

### President's Corner

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our Retreat & Legislative Update! It was a timely meeting because we were able to discuss the very fast moving proposition to change the Hillsborough County Commission to all single member districts. We are so lucky to have so many long-term members with historical knowledge of why this didn't work, resulting in the system we have today. See article below for more info.



Please make sure to read all the way down to the calendar of upcoming events, which includes instructions and a link on how to subscribe to all our events so you don't miss any. So many great articles to read between here and the event calendar! Don't miss the Save the Date for the return of our Lifetime Achievement Awards Luncheon (February 21, 2024!). The nominations forms are included below so please start nominating now! The deadline is mid-September.

[Teresa Potter, President](#)

## This Is Not Your Mother's Florida

The overwhelming majority of Floridians think we should all have the freedom to make our own personal health care decisions without interference from politicians. Help put these decisions back in the hands of Florida families and their doctors by signing the Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion petition.

As of late July, over a half million petitions have been received by Floridians Protecting Freedom. The goal is to have 1.2 million certified petitions by Feb. 1, 2024.

Please remember to ask your friends and family to sign petitions, which may then be sent to the address on the form or dropped off at one of the hubs listed at the petition site: <https://floridiansprotectingfreedom.com/petition/>. You can also find additional information on the LWV of Florida's website, including an intake form to include if you are submitting completed petitions by mail, at <https://lwwfl.org/abortion2024/>.

Keep in mind that we should sign the petition only one time. There is nothing to be gained and there may even be penalties for signing the petition more than once.

Most people who follow this issue agree that the Florida Supreme Court is likely to approve the 15-week ban as early as September 8, which would automatically make the 6-week ban effective as of October 8. The petition will not be on the ballot until at least late 2024, which means that a year's worth of abortion-seekers will have to leave the state in order to obtain a procedure. This is grim news for Florida women and our corporeal autonomy.

For anyone who would like a deep dive into the abortion landscape nationwide post-Dobbs, check out "Your Local Epidemiologist", Katelyn Jetelina, at [her blog](#).

It is a sobering truth that women of child-bearing age in Florida now have fewer rights than their mothers did.



## The Other Petition

While the Florida legislature is turning women into second class citizens, it also regularly threatens the health of all Florida men, women, children, non-binary residents, and our pets. Please sign the petition to make clean water a right in our state. It is not as sexy an issue as reproductive rights, but it is an essential one.

Unlike Floridians Protecting Freedom, the Florida Right to Clean Water organization has no paid volunteers to gather petitions. Please sign the petition and ask at least five of your friends to sign the petition. Petitions and more information are available [here](#).

## Tips for Petitioning

by Cindy Wilson, Communications Chair, [communications@hclwv.org](mailto:communications@hclwv.org)

Here are three tips regarding our petition efforts to protect Floridians' freedom to access abortion and our ability to access clean water.

**USE A PERSONAL APPROACH.** One of our members has been going through her contacts list and reaching out to local friends by text or call, asking if they would be interested in signing a petition. If the answer is no, she thanks them and moves on. If they respond yes, she makes arrangements to meet them and/or drop off a petition for them. She has found people respond positively to this approach, and she is steadily collecting petitions.

**SHARE REMINDERS.** This member also created a short list of reminders regarding the most common mistakes people make on the petitions, such as mistaking "county" for "country." She set up a page with several sets of these reminders on a page (find the page [here](#) to download). Provide a copy of this list when you drop off a petition or if you are handing out multiple petitions at an event.

### CLIPBOARD SIGNS.

Many members keep blank petitions on a clipboard in their vehicles and on the back of the clipboard they have a sign that says "SIGN THE PETITION SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO ABORTION IN FLORIDA." This can help attract potential signers when we are out in public. We have a version ready for you to download and print for your own use [here](#).

It also includes a page with a similar message for Florida's Right to Clean Water petition drive.



## Juneteenth in August in Pasco, Seriously

Members of the League hope to table at this Juneteenth celebration in Port Richey, helping people register to vote and sharing information on the League and recent changes in election laws. Contact [pasco@hclwv.org](mailto:pasco@hclwv.org) for more information. The event is at Booker T. Washington School in Port Richey, from 12-5 pm on Aug. 5.

