

Villages-News^{com}

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To the Editor:

The Wednesday edition of The Villages Daily Sun ran a headline claiming the repeal initiative for "One Sumter" would restrict voter rights. This is a blatant misrepresentation. Removing it from the November ballot will prevent the electorate in Sumter County from having a voice in how their county commissioners are elected, either by district or at-large (current method). The paper does accurately state the voters affirmed One Sumter twice, however the last time voters had a voice in this matter was in 2008. Since then, thousands of new residents have moved to the county, and voters in the last election replaced three of the five incumbent county commissioners demonstrating voters are interested in change. It is fitting for this county's voters to have a voice in how they are represented. I find it interesting that the governor-appointed commissioners are so keen to take up this issue to reverse an action taken by the duly elected county commissioners. One might wonder why this is such a burning priority.

The League of Women Voters would be vehemently opposed to restricting voter rights. A return to commissioners elected by those who reside in their district doesn't meet our definition of voter suppression. Unfortunately, our representatives in Tallahassee have once again passed a bill placing new restrictions on vote-by-mail ballots after buying in to a false narrative about stolen elections and widespread voter fraud. None of those allegations have proven to be true, but the taxpayers of this state will now be spending millions of dollars on a new Office of Election Crimes. Additionally, the legislators and governor have failed to follow the guidelines for redistricting as set forth by the voters in the Florida Constitution. These efforts to restrict voter rights will no doubt end up in lengthy and costly court battles once again.

Gail Formanack, co-president

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