

The VOTER February 2025

Our February newsletter is coming out on the 4th of the month in February because today is the day that the LWV of the US is launching the new membership portal. Please read below for full details and watch your email for an invitation from LWV-US. Also, scroll down for information on:



- Florida's League Lobby Days - registration is open!
- Pasco County Outreach event planned at Black Heritage Fest on Feb 8th - sign up open!
- National Popular Vote team needs help!
- Don't forget that VBM ballots are expired (AGAIN). Outreach training on Feb 4 & Feb 6.
- We are trying to compile a list of Trusted Sources and ways to spread the word.
- And much more...

And please don't forget that our virtual Monthly Member Meeting is on Wednesday, February 5th at 9AM. We alternate between morning and evening (January was evening) to accommodate all our members. The registration link is on our website and in the calendar section at the very end of this newsletter..

League Lobby Days

Join LWV members and allies from around Florida as we descend on the Capitol in Tallahassee March 11-12. If you have never experienced this before, 2025 is the year to do it.

- Day 1 is filled with comprehensive training that include updates on the current climate of the Florida legislature, lobbying techniques, and in-depth information regarding our 2025 legislative priorities. The day is capped off with an evening awards reception.
- Day 2 is when the work really happens! Our members meet with legislators regarding our legislative priorities, pop into committee meetings, and watch each chamber with an eagle eye as they conduct business and pass legislation.

Lobby Days marks a unique opportunity to humanize our [legislative priorities](#) with our state lawmakers. The League's membership has continued to grow over the past year and we're excited to show that off in the halls of our state capitol. The Tallahassee Four Points Sheraton is the official hotel for Lobby Days.

[Click here for more information and to register!](#) If you are interested in participating, or have already signed up, please email president@hclwv.org so we can connect those who are going for lodging and travel coordination if possible.

Volunteer at Black Heritage Fest - Pasco

Our League will participate in the first Black Heritage Festival in Pasco County on Saturday, Feb. 8, from 11 am to 3 pm. It will be held at the Wesley Chapel District Park, 7727 Boyette Road. We are seeking volunteers to serve in two-hour shifts to register voters and share voting and election information. Sign up below to help.

The festival is sponsored by the Nature Coast Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, in collaboration with Pasco County Parks and Recreation and the African American Club of Pasco County.

This celebration of Black History and culture will offer exciting and educational programming designed for the community to explore the rich history and contribution of African Americans. This community-focused event will showcase African rhythms, storytelling, and HBCU pride. The event's goal is to increase awareness and celebrate Black Achievement, but also to raise funds that will support a College Bridge initiative of providing tools, resources, and financial assistance to help local students become college bound.

[Sign up for Black Heritage Fest](#)

New LWV Membership Portal

The League of Women Voters is switching to a new member portal for all Leagues across the country. LWV-US wants to provide all members with an overview of what these changes mean for you. (There is no action that members need to take right now!)

The system launches today, Monday, February 3rd and all members will receive an email to log in to the portal sometime this week. You will not be asked to renew until a year after your most recent renewal, but you will be given the option to sign up to auto-renew so that your renewal will happen automatically at that time. The portal will also allow you to update your information, including contact information.

When it comes time to renew, you will receive an email reminder. Dues will no longer be a fixed rate but will be pay-what-you-can. The recommended dues amount for all members across the country will be \$75, but members can pay any amount (min. \$20), including the previous dues rate for our local league (\$60).

Under the previous system, our League paid a fixed rate per member to LWV of Florida and to LWV-US. Under the new system, dues will be paid to LWV-US and a percentage of those dues will be distributed to the state league and our local league. This means that when you renew, if you would like to make an additional contribution directly to OUR League, as some members choose to do when they renew, this will need to be done in

the separate section in the online form that allows for donations to your local league. We will continue to provide more information on how this works in the coming months and at the Annual Meeting in April.