## Report Cards



The Legislature is out for the summer and so are report cards on our legislators' votes. Progress Florida scored every Florida state legislator and gave them a percentage score and a letter grade from A-F based on their votes across a wide spectrum of issues including housing affordability, reproductive freedom, civil rights and equality, healthcare access, public education, safeguarding democracy, environmental protection, and more.

Their criteria was whether the official voted on behalf of Florida residents or on behalf of some other interest.

Karen Gonzalez Pittman, District 65, for example, put people first on just six of the 28 bills that Progress Florida tracked. Pittman's constituents can see at this site how Pittman voted on each of these bills. If you are looking for accountability from your elected officials, look [here](#). This might be one of the best tools we have going into the next elections.

## School Speed Cameras – Safety vs Equity

by Emily Hinsdale, Transportation Action Group Chair, [transportation@hclwv.org](mailto:transportation@hclwv.org).

On June 1, Governor Ron DeSantis signed SB588/HB 657 into law, authorizing county or municipal governments to enforce the speed limit through speed detection systems in school zones at school arrival and dismissal times. The Hillsborough County BOCC has asked staff and stakeholders to draft an ordinance enacting this law in Hillsborough County. Presumably the same process is taking place in Pasco County. Automated speed cameras will record vehicle tag numbers in school zones. Drivers who go 10 mph or more over the posted speed limit, will receive tickets in the mail.



HCLWV supported speed cameras in past legislative sessions. According to the CDC,

- Speed cameras have reduced traffic crashes from 8 to 49% in existing locations where they are already in use, such as Georgia and New York.
- Automation allows consistent and continuous enforcement; removes the risk to law enforcement of stopping speeding drivers; and is more equitable, eliminating human error and bias.
- Speed is a key factor in the majority of crashes. Traffic fatalities are among the leading causes of childhood death.

However, this particular law comes with some pitfalls and questions.

First, this is an unfunded mandate, which means counties and municipalities will have to use already limited transportation budgets to implement speed camera programs. Once in place, though, a portion of fees collected can be used for recruiting school crossing guards and for improving neighborhood walking conditions.

More importantly, how are camera locations to be determined? Our transportation department has identified a number of "High Injury Corridors." But since many of our high speed and, therefore, dangerous roads were historically placed in less affluent Black and Latino neighborhoods, these areas are bisected by many High Injury Corridors.

Will cameras be placed solely in communities of concern because of the High Injury Corridors, where those who can least afford the tickets will be the most targeted? Or will the BOCC distribute cameras more equitably among schools across the county?

Thoughts?

## No More 9.99 GPA's



This history may resonate painfully with parents of recent and/or current high school students in Hillsborough County. For parents of future high school students, read how HCLWV member Louan Tolbert affected positive change in the school district.

For classes graduating before 2027, additional points for honors, AICE, AP, IB and dual enrollment courses have been *added* to the unweighted GPA. As the enrollment in these classes and the availability of online classes through Florida Virtual School have increased steadily, graduates began to earn GPA's in excess of 9.99, causing confusion for students and parents about college admissions and qualifications for Florida Bright Futures. Students seeking to bolster their class ranks took more weighted classes than required for graduation, resulting in a *quantity over quality* educational focus. In recent years, top ranking students have graduated with over 70 high school credits by taking dual enrollment and online courses. As these students took courses day and night and throughout the summer, school staff members noticed increasing mental health issues.

Louan Tolbert, a member of the HCLWV Education Action Group, is a former high school counselor in Hillsborough County and volunteers at her neighborhood school regularly. Louan used her knowledge base, contacts within the school system, and leadership skills to convince Hillsborough County Public Schools to revise the GPA calculation process for the district. The transition to the new GPA calculation takes effect with the freshman class of 2023.

For the senior class of 2027 and thereafter, a realignment of students' weighted GPA's will be more consistent with college admissions and with other Florida districts. Classes will be weighted as always, but the additional honors points will be *averaged* rather than *added* each semester, and the maximum GPA will be less than 5.0. The new model will be easier to calculate, while encouraging students to focus on the most appropriate classes to meet their educational goals. For more details about the GPA transition, see [this link](#) on the HCPS website.

