

The VOTER April 2024

President's Corner

Happy April! Thank you to our members who volunteered for events in March. If you missed the Grand Opening for the Voice & Votes: Democracy in America exhibit at the Sulphur Springs Museum, see the section below on dates and hours for the exhibit. It will be in town until May 19th and there are four more opportunities to help with league tables at the Sunday Speaker Series Events. I'm including this week's Take Action notices in this section but please also scroll down for the April 13th & 20th upcoming events for #Yeson4 - the Amendment for Reproductive Rights. We'll all be watching for the decision today at 4 pm and there will be an Emergency Update call today at 6 pm - the link is in the Amendment 4 section below.



As mentioned in our 'Take Action' notice last week, there are opportunities this week to speak out in support on two very important issues: the Hillsborough County election process & Hillsborough County Public Schools. As you may know, Pasco County was successful in passing a millage referendum for teacher salaries in 2022. Hillsborough County Public Schools is still trying. Here are quick ways to take action if you haven't already:

The Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, April 3rd at 10 am to discuss their vote to reduce the Hillsborough Supervisor of Election's budget by \$200,000. Help us urge BOCC members to support fully funding our election process in an election year.

[Click HERE to see the BOCC Agenda Item language & the LWV of Hillsborough & Pasco Counties' Statement on this Issue which will be read at the meeting](#)

[CLICK HERE to sign up to speak at the April 3rd BOCC meeting \(sign-up opens 4/1 at 9 am\).](#)

[CLICK HERE for the All Voting is Local Call to Action for a Quick Way to Email all BOCC members](#)

If you have more time, consider making personal phone calls and direct emails to those who voted for this reduction:

District 2 County Commissioner Ken Hagan, Chair
Phone 813-272-5452
Email: hagank@hillsboroughcounty.org

District 5 County Commissioner Donna Cameron Cepeda
Phone Number: 813-272-5725
Email: CepedaD@hillsboroughcounty.org

District 4 County Commissioner Michael Owen
Phone Number: 813-272-5740
Email: owenm@hillsboroughcounty.org

District 7 County Commissioner Joshua Wostal
Phone Number: 813-272-5735
Email: wostalj@hillsboroughcounty.org

The Hillsborough BOCC will also discuss a draft ordinance of the Community Investment Tax (CIT) on April 3rd. Some BOCC members are considering excluding education from the list of beneficiaries of the CIT. Help us urge BOCC members to continue to include schools as a beneficiary of the CIT.

[CLICK HERE to speak at the April 3rd Hillsborough BOCC meeting.](#)

[CLICK HERE to email Hillsborough BOCC members.](#)

The Hillsborough County School Board will meet on Tuesday, April 2nd to vote on whether or not to place a local millage referendum on the November ballot. Help us to advocate that board members allow our community to decide if we want to fund local public schools through an increased millage rate. Urge board members to vote YES to place a millage referendum on the November ballot.

[CLICK HERE to sign up to speak at the April 2nd School Board meeting \(901 E. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa\).](#)

[CLICK HERE to email School Board members.](#)

Annual Meeting is May 18th!

Saturday, May 18 - 11:00 AM

Seminole Heights Public Library (4711 Central Ave., Tampa)

Doors open at 10:30 AM

Members and guests - YOU are invited to our annual meeting for 2024! This is when we share the accomplishments of the past League year and plan for the coming 2024-25 year. We will approve a program (aka our priorities), elect officers and a board, approve a budget, and consider changes to our bylaws. We will also have opportunities to ask questions, share feedback, and spend time with each other in person.

We hope you'll attend. Refreshments will be served, and there is no charge to attend. Register today!

[Register here!](#)

Come to a Postcard Party

Friday, April 5, 4-7 pm

Raining Berries - 25595 Sierra Center Blvd., Lutz

We will be addressing and stamping postcards from the State League to returning citizens (those who have served their time for a felony conviction). The postcards provide information for them to access free legal help (provided by the League of Women Voters) to have their voting rights restored.

If you can join us, please contact Chris Conn to let her know you will be there.

