

THE VOTER

October 2016

From Our President

Hello Leaguers,

There is so much going on right now and I know all of you are working very hard on our voter services program, campaign finance reform, gun safety, immigration, solar energy, and amendments. And there is not a moment to lose!

Between election deadlines, legal challenges, preparation for legislative session, and social justice issues, we are in the middle of the fight to ensure a democracy for, of, and by the people. Thank you for all of your incredibly hard, and effective, work. We are making an incredible difference!

In League,
Julie



Julie Kessel
President, 2016-2017

Countdown to Election: 2016

There's Still Time for You to Get Involved

by Raechel Garafalo, Voter Service Committee Chair

As we near the home stretch of this tumultuous 2016 election season, I'm sending a call to action for our final push to educate voters and get out the vote. Here are ways you can help us educate voters in these last few weeks before the general election:



- **Distribute the printed [2016 Non-Partisan Voter Guide](#)** at specified locations throughout the community. We have cases of these guides at the League office and would welcome your assistance in distributing them and/or in suggesting additional locations where they might be needed. Produced by the League of Women Voters of Florida, the guide contains information about the Amendments to the Florida Constitution, Supreme Court Justices, frequently asked questions about the merit retention judicial races, and more!
- We need volunteers to **speak briefly and pass out the League's voter education literature at our *Get Out the Vote* activities.** How much we accomplish depends on volunteer participation.
- The Pinellas County Canvassing board will begin meeting on October 19th and continue to meet periodically through election day. **We need volunteers to observe and report on the canvassing board's activities.**
- The League is receiving many phone inquiries by citizens seeking election information. We do the best we can to return calls by those leaving voice messages, but we do not have regular office staff. In order to provide more

timely information to all callers (some hang up when no one answers), we are trying to staff the League office for as many hours as possible during the week before the election, up to and including election day. **Volunteers will work in shifts to answer and return calls, providing callers with the League's non-partisan voter resources.** The window of opportunity to make a difference narrows each day.



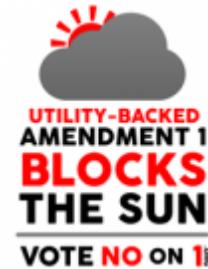
Please [email me](#) or leave a message on the office phone if you would like to be a part of our community efforts.

Vote NO on Amendment 1

Dockery: Don't be Fooled by Anti-Solar Amendment 1

The Florida League of Women Voters recommends a NO vote on Amendment 1 to ensure that solar energy will be accessible and affordable for Floridians. Florida League Board Member Paula Dockery has been an articulate advocate for the League's position. In a recent *Tampa Bay Times* opinion column, Dockery explained why a NO vote is so important. Here are a few excerpts from her column:

- Don't be fooled by their (monopolistic power companies) clever ploy. Vote NO on Amendment 1 and let them know you're smarter than they think.
- The utility industry was very shrewd-and devious-in crafting the amendment (1) language. Instead of promoting choice, it limits it. Instead of allowing competition, it suppresses it. Instead of helping small businesses, it requires more regulation.
- Under the guise of consumer protection, it would actually protect their profits and limit competition. And it proposes doing this in the Florida Constitution-not through general law, thus making it much more difficult to change.



[Click here](#) to read the entire column. For more information and to download a printable flyer about Solar Amendment 1, [click here](#).

Florida League Does it Again



League Joins Effort to Push Florida to Extend Voter Registration Deadline

The League of Women Voters is an organization that never stops fighting to protect voters. The most recent victory came after the Florida League's challenge to Governor Scott and Secretary of State Detzner's refusal to extend the voter registration deadline in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

Again, the League, along with other FL organizations, took to the courts to make democracy work for the many Floridians whose efforts to register by the October 11th deadline were impeded by storm preparations, evacuations, and cleanup.

[Floridians now have until Tuesday, October 18th to register to vote.](#)

[Click here](#) to check your current voter registration status.
To access information about dates and deadlines for the general election, [click here](#).