## Support Hillsborough Public Schools

The Hillsborough Education Foundation's annual EmpowerED Luncheon will take place on Sept. 13, at Armature Works. The Foundation will share how it ensures access to high-quality public education for the success of all students. The event raises funds for thousands of vulnerable students and teachers at the highest needs schools in Hillsborough County. Click [here](#) by August 30 to attend and/or to sponsor the event. Also please inform [president@hclwv.org](mailto:president@hclwv.org) if you would like to sit with other HCLWV members.

## Hillsborough County Single-Member Districts?



By the time you read this, the HCLWV will have already held its July 31 discussion about this and will probably be sending out a statement of the HCLWV's position, along with a request for action. This is very important, so please respond as requested.

The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will be considering the elimination of all countywide members and the addition of two additional single-member districts to increase the total board size to nine single-district members. This would have to be put before voters to be added to the County Charter but discussion by the Commission is expected to start as soon as August.

Moving to single-member districts would have the advantage, probably, of creating an additional Black-majority district, but would also probably make it difficult in the future to increase affordable housing, improve public transit, and support many of the non-profit organizations that currently rely on the County for some or all of their funding. There would also be no one concerned about the County as a whole.

In add insult to injury, the BOCC has indicated that it would like this proposed change to be on the presidential preference primary ballot in March of 2024. Putting this on that ballot would effectively disenfranchise those who won't be voting for presidential candidates, i.e. most third-party voters and any voters whose party has one candidate strongly in the lead.

Write to the BOCC [here](#) to express your concerns and stay tuned.

## NPV Moves Forward

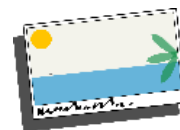
In case you missed it in the Florida Voter of July 18, the National Popular Vote is now one of the League's top issues nationwide, thanks to the Florida Delegation to the national convention!

## Don't Be Unwound

During COVID, keeping people on Medicaid was determined to be an emergency. No one had to requalify. That period has come to an end and Medicaid "unwinding" has begun. All Medicaid recipients should contact the Department of Children and Families ACCESS [here](#) to make sure that their current contact information is on file, so that Medicaid can reach them and renew their benefits.

## Postcards to Returning Citizens

Remember how returning citizens or former felons were given the right to vote in Florida? Remember how difficult and scary that process has become, thanks to elected officials in Tallahassee?



Please think about addressing postcards to returning citizens urging them to look into the possibility of voting. The cards are printed with instructions; all we do is add a note of encouragement, an address, and a stamp.

If you are interested in doing this and live in Pasco County, please contact Chris Conn at [voterservices@hclwv.org](mailto:voterservices@hclwv.org). If you live in Hillsborough County, please contact Elizabeth Corwin at [voter@hclwv.org](mailto:voter@hclwv.org).

The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition hopes to mail 100,000 cards by November and it has reached 35,000 already.

## Another Distant Memory

Remember the ERA? It is still moving forward in Congress. Florida Now is asking all of us to contact our U.S. Representatives to ask them to vote for HJ Res 25, the resolution to affirm the validity of the ERA and remove the arbitrary time limit. Rumor has it that we are near the 200 mark. We need 218 votes to bring the resolution to the House floor for a vote and bypass the possibility of anti-equality legislators holding the resolution captive in committee.

[Help defenders of equality reach that 218 number by contacting your member of Congress and letting them know equality can not wait.](#) Find out how [here](#).

## Speaking of the ERA

The National Women's History Alliance is hosting a webinar on August 19 at 2 pm on why the ERA is urgently needed now.

First proposed by suffragist Alice Paul in 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution is designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. According to its legislative history, it would end legal disparities between men and women in matters of divorce, property, employment, and other areas. This Amendment has been introduced into Congress for 100 years and is still not in the US Constitution. What is the problem with including women in the United States Constitution?

The urgency for getting the ERA inscribed in our Constitution has heightened since the increase in attacks on civil rights, women's equality, and rights! Do something about it. Click [here](#) to attend the webinar, which will be moderated by Christine Pelosi, author and political strategist.