There will still be the option to renew by check for members who don't use the internet, but members who are able to access the portal and renew that way are encouraged to do so.

On a member level, we hope these changes will make managing your membership easier. On a national level, this is expected to increase membership around the country and increase our ability to empower voters and defend democracy.

The National Popular Vote

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact has been filed in Florida as HB33. Currently proponents are contacting legislators to request that they co-sponsor this bill. Legislators are limited in the number of bills they can sponsor but can co-sponsor as many as they like. If you know a legislator or want to know a legislator, please volunteer to help. Since we are the LWV of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties, all legislators representing any portion of these counties can be contacted. Interested in helping? Contact [Shirley Arcuri](#)

Legislative Updates

1000 Friends of Florida's website and webinars track legislation related to the state budget as well as bills addressing planning, conservation, transportation, and growth management. You can learn more and sign up for updates [here](#). Note that the first webinar on the 2025 Legislative Session is on Feb. 19.

What other organizations track legislation? Please share those websites with voter@hclwv.org.

Post-Holiday Party

While many of us were defending our homes against pirates, over two dozen League members and guests celebrated the past year at our annual Post-Holiday Party at New World Brewery. The day was a little chilly, but it was a good opportunity to meet in person and discuss ideas for the coming year.

USF Outreach



Our League's first tabling event of 2025 took place Jan. 15 at the USF Market on the main campus, where we provided information on voting and voter registration.

Trusted Sources

(1) Trusted Source of Information on Public Health

Your Local Epidemiologist (YLE) is founded and operated by epidemiologist Dr. Katelyn Jetelina, MPH PhD. Dr. Katelyn Jetelina consults with several nonprofit and federal agencies, including CDC. YLE reaches more than 290,000 people in over 132 countries with one goal: to “translate” the ever-evolving public health science so that people feel well-equipped to make evidence-based decisions. This newsletter is free to everyone, thanks to the generous support of fellow YLE community members. [Sign up for the free email newsletter here.](#) On the fence? [Read Dr. Jetelina's Cliff Notes on the Senate hearings of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. here.](#)

(2) The Truth Brigade for All Subjects

The Indivisible Truth Brigade is a nonpartisan grassroots program designed to combat misinformation. Propaganda, false characterizations, intentionally misleading messages, and outright lies threaten our democracy and even our lives. Independent studies prove that we can persuade a lot of people to stop spreading lies with just one strategic message or conversation. [For more information and to sign up for the Truth Brigade click here.](#)

(3) Trusted Source of Information on Gun Safety

The Trace is the only newsroom in the U.S. dedicated to gun safety -- breaking stories as well as patterns, experiments, and solutions. [Subscribe here for any or all of their newsletters.](#)


Do you know of other trusted sources? Please let us know at voter@hclwv.org.

Tampa Hillsborough Housing Initiative

Volunteers are Needed for the 2025 Point-In-Time Count!

The 2025 Point-In-Time Count is almost here and the Housing Initiative needs volunteers!

Volunteers collect critical data on homelessness, shaping the resources and support for those who need it most.

 When: Thursday, February 27, 2025

 Where: Throughout Tampa-Hillsborough County

Let's help to create a brighter future for everyone.

Click [here](#) for more information and to sign up.

It's Not Too Soon

All vote-by-mail requests in Florida expired on December 31, 2024. Those who would like to have a vote-by-mail ballot mailed to them for elections taking place between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2026, must submit a new vote-by-mail request. This applies to all voters, even if they voted by mail in the 2024 General Election.

Common Cause and All Voting Is Local will offer VBM outreach training for 2024 volunteers as follows:

- [English, Feb 4 at 6:30 pm](#)
- [Spanish, Feb 6 at 6:30 pm](#)

Celebrating Solar Energy

Our work 2022-2023 on Hillsborough County solar co-ops led to multiple community successes.