[Notify Chris](#)

Monday is Decision Day for Amendment 4 Upcoming #YesOn4 Events

The Florida Supreme Court has an **April 1st** deadline to rule on whether or not the Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion will be on the 2024 ballot. The decision will be released on Monday, April 1st at 4:00 pm. Floridians for

Reproductive Freedom, the group organizing this effort, has scheduled an Emergency Update Call for 6 pm Monday, following the release of a decision. [Click here to RSVP](#)

Leagues across Florida will join the Florida LWV in Orlando for the **#YesOn4 Rally & March for Amendment 4 Repro Rights on Saturday, April 13, 12 PM - 2 PM at Lake Eola Park (195 N. Rosalind Ave., Orlando)**. Please email Teresa Potter at president@hclwv.org if you are interested in representing our league at this April 13th event in Orlando.

The Tampa Bay Area **#YesOn4 Super Saturday event on Saturday, April 20, 10 am-12 pm at Allendale United Methodist in St. Petersburg**. If you can't attend the in-person event in St. Pete, use the first link below and go to page 2 to see a complete list of Super Saturday training events across the state, including a virtual option.

[April 13th Rally & March for Repro Rights](#)

[Tampa Bay Super Saturday Training](#)

Voices and Votes Exhibit Sulphur Springs Museum through May 19

We will be hosting a voter information table at the 2-3 pm Sunday Speaker Series events on April 7, April 21, May 5, and May 19. Go [HERE](#) for information on the speakers and their topics.

[Sign up to help](#)

Sulphur Springs
MUSEUM AND HERITAGE CENTER

1101 E. River Cove St, Tampa, FL 33604
www.sulphurspringsmuseum.org

**Voices and Votes:
Democracy in America**

March 23 – May 19, 2024

This multi-media exhibition, created by the Smithsonian, explores the 250-year-old American experiment of a government "of, by and for the people," from revolution and suffrage, to civil rights and protest.

Grand Opening
Saturday, March 23, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Art and poetry from youth groups Community Stepping Stones and Battleground Poets.
League of Women Voters; Hillsborough County Election Supervisor; elected officials, and community partners.

Sunday Speakers: 2 p.m.

April 7: Dr. David Ponton, USF:
"Racial Subordination & the Meaning of Democracy."
April 21: Dr. Kimberly Voss, U of Central Florida:
"Politicking Politely: Women Making a Difference in the 1960s and 1970s."
May 5: Dr. Philip Levy, USF:
"The Act that Ruined America, and How to Fix It."
May 19: Dr. Elizabeth Aranda, USF:
"Contemporary Challenges to Im/migrant Rights."

Voices and Votes: Democracy in America" is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and state humanities councils nationwide. Support for local exhibitions and programming has been provided by Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Our League has partnered with the Sulphur Springs Museum to bring the "Voice & Votes: Democracy in America" traveling exhibit to our community!

Please visit the exhibit and encourage your friends to do so as well. The museum is open from 11 am - 4 pm Wednesday through Saturday, and admission is free (a \$5 donation is requested).

The museum is located at 1101 E. River Cove St., Tampa 33604.

Urge Local Leaders to Rein in Electric Rates

Our League, through our Environmental and Climate Change Action Group, has partnered with the Affordable Energy Coalition to work with local and state government leaders to reduce the cost of energy, and to increase the use of sustainable power sources in Hillsborough County.

The increasing amount of our income we spend on paying for electricity is a major driver of rising consumer costs. In fact, in the last four years, the average Tampa Electric (TECO) bill has gone from \$99 per month to \$162 per month. That's an additional \$756 per year! These costs keep going up because utilities refuse to quit their fossil fuel addiction. Between international conflicts and corporate greed, the costs of fossil fuels are volatile and ever increasing. And in Florida, the costs of fuel are passed directly on to Florida families.

It's time to urge our elected officials to do something about it! A few months ago, thirteen Hillsborough residents, including League member Steve Kauffman, showed up at a Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners meeting and asked them to fight to give us a voice in TECO rate hike hearings... and they responded by sending a letter to bring TECO rate hearings from Tallahassee to Hillsborough.

