

The VOTER *JULY 2025*

Co-Presidents' Corner:

Hello, members and friends of the Hillsborough and Pasco Counties LWV! Thank you to those who joined us for the Strategic Planning Retreat on June 21. At that meeting, we decided to pilot a new voter information/registration campaign for the City of Tampa special election on Sept. 9 (see Tampa District 5 below). We will have a City of Tampa Special Election Workshop on Monday, July 7, 7pm-8pm.



[**Register Here for Tampa Special Election Workshop**](#)

We will use this city campaign to make a plan for next year's General Election. Also, starting this month, our Monthly Member Meetings will take place virtually on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, from 7 pm-8 pm, starting July 15 so please mark your calendars.

[Click here to register for our virtual Monthly Member Meetings.](#)

It was lovely to celebrate the life of Dr. Idelia Phillips at her memorial last Friday and see so many league members in attendance. We would like to do something special to honor Idelia for her many years of dedication and commitment to the league and our community. One idea is to create an Idelia Phillips Memorial Scholarship for middle school girls to attend STEM camps. Please send your ideas and join us at our Monthly Issues Update Meeting on Tuesday, July 15 to discuss.

Teresa Potter

City of Tampa District 5 Needs You

Tampa residents were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of City Councilwoman Gwen Henderson, none more so than her fellow Council members. A special election will be held on Sept. 9. Candidates must qualify August 11-15. Voters must register by Aug. 11 and request vote-by-mail ballots by Aug. 28. Early voting is Sept. 4-7.

If you live in District 5, think about running for office. Why not? Click on the flag to learn how.



Amendment Petition Collection

Under the new law impacting citizen-led constitutional amendments, House Bill 1205, a volunteer may distribute unlimited forms but may only collect up to 25 without being a registered petition circulator. Since the new law has substantial penalties for registered petition circulators who do not turn in forms on time, league volunteers will not sign up to be registered petition circulators.

The LWV of Florida (LWVFL) is not a sponsor of any of the proposed state constitutional amendments for the 2026 ballot, however we are supporting the amendment to expand Medicaid. The sponsor is Florida Decides Healthcare (FDH). Starting July 1, the procedure for collecting petitions for this amendment will be like the one we use for voter registration. The FDH will provide petition forms and pre-addressed, postage-paid envelopes. We will distribute the forms and envelopes to voters, but we will not collect them ourselves.

Starting July 1:

- Volunteers/local leagues should destroy blank copies of the current petition form as it will no longer be valid. Also destroy any envelopes as the address has changed.
- Volunteers should shift to distribution rather than collection.
- Volunteers may answer questions and review completed forms for correctness, but only without physically handling the signed petition.
- Volunteers should provide pre-addressed, postage-paid envelopes to the voters who will then mail in their own completed petitions. If relevant, know the location of the nearest mailbox and point voters to it.
- Volunteers should not accept any signed petitions or envelopes containing them.

Democracy in Your Hands

LWV-US

If you missed the National LWV email, you might not know that there is an on-going Democracy in Your Hands training series. The schedule is below. Attend any or all sessions. More information is available [here](#).

- Jul. 23, 11am ET | Championing Issues That Matter Most to You
- Aug. 20, 12:30pm ET | Understand the Three Branches of Government
- Sept. 17, 11am ET | Working With Local Election Officials to Anchor Change
- Oct. 22, 3:30pm ET | Building Coalitions to Amplify Action

Register [here](#).

Be a Force for Good?

The deadline for applying for a seat on the Hillsborough DOGE Liaison Committee is July 9. Find the application [here](#).

Status of Road Safety in Tampa Bay

by Transportation Action Group Chair Emily Hinsdale

The 2024 road crash statistics for our region were released this spring:

Hillsborough

Total crashes: 42,706

Severe injuries: 934

Fatalities: 181

Pasco

Total crashes: 11,146

Severe injuries: 482

Fatalities: 109

Pedestrians and bicyclists are involved in only 3% of reported crashes, but account for 20% of severe injuries and 35% of fatalities.

In summary, safety on Tampa Bay roads is... not good.

How do we better to keep people alive getting around town? Here are some tools and ideas:

Speed cameras reduce crashes that cause fatalities and severe injuries by 11-44%.

Communities that have placed speed cameras strategically in dangerous corridors or around critical areas, such as schools, are seeing the benefits around the country ([“The](#)

[Truth About Whether Speed Cameras Make Us Safer](#)”).

What about here in Florida? Florida’s law permitting school zone speed cameras was enacted in June 2023. Cameras are up and running in several school districts around the state. Hillsborough County has launched its program at one school, but we’re still waiting on the City of Tampa and Pasco County to get started.

Narrower travel lanes (reducing lane width from 12 ft to 9 ft, for example) make people drive slower and, therefore, more safely. Lane repurposing - changing a road design from two vehicle lanes in each direction to one vehicle lane in each direction with a center turn lane and bike or transit lane - serves a similar purpose, and also offers space for different road users such as transit, bikers, and walkers. This design also can improve economic development for a neighborhood, making businesses safer and easier to access.