## HCLWV Lifetime Achievement Awards

In 2020, the HCLWV last held its annual LAA luncheon, honoring Liana Fernandez Fix with its Lifetime Achievement Award and the late Dena Gross Leavengood with its Sydney & Thalia Potter Civic Leadership Award. The 15-year tradition of the LAA came to an end with COVID. **We are excited to announce that the LAA luncheon will once again be held - on Feb. 21, 2024. Save the date and plan now to be there!**

In the meantime, start thinking about whom we might honor. The Potter award is presented to an individual who has improved government, protected the environment, or enhanced their community through civic leadership at the local and/or state level. It was established in 2008 to honor Sydney and Thalia Potter.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to an individual who has dedicated his or her life to serving the public through education and advocacy at the local, state, or national level.

Who should join the ranks of Betty Castor, Sam Gibbons, Arthenia Joyner, Jane and Gary Gibbons, and other lions of democracy and fierce activists? For the full list of past honorees, see [here](#).

Download nomination forms here:

[Lifetime Achievement Award](#) and [Potter Award](#).

Think broadly! Think Pasco!

Would you like to work on the luncheon?  
Contact Angela Birdsong at [LAA@hclwv.org](mailto:LAA@hclwv.org).



## 8th Annual Two Good Soles

Pasco County is collecting shoes and socks for students. Please bring new shoes and socks to county offices through Oct. 11. Details can be found [here](#).

## Mobile Mammograms

Mammograms may still be uncomfortable, if not painful, but they can be quite convenient. Advent Health will be conducting mammograms in August and September in schools and other locations in Hillsborough and Pasco Counties. Go [here](#) for information and appointments.

## Vaccines in Pasco

Students in Pasco County can receive their required vaccines in three different locations on four different days. For more information and to make an appointment, call the Pasco Department of Health at 727-619-0300.

## Veteran Care

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, in partnership with the Tampa Bay Rays, will host a VetFest event, Saturday, Aug. 5 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Tropicana Field. Veterans and families do not need to sign up or register for this event, but just need to park in lot 6 and enter through gate 1.

VetFest is held to educate and inform Veterans about the PACT Act and to provide onsite services to include VA health care enrollment, toxic exposure screenings, VA claims assistance, women's health, mental health, whole health, and more. Attendees will also have opportunities to receive guided tours of Tropicana Field and enter drawings for free game tickets, compliments of the Rays.

## NAACP Hillsborough Annual Dinner

The 2023 NAACP annual dinner will be Sept. 30. Check [here](#) for more information.

## Tiger Bay Club



The Mayors of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City will speak on August 18 at the Tiger Bay Club.  
Tiger Bay meets at noon at the Cuban Club in Ybor City.  
Doors open at 11:30.

The Tampa Tiger Bay Club is a non-partisan political group that presents lively discussions on important issues and candidates running for office. To find out more and/or to purchase a ticket to attend, go to <https://www.tigerbayclub.com/>



## Local Theater

American Stage presents *La Gringa* July 19-August 13, by Obie Award-winner Carmen Rivera. Common themes in her works reflect her life as a Puerto Rican born in New York.

If you are feeling murderous, check out Jobsite's production of *Lizzie*, July 12-Aug 6. It's the musical story of Lizzie Borden and her parents. Beginning on Aug. 16, check out *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, by Anne Deavere Smith and about the Rodney King riots.

FreeFall Theatre has *At Home with Ethel Waters* from Aug. 11-Sept. 10, about the pioneering star of film, stage, television, and song.

Catch the humorous *Please Don't Tell My Kids* at Stageworks on August 19 only.

## Save the Dates



## Be An Eco Geek with 1000 Friends of Florida

1000 Friends of Florida has two resources that might be of interest to eco-geeks and voters. The first is a report on SB 250, the bill that addressed the preparation and emergency response activities of both state and local governments when a natural disaster strikes. Read [here](#) what this new law does and doesn't do for Florida citizens.

The second is a report card on legislation that 1000 Friends deemed good, bad, and evil, and how the legislation fared during this past legislative session. Find the report card [here](#).

## Osher Lifelong Learning Institute - USF

If you teach at OLLI and belong to the LWV, let us know! We would like to highlight your class!

OLLI classes in August include:

Imprisoned without Trial: Japanese Internment in WWII;  
Pirates, Warriors and Spies: Women Who Didn't Make the History Books;  
Women Rowing North: Navigating Life and Finding Joy;  
Sex, Drugs, and Your State of Mind; and  
Ice Cream with Grandpa -- Alzheimer's and Family.

Also check out the Shared Interest Groups on China, Politics, and more.