Our local leaders can do even more. In Hillsborough County, the county commission can pass policies to increase access to solar, improve energy efficiency (less energy used means lower bills), and invest in resiliency. And we have the power to make them do it!

Send a message to the Hillsborough County Commission to tell them to act on our rising bills. We know they can make a difference if they take action.

[Take Action!](#)

Athena hosts Wit, Wisdom & Women April 18

The Athena Society is hosting Wit, Wisdom & Women on **Thursday, April 18 from 10 am - 2 pm at The Portico, 1001 N Florida Ave, Tampa**. The Athena Society is a women's organization launched in 1976 committed to advancing the status of women through equality, acceptance, education and opportunity.

This is Athena Society's first event open to the public in 40+ years and there is a powerful line-up of 15+ speakers covering various personal and professional topics impacting women, including Bonnie Wan author of The Life Brief.

Click [HERE](#) to purchase tickets.

Women's History Month event at Saint Leo

Members of the League enjoyed participating in a Women's History event at Saint Leo University in Dade City in mid-March. Member Mary McKnight, left, was one of several League members who staffed the table, sharing information and helping many student join the League. League President Teresa Potter, right, spoke during the event.



Moving Maternal Health Forward Event

The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough is hosting a full-day event "***Moving Maternal Health Forward in 2024***," on **Thursday, April 18, 2024 8am - 2pm**. This event will be held at the Children's Board in downtown Tampa and will provide an opportunity to learn and connect with others about health issues affecting individuals before, during, and after pregnancy. This event is open to anyone working in a maternal and child health related field or anyone interested in health issues affecting moms. [Click here for event website.](#)

Please contact healthcare@hclwv.org if you can attend this event on behalf of our League.

Nominate a League Member to the Florida Women's Hall of Fame!

Annually since 1982, the Florida Women's Hall of Fame commemorates women's history by honoring and remembering those women whose lives and contributions have improved the quality of life for both Florida and the nation. With this in mind, we ask that you take time to nominate a deserving woman who has made a difference in the lives of those they serve.

The Florida Women's Hall of Fame is located on the Plaza Level in the rotunda of the Florida Capitol building, where a bronze plaque with an image and biographical summary of each member of the Women's Hall of Fame hangs in tribute. In addition, two digital kiosks allow visitors to engage in a more interactive experience.

We would like our members to consider nominating our local and state-wide heroines to be entered into the Hall of Fame. Nominations are open April 1 through May 31, 2024. More information can be found here: flwomenshalloffame.org.

Local Florida Humanities Programs

Here are a few upcoming programs offered by Florida Humanities in our area:

Black Voices in the Humanities - 6: 30 pm April 10 at the Woodson African American Museum of Florida, 2240 9th Ave., St. Petersburg

Chronicles of Color: "Underground History" Film Screening - 6:00 - 8:00 pm April 11 at the Woodson African American Museum of Florida, 2240 9th Ave., St. Petersburg

Separate is Not Equal: Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education - 6:00 - 8:00 pm April 23 at Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, 2333 34th St S., St. Petersburg.

War in Paradise: World War II in Florida at Home Alive in '45: A World War II Living History Event - 10 am - 4 pm April 27 at Pioneer Museum, 15602 Pioneer Museum Rd., Dade City.

Help us Plan Community Events!

Once upon a time, we organized, co-organized, and sponsored events. Then came COVID. We rarely do that anymore. We also have had organizations ask us to co-host candidate forums with them. But we need help to do everything we want to do!

Would you be willing to work on a committee to set up 'Hot Topics' events to share important information in our community? Would you help coordinate Candidate Forums? Please reach out to president@hclww.org.

Tiger Bay Club

The April 19 lunch will feature a forum of candidates for the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners county-wide district 6. Tiger Bay meets for lunch on the third Friday of the month for good conversation and enlightenment.