What about here in Florida? In 2023, Florida made it harder to repurpose lanes. The state now requires extensive and expensive studies that emphasize negative public opinion over demonstrated need.

Celebrating car alternatives to promote our need for safer public spaces has worked in other states and countries - it can work here.

What about here?

- Support transit by riding the free HART Rte. 1 bus or the TECO Streetcar.
- Support walking and biking by participating in Tampa’s third annual World Car Free Day on September 20.

Listen to What the Man Said

Important information from Hillsborough SOE

Hillsborough Supervisor of Elections Craig Latimore sent an email to registered voters describing the process and schedule for list maintenance. List maintenance is done to identify changes in a voter’s residence or eligibility, as outlined in Florida law (*Chapter 98, Florida Statutes*). Supervisors of Elections across the state update voter records based on information received from voters and from official sources, including

the Florida Department of State, the US Postal Service, and the Hillsborough County Clerk's Office.

Latimer says it's important to read any mail from him. If voters don't respond to an Address Confirmation Final Notice within 30 days, they will be moved to **inactive** status. If we don't respond to a notice of potential ineligibility within 30 days, they will be **ineligible** to vote unless they re-register before the election deadline.

Inactive voters are still eligible to vote. Our status goes back to **active** if we confirm our address while updating our registration, requesting a Vote By Mail ballot, or voting in person. If we don't do any of those things, after two General Elections our status changes from **inactive** to **ineligible**. Not sure what your voter status is? It's easy to check at VoteHillsborough.gov/VoterLookup. In Pasco County, check your status at pascovotes.gov/Voters/Am-I-Registered.

Obviously members of the LWV vote, but this is good information to know during voter registration and conversations with friends and family.

Alligator Alcatraz



Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier recently announced a plan to build a massive ICE facility on the very site where Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the Everglades Restoration movement defeated the Everglades Jetport in 1970. In fact, that 10,500-foot-long airstrip is the reason Big Cypress National Preserve exists and the reason Douglas became, at age 79, an environmental crusader for the rest of her 108 years of life.

The new plan has been dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" because the prison would be surrounded by a sea of alligators and pythons.

Now it appears that the state overrode local authority and also had started construction the day before the announcement, despite serious environmental concerns raised by the Miami-Dade Mayor and the fact that the land is owned by the county.

Critics charge that the project would desecrate ecologically critical wetlands, trample on Tribal sovereignty, contaminate drinking water in the county, and transform a cherished ecosystem into a prison camp. If you agree with the critics, sign the Sierra Club petition [here](#).

Legislative Debriefs

have launched the **Equal Ground Legislative Debrief Tour**, a multi-city effort to bring legislative transparency and political education directly to communities of color across Florida. Legislative debriefs will be held in our counties on these dates:

- **Pasco County on Thursday, July 24 7pm-8:30pm at Land O'Lakes Recreation Center Rooms 1-2 (3032 Collier Parkway, Land O'Lakes).** Sponsored by Equal Ground, the African American Club, and the National Organization for Women - [RSVP HERE](#)
- **Hillsborough County, on Saturday, July 26 10 am-12pm at The Art Institute of Tampa (4401 N Himes Ave, Tampa).** Sponsored by Equal Ground and the Hillsborough County Black Chamber of Commerce - [RSVP HERE](#)

These important conversations will break down Florida's 2025 legislative session, what passed, what failed, and what it all means for our communities across the state. From attacks on education and voting rights to inaction on economic policies that make Florida more affordable, the panel will unpack the legislative trends that are shaping Florida's future and provide tools to help us stay informed and engaged.

[For more information on events in other counties, click here.](#)

For another sort of debrief, have a look at this partial list from the Naples Daily News of laws going into effect on July 1.



Support Women's Health

Don't miss the St. Pete League's July 7 fundraiser for the Tampa Bay Abortion Fund. Paint 'n Sip with allies at the Hive in St. Pete. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

We're halfway through 2025, what has Tampa Bay Abortion Fund been up to?



- We have paid clinics over **\$454,000**
- Spent **\$59,000** on practical/travel support
- Gotten over **2000** people filling out our intake form
- Dispersed **1000s** of emergency contraception and condoms
- Started mailing out **free** OPill to Floridians
- Hosted or have been apart of **15** events



Let's Make Some Good Trouble

Keep your eyes on the [Good Trouble Lives On](#) website for a list of July 17 actions to respond to the attacks on our civil and human rights and to remember that in the U.S., the power lies with the people.

July 17 is the anniversary of Congressman John Lewis's passing. Non-violent events are taking place in Tampa and all over Florida to honor his legacy of Good Trouble.

From voter suppression bills like the SAVE Act to the criminalization of protest, we are witnessing a full-scale attack on our civil and human rights. This is more than a protest; it's a moral reckoning and a continuation of the movement Lewis helped lead.