Now Solar United Neighbors has invited us to an event at which we can swap stories with solar owners and advocates and learn about new and old ways we can build a clean equitable energy system that benefits us all, regardless of income. Whether you want to go solar, or already went solar through one of the co-ops, you are invited to this casual

social for a night of drinks, light bites, and community spirit.

Have a friend, neighbor, partner, colleague or representative that would benefit from hearing first hand about solar? Invite them too!

Thursday February 20, 6-8 PM, Southern Brewery & Winery, Tampa.

Please [RSVP](#).

Free Fitness in the Park

The Tampa Downtown Partnership hosts free fitness classes in downtown Tampa's Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park each weeknight at 6:00.

Mondays: Rumble Boxing

Tuesdays: Zumba

Wednesdays: Barre

Thursdays: Pilates

Sundays: Yoga

For more information on this and other events, click on the logo below.



Exploring Florida's Historic African American Homes

Sulphur Springs Museum and Heritage Center 1101 E River Cove St., Tampa, Florida

This program examines how Black Floridians have made rich contributions to the state throughout its history in all avenues of public and private life, from education to business and politics. Audiences can learn about a selection of Black historical homes across the state from author and public historian Jada Wright-Greene.

Feb. 9, 2-3:30.

Jews of Florida: Centuries of Stories

Virtual/Online

Florida hosts the nation's third-largest Jewish community with a surprising history! This comprehensive history of the Jews of Florida from colonial times to the present is a sweeping tapestry of voices spanning centuries and examines their contributions to Florida's growth. This program is based on Dr. Marcia Zerivitz's book of the same title.

February 17, 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Information available [here](#).



FMoPA's "*Land Land Land*" exhibition offers a captivating collection of photographs by *José Ney Milà Espinosa*, a Cuban-born artist exploring rich spiritual and cultural heritage of the "Yoruba" (Afro-Cuban Santería) and "Kimbiza, Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje," a lesser-known Afro-Cuban spiritual practice. Through powerful imagery, the artist captures the vibrant rituals, sacred symbols, and deep rooted traditions that bridge the African diaspora in Cuba. [Florida Museum of Photographic Arts](#), through Feb. 16.

An exhibition featuring the work of artists Krystle Lemonias and Sharon Norwood explores the value of African American labor and its simultaneous invisibility. [Woodson African American Museum of Florida](#), through March 29, 2025.

Bodies and Souls represents Suchitra Mattai's (Guyanese, b. 1973) first solo Museum exhibition on the East Coast and in Florida. Comprised largely of new works, the show focuses on three themes central to Mattai's practice: migration, motherland, and materiality. [Tampa Museum of Art](#), through April 20.

Jennifer Steinkamp: Madame Curie celebrates two female trailblazers: scientist Marie Curie (Polish-French, 1876-1934) and artist Jennifer Steinkamp (American, b. 1958). Curie remains the only woman awarded two Nobel Prizes for her groundbreaking scientific discoveries and research. Born nearly a century later, Steinkamp is internationally recognized for her monumental installations that unite art with technology. [TMA](#), through August 10.

The X Factor: Latinx Artists and the Reconquest of the Everyday looks to historical, recent and commissioned works by key Latinx artists to engage, depict, and challenge the underlying complexities of identity. *X Factor* underscores a period of political and creative ferment in which fundamental redefinitions of both society and identity abound. [USF Contemporary Art Museum](#) through March 8.

Barbara Peacock's *American Bedroom* series offers a unique glimpse into the unguarded lives of individuals, couples, and families, revealing the depth of their character, truth, and spirit. Each photograph tells a story of love, struggle, hope, and everyday life. At [FMoPA](#), opening Feb. 20.



Returning after a successful run at Stageworks Theatre in 2023 *When the Righteous Triumph* delves deep into the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. This compelling drama brings to life the courageous stories of individuals who stood up against injustice and fought for equality through sit-ins that led to the desegregation of Tampa lunch counters in the 1960s. At the [Straz](#) March 6-9 only.

