



League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County Area

Nationally Recognized & Locally Active

www.lwvtrifl.org

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President's Letter

The first requisite of a good citizen in this republic of ours is that he/she is able and willing to pull his/her own weight.

Theodore Roosevelt

We are nearing the end of our league year. Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 27 and I hope to see you there to welcome state League Secretary Pat Drago who will be our guest speaker. Please join us as we celebrate the conclusion of a successful year that saw our league attain full league status and an increase in membership! We will be electing new board members, approving our 2017-2018 program and budget, and making needed changes to the bylaws as well as enjoying each other's company! Details for reservations are in this newsletter!

Please note the opening quotation. My goal this year is involvement as we all pull our weight. If we all do a little, so much can be done. Please do not run away thinking you are too busy! Some tasks seem minor, but taken together allow for a smooth running organization.

A few examples from our February Meeting will help illustrate this point. As we were discussing our proposed program, one member suggested speakers for two of our interests. By the end of the day, I had a contact for juvenile justice and restoring rights of felons. Another leaguer volunteered to keep track of local commission

and school board meetings. What can you do? Perhaps you can do research for a speaker's bureau presentation. Or you might be able to sort and organize a box of clippings from local papers on our League. Can you do name tags for our new members? How about working on the monthly power point announcements? These are just a few jobs done by board members. Maybe we can all pitch together to lighten the load! Remember if everyone does a little we can do a LOT! What do you like to do and where can you fit in?

See you at the Annual Meeting and don't forget to invite a friend!

In League,
Beth Hicks

March Annual Meeting

When: Monday, March 27, 2017

**Where: Continental Country Club
CR44, Wildwood, Florida**

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Pat Drago, Secretary, LWV Florida



Pat worked for the Volusia County School system until her retirement in 2009 from her position as Executive Director of Facilities. During her 22 years of service with the school district she oversaw a \$750 million building program, was responsible for management, operations and maintenance of 9 million square feet of education facilities and supervised a staff of 350.

Pat has been a League member since 1981 and credits her League education and exposure for securing her the position with the school district. She has served as a local League President, Natural Resources Chair and on the State Board in the 1980's.

Membership

We would like to welcome Gail Formanack and Patricia Trainor.



2017 LWVTRI Annual Meeting & Luncheon

Our 11th General Meeting will be held on **Monday, March 27**, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the **Continental County Club** on CR44 in **Wildwood**. At that time, we will vote on a new program for 2017-18; adopt a budget for 2017-18; amend our Bylaws and finally, elect officers and directors. The cost will be \$25 and that includes tax and tip. [Please click here for entree selections and reservation information, and remember, invite a friend!](#)

Nominees for 2017-19

Treasurer – Sharon Edwins
Director – Steven Cooper
Director – Carolyn Johnson
Director – Linda Thomas
Director – June Webber

LWVUS Impact on Issues

The national League's 2016–2018 guide to public policy positions, *Impact on Issues*, is now [available for download HERE](#). If you would like a printed copy, it is available for purchase on Amazon or download for Kindle. The cost is \$5.95.

First Woman

The League celebrated its 97th birthday on February 14, and as March is Women's History Month, you might be interested in picking up a copy of *First Woman* which is a 48-page volume which places Hillary Clinton's unprecedented campaign in the context of women's history and celebrates the many women who first ran for and held office in American government.

First Woman also recognizes American suffragists who worked successfully for women's civil rights. The wealth of detail included here irrefutably shows the growing contributions women have made to our national life. These courageous women smoothed the path that led our nation to where it is today. Copies will be available at the General Meetings and cost \$14.95. For information or to reserve a copy, contact Charlene Allmen, charallmen@gmail.com.

Education

VPK Project

We now have a group of our volunteers developing questions to ask program directors and classroom teachers and another group developing a checklist for use in classroom observations. Thanks to the following for their help: **Questionnaires Development- Barb Blatchford, Diana Bishop and Gail Formanack; Checklist Development-Ann Koziol, Beth Hicks and Ginger Ryan.**

We will be sharing these questionnaires with the Early Learning Coalitions prior to our visits to the providers.