Another Reason to be Proud of the League

Voter Service Committee Has Been Rockin' It!

by Raechel Garafalo, Voter Service Committee Chair

Presidential election years are always particularly busy for the League. The Voter Service Committee shifts into high gear in the months before the election, and here's a look at what we have been doing:

The Leagues of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area and North Pinellas County produced ***The League of Women Voters 2016 Pinellas County Voter Guide***, an online, comprehensive, non-partisan resource for both the August primary and the upcoming November 8th general election. Please take a moment to [check it out](#) and share it with others. **A special thanks to Delia Miller of LWV North Pinellas County and Amy Weintraub of LWV St. Pete Area for their time-intensive contributions to the development of the Guide.**



Sati and Alyssa, USFSP Student Voter Registration team volunteers, register voters at Grand Central bus station.

The Voter Service team entered into a collaborative partnership with six USFSP students in conducting a month-long voter registration drive. This pilot project was offered as part of their American Government class, comprising 50% of their grade and substituting for their mid-term and final exams. It was great fun watching the students learn and being part of their first forays into civic engagement.

During the past four weeks, the project team participated in over a dozen events and collected 65 registrations, about half of which were new voters (vs. updates). Veteran League

Voter Service members **Nicole Carr, Sue Price, Gina Rothlein, Pat Wood, Iris Yetter, and I** were among the supervising team members. Thank you all.

An additional note of thanks to League members **Nicole Carr, Robin Jones, Amanda Patanow, and Lisa Meyers, who all sponsored League membership dues for the student participants** so that they would be certified to register voters under the auspices of the League of Women Voters of Florida.

We welcomed a new and dynamic **Voter Service Co-chair, Robin Davidov**, who jumped in with both feet and has been instrumental in orchestrating our volunteer efforts to educate and register voters. Robin conducted much of the training, coordination, and oversight of the USFSP/LWVSPA voter registration project team and generously donated significant time and resources for many other voter service activities. I'm looking forward to working with her for the rest of the election season.

Florida Coalition for the Prevention of Gun Violence Protests at Local NRA Fundraiser

Local League Sends a Message to the NRA

Local NRA supporters were met by a group headed by LWVSPA president and LWVF Board member Julie Kessel, M.D., as she led a Sept. 9th press conference event in support of the newly-formed [Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence](#).



The press conference took place in the parking lot east of the main entrance to Banquet Masters, where the local [Friends of the NRA](#) were holding a fundraiser. Participants held signs focused on ending gun violence and showing our LWVSPA name and logo and that of the newly formed coalition. [Click here](#) to read the *Tampa Bay Times* article about the protest.

The catalyst for the development of **Florida Coalition for the Prevention of Gun Violence** was not only the [Pulse Nightclub mass shooting](#) in Orlando, but also the broader impact of gun violence in our communities. The stated objectives of the Coalition are:

- to close loopholes and expand universal background checks
- to ban assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition clips

The press conference was well-covered, made a big statement, stood up to the NRA, and publicized our new coalition. We encourage everyone to go to www.preventgunviolenceflorida.org to learn about the coalition and to sign up for updates. Additional information is also available at thefloridavoter.org or lwwspa.org.

League Joins New State Coalition



Amy Weintraub

Floridians for Reproductive Freedom

by Amy Weintraub, LWV-St. Petersburg Area

With my long interest and service history in the reproductive health, rights, and justice movement, I am pleased to have been appointed to represent LWVF in the newly formed state-wide coalition, **Floridians for Reproductive Freedom**. The coalition is made up of a wide array of groups interested in health care and social justice. ([Click here](#) for a list of current members.)



The mission of the group is to affirm and advocate for equal and safe access to the full range of reproductive health care, from abortion to birth control to evidence-based sex education. The group's major goals include eliminating reproductive oppression and promoting policies that advance the social, economic, and political power of Floridians. The coalition's vision is an inclusive future where all of us will be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Floridians for Reproductive Freedom began to form in mid-summer and I have represented LWVF on biweekly calls since August 19th. Kim Diaz, the Legislative Representative for the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, is the chief group coordinator.

