 29: Advocacy Training: Net Neutrality**

6:15-8:45 p.m. @ Allendale United Methodist Church, 3803 Haines Rd., St. Petersburg

[Calendar](#)

**April 2: International Relations Study Group: Saudi Arabia**

2-3:30 p.m. @ Barbara S. Ponce Public Library, 7700 52nd St. N, Pinellas Park

[Calendar](#)



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.

**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  
Treasurer: Caroline Bloodworth

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Caitlin Constantine  
Raechel Garafalo  
Linsey Grove  
Susan Mayer  
Marty Shapiro

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

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

### **EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY LEADS**

Gun Safety: Sharon Winters  
Immigration: Karen Coale, Lydia Castle  
Health Care: Julie Kessel  
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



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.**