Voter Service

2017 Florida Legislative Session

During the course of the Florida Legislative Session, which will begin on **Tuesday, March 7, 2016**, and go for 60 days, League members will receive a weekly online "**Capitol Report**" which is prepared by the League's lobbyist in Tallahassee. This is a newsletter which describes legislation pertaining to LWVF legislative priorities and gives tips on when and how to take action. [Click here for the latest issue.](#)

In addition, **Action Alerts** are sent to local League members when local lobbying can play a critical role and when member interest and knowledge are high enough to produce an effective response. Local Leagues are urged to take the action requested in the Alerts in the name of their local League or as an individual members as appropriate. State level positions come from the study and consensus of individual League members, so local League support can prove very effective in lobbying on these positions. Make your voices heard in Tallahassee when you are asked!

2017 Florida Constitutional Revision Commission

Shortly, the Florida Constitution Revision Commission will begin scheduling public hearings to be held throughout the State, in order to develop proposed Constitutional Amendments for the 2018 General Election Ballot. Every 20 years, the Commission is appointed to

1. Examine the Florida Constitution;
2. Hold public hearings throughout the State; and
3. Recommend changes to the Florida Constitution for voter consideration.

The Commission will be composed of: 15 members appointed by the Governor; 9 appointed by the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; 9 appointed by the President of the Florida Senate; 3 appointed by the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court; and 1 appointed by the Florida Attorney General. This Commission can offer changes to the Constitution that omit current provisions or add new provisions. For example, the last time the Commission met, in 1998, the Commission proposed Revisions to Article IX, Education, which included limiting class sizes, permitting adjacent counties to combine school districts and permitting counties to give the school board power to appoint the superintendent, which requires a vote of the county registered voters.

A **Citizens' Guides to the 2017-2018 Commission** is available at all League General Meetings or you can go to the Florida Constitution Revision commission website revisefl.com for more information.

News from LWV United States

LWVUS Board Sets Legislative Priorities for 2017

The LWVUS Board set the following as the legislative priorities for 2017:



1. Campaign for Making Democracy Work™ (MDW), with special emphasis on protecting voting rights.
2. Watchdog: Respond strategically on issues with LWV positions when needed, but focus on the campaign for Making Democracy Work™.

The board recognizes that the next year will be full of the unexpected. The main focus for LWVUS should be our MDW Campaign, but other topics are expected to pop up that are important to the LWV—including the Affordable Care Act (ACA), immigration and climate change. There will doubtless be other, unpredictable legislative issues. Advocacy staff, working with the president and advocacy chair, will respond to watchdog issues as time allows. The board can re-examine or re-align legislative priorities as the situation may dictate during this next year.

League Calls on U.S. House to Keep Key Elements of the ACA

The League sent an action alert urging members of the grassroots lobby corps to contact their Representatives regarding the Repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Please contact your Representatives or call 866-426-2631 to be connected via phone. Tell your member of Congress:

- Don't repeal the Affordable Care Act without an effective plan that will assure we have affordable, quality health insurance.
- Now is not the time to take away health care protections and coverage without an effective plan that will assure we have affordable, quality health insurance.
- Stop rushing to make major changes that will harm millions of Americans while throwing the U.S. health care system into disarray.

League Urges Opposition of Election Assistance Commission Termination Act

The League sent a memo to members of the Committee on House Administration ahead of the markup of HR 634, the Election Assistance Commission Termination Act. The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is the only federal entity devoted exclusively to improving election administration on a bipartisan basis. At this time the League does not believe terminating the EAC is warranted and urges the Committee on House Administration not to report this legislation. LWVUS also joined a coalition letter sent to the committee opposing the termination of the EAC and the Presidential Election Campaign Fund.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization.

The League neither supports or opposes political parties or candidates.

The League promotes active participation of citizens in their government through education and advocacy.