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

1000 Friends of Florida Legislative Wrap-Up

A free four-part online seminar series on Planning to Protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor will be presented April 4, April 10, April 24 and May 1 by the University of Florida Center for Landscape Conservation Planning and 1000 Friends of Florida. Topics include Looking at the Big Picture, Fostering Community Vision, The Planning Toolbox, and Building a Big Tent. Attendees may receive professional certification credits. Register at <https://1000fof.org/upcoming-webinars/>



Café con Tampa brings together community activists every Friday morning at 8:00, at the downtown Tampa Portico, for coffee, breakfast, community announcements, networking and a talk. Come learn about what's going on in Tampa or, just as likely, the world at-large. Coming up soon, State Sen. Darryl Rouson will share an End of Season Update from the Florida Legislature on April 5, and Mark Proctor will speak on the Mosley Homestead on April 12.

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/>.

Free Trees

Just a reminder that the City of Tampa will give you and your neighbors trees for free! Developers have to put money into a fund when they chop down trees and there is now over a million dollars in this fund. Let's get these trees planted! There is no cost to you - the City will even plant the tree(s) for you.

Just call 813-274-8615 or visit Tree-Mendous-Tampa.

The Trees available are:

Live Oak, Florida Maple, Bald Cypress, Loblolly Pine, Purple Tabebuia, Yellow Tabebuia, Bottle Brush, Geiger Orange, Japanese Blueberry, Loquat, Silver Buttonwood, Crape Myrtle Natchez

Tampa used to have the largest canopy in an urban area in the world. We can see in our own neighborhoods how the trees have been coming down in record numbers and a recent report released by the City confirms it.

Hillsborough County Transportation Survey

What comes next for safe roads, sidewalks, and bike paths in Hillsborough County? Add your thoughts via the Long Range Transportation Plan survey! This is your chance to have your voice heard as the Transportation Planning Organization sets its goals for our county's future. The survey closes April 15.

All of the projects and priorities listed on the survey are under consideration, whether urged by residents, elected officials, or state officials. The survey results will help determine which of these items receive top billing, so to speak, in county plans.

As you consider transportation priorities in this survey, remember that this is a Long Range Plan. How do you want the county to look in 2050? How do you want your children and grandchildren to be able to move around this region? It's up to you.

Find the survey [here](#).

Tampa Bay History Center

Going on at TBHC this month:

- Downtown Tampa Walking Tour
- Ybor City Walking Tour
- A Florida Conversation on Tampa's Historic Streetcars
- Book discussion on *Through the Groves: A Memoir*, by Ann Hull
- Black History Book Club: *The Miseducation of the Negro*
- Annual Duckwall Lecture on Chinsegut Hill's history

Also, check out the exhibits:

Decade of Change: Florida in the 1920's
Sharps & Marks in Paradise: Florida in the 1920's

Find out more at tampabayhistorycenter.org.



NAACP Hillsborough

Monthly meetings are usually the third Thursday of the month. Check the website at <https://naacphillsborough.org/> for more information.



Hillsborough County residents are in the Tampa Bay Sierra Club while Pasco County residents can join either the Tampa Bay Sierra Club or the Suncoast Sierra Club! Both clubs are active.

The Tampa Bay Club usually meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm. This month "Bear Warriors United" Executive Director Katrina Shadix will present a program an online program titled "Got Bears? I Can Help!" on April 10; go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay> to get the link to join. An Earth Day

Celebration is planned for April 6 and Ecofest is set for April 20.

Take a look at <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/suncoast>. The Pasco Conservation Team is meeting online on April 10.

Upcoming Member Meetings

April 1, 6-7 pm, Monthly Issues Update Meeting. Register [here](#).

April 3, 9-10 am, Monthly Issues Update Meeting (repeat). Register [here](#).

April 5, 4-7 pm, Postcard Party in Lutz. Sign up at voterservices@hclwv.org

April 10, 7 pm, New Member Orientation (via Zoom). Register [here](#).

April 16, 1-2:30 pm, Monthly Voter Protection Meeting. Email voterprotection@hclwv.org for more information and the link.

April 7 and 21, 2 pm, Sunday Speakers at Voices & Votes exhibit, Sulphur Springs Museum. <https://www.sulphurspringsmuseum.org/upcoming-events>

April 22, 6:30-8:30, HCLWV Board. All members welcome. Meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84852744779>

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](#).

EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.

League of Women Voters of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties

813-461-5365 | hclwv.org



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