Find out more at [www.usfseniors.org](http://www.usfseniors.org).

## Tampa Bay History Center

Selected July programs include:

- Aug. 12 - Walking tour of Ybor City
- Aug. 19 - Walking tour of downtown Tampa
- Aug. 26 - Living History Saturday: Reading in Cigar City

Find out more at <https://tampabayhistorycenter.org/>.

## The Most Exciting Women's Event This Summer

No, it's not *Barbie*.

What is the most exciting women's event going on now? The World Cup! Catch matches between now and August 20 on Fox and Telemundo. Cheer on Meghan Rapinoe -- the fun grandmother, in her own words -- in her final season. Welcome other old hands as well as newcomers. These are amazing athletes.

## You're Not On the USWNT?

So, you're not on the U.S. Women's National Team in New Zealand or Australia right now? That's no reason to sit around. When you are not watching the matches on television, head to downtown Tampa and check out these [free exercise classes](#).

## What Should We Know?

Do you have a radio show that touches on issues of interest to the League? Are you teaching a class? Have you written a book? Write to [voter@hclwv.org](mailto:voter@hclwv.org).

## Café con Tampa

At 8:00 on Friday mornings over breakfast, people gather at the downtown Tampa Portico to listen, ask questions, and learn about what's going on in Tampa or just as likely the world at-large. Want to know about the city's latest development project? Eager to learn more about historic preservation? Have a question about the political landscape? Want to grill a city council member? No topic is off limits at Café con Tampa whose founders describe the forum as a place for insightful conversations. Find out more at <http://cafecontampa.com/>.

The program on Friday, August 4 will be "The Power of Brevity", with speaker Selene San Felice, of Axios Tampa Bay. Learn about the importance of who brings you your news and how, the Smart Brevity format, and the way the Axios Tampa Bay newsletter works.

## Did You Know?

If you miss a "Lunch and Learn" presentation by our Florida League you can watch a recording of the presentation afterward! Go to <https://lwvfl.org/toolbox/toolbox/lwvfl-lunch-learn-event-recordings/>. If you need the password to access the recordings, contact a board member or chair.

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## Upcoming Member Meetings

Aug 1, 12pm - LWV of Florida Members-Only Litigation Update Webinar. Contact [president@hclwv.org](mailto:president@hclwv.org) if you can't find your LWVFL newsletter with the link.

Aug. 2, 9-10 am - Education Action Group Meeting. Use meeting [link](#) and/or contact [education@hclwv.org](mailto:education@hclwv.org).

Aug. 3, 5:30-6:30 pm - NPV State Meeting. Contact [npvic@hclwv.org](mailto:npvic@hclwv.org).

Aug. 5, 12-5 pm - Juneteenth in Pasco. Contact [pasco@hclwv.org](mailto:pasco@hclwv.org).

Aug. 7, 6-7 pm - Healthcare Action Group. Contact [healthcare@hclwv.org](mailto:healthcare@hclwv.org).

Aug. 9, 7-8 pm - State-wide Gun Safety Meeting. Contact [gunsafety@hclwv.org](mailto:gunsafety@hclwv.org) for the zoom link and/or more information.

Aug. 15, 1-2:30 pm - Voter Protection Meeting. Contact [voterprotection@hclwv.org](mailto:voterprotection@hclwv.org).

Aug. 16, 7-8 pm - DEI & Social Action Group Meeting. Contact [dei@hclwv.org](mailto:dei@hclwv.org)

Aug. 17, 10-11 am - Environment & Climate Meeting. Contact [environment@hclwv.org](mailto:environment@hclwv.org). Participate by zoom [here](#).

Aug. 17, 6-7:30 pm - Pasco Planning Zoom. Contact [pasco@hclwv.org](mailto:pasco@hclwv.org).

Aug. 28, 6:30-8 pm - Board Meeting. All members welcome! Contact [president@hclwv.org](mailto:president@hclwv.org) for more information and a meeting link.

Check the League's website [calendar of events](#) throughout the month for new meetings and events.

Want to know what's coming up? You can now subscribe to our HCLWV Events Calendar so our events show up on your online calendar! Find the subscribe link just below the calendar heading [here](#).

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**EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.**

League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County  
813-461-5365 | [hclwv.org](http://hclwv.org)



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