The first action by the group has been to create a joint statement urging Governor Scott to address the Zika crisis more proactively than through just mosquito control. Suggestions for the governor include establishing a more transparent collaboration with local communities and partners like this coalition and disability rights groups, increasing access to sexual health education in our communities, and expanding Medicaid at the state level to ensure that no Floridian is left in the

coverage gap. [Click here](#) for more information and to read the letter to Governor Scott.

Meanwhile, coalition partner Planned Parenthood is canvassing southern Florida neighborhoods most at-risk for Zika transference. They report an alarming number of contacts with folks who have no idea of the risk or how to protect themselves.

Immigration: A Major Part of Election Conversation

Immigration Education Campaign Launched

by Karen Coale, Immigration Committee Co-Chair, LWV-St. Pete Area
Immigration Committee Co-Chair, LWV-Florida

The United States is a nation of immigrants, and the League of Women Voters has a long history of encouraging their participation in American society. Immigrants have helped weave the fabric and identity of our nation, and we believe that it is critical for the U.S. to encourage their participation in our democracy.

Because immigration is a major part of this election cycle's conversation, the League of Women Voters is here to help you understand this complex issue. As a national organization we have studied this issue and developed a position that forms the framework for our advocacy and education.

Due to the considerable amount of misinformation being spread about immigrants and the economic and social costs of suggested solutions, the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area's Immigration Committee has developed an educational campaign to provide you with facts you should know about various aspects of immigration.



This card, created by the Immigration Committee, summarizes the contents of our education campaign and provides link address information to the campaign's website; **please share it with friends, family, and co-workers.** We also need volunteers to hand out cards at LWVSPA events and to identify non-League but appropriate events and venues to distribute them. To obtain cards and volunteer to help distribute them, please email me at immigration@lwvspa.org.

Join Us for an Important Discussion on Nov. 5th

POVERTY MATTERS

Its Impact on Us and the Health of Our Community



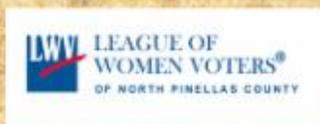
Saturday, Nov. 5, 2016 at 10:30am
Trinity Presbyterian Church
2001 Rainbow Drive, Clearwater
(East side of Hercules,
one block north of Gulf to Bay Blvd.)

Guest speakers: Norin Dollard, PHD, Asst Professor, USF,
 who will discuss how poverty impacts families & kids in our county
 and in Florida

and

Dr. Julie Kessel, President of the LWVSPA, who will address
 the recent push to expand Florida Medicaid to cover 600,000
 more citizens currently without any health insurance.

Sponsored by



For more information call Beth Hovind: 727-938-9809

www.lwvnorthpinellas.org



We are very pleased to welcome these new members to the LWVSPA:

Doris and Paulo
 Janet

Albuquerque
 Bast

Alyssa	Brodnax
Jean	Campbell
Steven	Cohen
Robin	Davidov
Aleta	Fisher
Lynn	Fruit
Mary	Gerken
Randi	Hilleso
Patricia	Holmes
Ysatis	Jordan
Claire	Karas
Sonia	King
Christopher	Lerbs
Anthony	Loffler
Gwendolyn and William	Mann
Samantha	Marvel
Linda	Ramirez
Julia	Rissler
Jacob	Ross
Linda	Sanguinett
Cynthia	Serra
Robert	Siberski
Rachel	Stanger
Elizabeth	Vanneste
Brooke	Verner
Mary	Wagner
Sally	Wallace
Sharon	Wright
Briana	Yates



Caught on Camera... at Recent League Events



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](#), 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 new Gold or Silver membership level, most of your dues will help support the work of our local League.

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area | office@lwvspa.org | 727.896.5197 | <https://lwvspa.org>

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.

LWVSPA, P.O. Box 11775, St. Petersburg, FL 33733

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