Celebrate Sisterhood with *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing*. In this modern fairytale, three sisters, left abandoned, take charge of their own destinies. Albiene, the fearless eldest sister, heads East. Beatrix, the adventurous middle sister, heads West. And Carmen, the thoughtful youngest, stays put. Together, they embark on a journey of sisterhood, courage, and self-discovery. Through Feb. 9, at [American Stage](#).

Black Arts Gala – An awards ceremony celebrating iconic African-American achievements in the arts. At the [Straz](#), Feb. 23.

The 2016 film *Hidden Figures* tells the story of the human Black female computers who helped launch the U.S. space program. At the [Tampa Theatre](#), Feb. 23.



Going on at TBHC this month:

- Walking tours and gallery tours;
- Andy Huse explains why Prohibition was such a disaster in Tampa, Feb. 5;
- NPR's Eric Deggans leads a discussion about the Florida Chitlin' Circuit Feb. 19;

- The book group discusses L.L. Kirchner's Florida Girls, Feb. 20
- The Black history book group discusses Black Like Me, Feb. 24.
- Black History Month Gala, Feb. 28.

Click on logo above for more information.



So many OLLI courses starting in February and now there are courses at St. Leo University in Pasco County as well! Click on the above bull for the full catalogue.



Café con Tampa brings together community activists every Friday morning at **8:00**, at the downtown Portico, for breakfast, community announcements, networking, and a talk. No topic is off limits at Café con Tampa whose founders describe the forum as a place for insightful conversations. Click on the logo above for more information, but for the most up-to-date information, subscribe to their email notifications.

Go Green

The Tampa Bay **Collard Green Festival** is an annual, vibrant community event held this year on Feb. 15. The Festival spotlights health, wellness, and cultural heritage. The goal is to raise awareness about heart disease in Black communities and promote accessible solutions for health equity through a celebration of collard greens and farm-to-table eating. Volunteers help bring this vision to life by assisting with fun activities, fitness sessions, cooking demonstrations, as a 5K run. Come for the food and fun or volunteer. More information available [here](#).



Planning to Protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor 2.0: Challenges and Opportunities for Florida's Agricultural Lands.

Approximately 80% of the currently unprotected 8 million acres in the Florida Wildlife Corridor is used for agriculture. These lands, however, are essential to the Corridor and provide vital ecosystem services that benefit all Floridians. Agricultural and conservation leaders will share their perspectives on the challenges facing the agricultural industry, steps to move forward, and strategies to maintain both agricultural and conservation

values on these working lands.

February 12, 12:00- 2:00 pm. For more information and to register, click on the logo above.



The Sierra Club has been a good partner to the HCLWV and has regular outings and events.

Hillsborough residents may join the local Tampa Bay Club. The Suncoast Club now has a Pasco County committee. Both clubs are active outdoors. The Suncoast Club is also active in social justice issues.

The Tampa Bay Group's Conservation Committee meets on the **second Monday of each month at 6:30 pm**. Email [here](#) for details.

The Suncoast Club's political committee usually meets on the **2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm** at the Barbara S. Ponce Library in Pinellas Park. General membership meetings are usually the **3rd Tuesday**. For information about the Suncoast Club's outings, meetings, and activism, click [here](#).

Tiger Bay

The Feb. 21 Tiger Bay lunch topic is "Moving Forward: A Post-Election Discussion with county party leaders."

Pet the tiger to register. The doors of the Cuban Club open at **11:30** and the program starts at 12.



See the Sun!



Upcoming Member Meetings

Feb. 5, 9-10 am, Monthly Issues Update Meeting. [Details](#)

Feb. 17, 12-1 pm, Monthly Board meeting. [Details](#)

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



Copyright © 2023 HCLWV. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

P.O. Box 18933, Tampa, FL 33679

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [unsubscribe from this list](#).