Tampa Celebrating 138th Birthday

Tampa turns 138 in July and there are many activities to mark the birthday and to recognize Archives Awareness Week. Some of them include learning about the staff of the Plant Hotel in 1925; a tribute to the first female city clerk; a tour of the Newman Cigar factory; a discussion of Black historical artifacts; a review of Booker T. Washington

School; an opportunity to see Tampa Airport's archives; and the dedication of markers at three historical cemeteries. Additional activities take place at museums, libraries, Centro Asturiano, and Sacred Heart. See the full list [here](#). You can even learn how to set up your own archives!

Bag Bans

Senate Bill 1822 and House Bill 565 died this year, so Florida will continue to allow single-use plastic bags. But if you have a moment, read [this article](#) about how effective such bans are.

Let Us Eat Berries

Who doesn't love summer vegetables and fruit? But how many of us know how safe our food is? To learn about the healthfulness of our food, take a look at the [EWG guides](#) to the dirty dozen and the clean 15. If produce isn't your thing, you should know that the EWG puts out lots of guides, including one to sunscreens and one to chocolate!



Ethical Shopping in Tampa

If you like Starbucks, try to frequent the Starbucks at 1300 S. Dale Mabry, across from the Publix. This is one of the few Starbucks nationwide that have succeeded in unionizing. If you support that, when asked for your name, say "pro-union!"

If you don't like Starbucks or even if you do, consider getting your coffee at CUP on S. Dale Mabry, downtown, or at St. Joseph's Hospital. CUP -- Coffee Uniting People -- hires and trains people with developmental challenges. Read all about it [here](#).

If you haven't discovered [Meacham Farm](#) yet, check out this organic farm in downtown Tampa. Or perhaps you are closer to [Sweetwater Farm](#)? Both farms offer fresh produce while also reaching out to the communities around them.

Please feel free to send similar tips to voter@hclwv.org.

Tiger Bay

Join the non-partisan Tiger Bay Club the third Friday of each month for discussions of current events. On Friday, July 18, there will be a 2025 Legislative Update. The speakers or panelists haven't been announced yet, but stay tuned.

Doors at the Cuban Club in Ybor City open at 11:30 and the program begins at 12.

Click on the Tiger below for more information and to register.



Ethical Boating with



**TAMPA BAY
WATCH**

If you want to hit the water but avoid gas-powered boats, Tampa Bay Watch's eco-boat tours are for you. Check out their schedule of educational boat trips [here](#). Tampa Bay Watch captains do not use illegal methods to draw out the marine life during their tours,

like some other tour operators.

Also read about their oyster bed restoration program and more. Your boat tour money goes to some very good causes.



Want to train parents about common sense questions to ask and actions to take about guns in their homes and other people's homes? Take a on-line training course on July 15. Find the information on Facebook at the [Mom's Demand Action](#) page.

The Performing Arts



In *Witch Hunt or, A Discourse on the Wonders of the Invisible World*, written by Liz Duffy Adams, ten years after Abigail Williams, instigator of the witch trials, disappeared from Salem, she turns up at the tavern of her fellow ex-witch-hunter, Mercy Lewis. About to leave the colonies forever, it's her last chance to understand the madness that overtook them. But with war threatening northern New England yet again, Mercy and her fellow townspeople are in no mood for

Abigail's doubts, which suggest complicity with the devil. And just when everything is most dangerously tense—the devil himself shows up. [Powerstories Theatre](#), July 11-12.

Check out the "One Night Only" summer music series hosted by [Studio@620](#) and the Green Book of Tampa Bay.

The July 26 R&B and folk concert features Shelby Sol & Ari Chi.



The Plastic Arts



Jennifer Steinkamp: Madame Curie celebrates two female trailblazers: scientist Marie Curie (Polish-French, 1876-1934) and artist Jennifer Steinkamp (American, b. 1958). Steinkamp is internationally recognized for her monumental installations that unite art with technology. [TMA](#), through August 10.

Visit the monumental Harriet Tubman sculpture in the Legacy Garden of the [Woodson African American Museum](#) in St. Pete. Admission is free. Indefinitely.

Another Weeping Woman photographs by Diana Sosnowska at the [Florida Museum of Photographic Arts](#), through July 13.

In the Out/Out the In includes draped, shirred, and pleated paintings by Nina Yankovitz. [St. Pete MFA](#), through Sept. 21.



So many OLLI courses throughout Hillsborough County and at St. Leo University in Pasco County as well! Want to learn about these topics and more? Click the logo above.

- Energy Real Issues, July 8-22
- The Films of Paul Newman, July 8-Aug. 12
- The Resonance and Residue of the First African American Press, July 14-21
- Women in Medicine who didn't Make the History Books, July 14
- The Supreme Court Today, July 14
- American Heroes of the Holocaust, July 16
- Hidden History: Spanish Immigrants in 19th Century America, July 16-23
- Presidents in Crises, July 22-29
- Case Studies in Democracy, July 24-Aug 21
- The Ground Glass Scare of 1917-1918, July 24
- Case Studies in Democracy, July 14-Aug. 21

Don't forget to check out the great tech classes on offer.



Going on at TBHC this month:

- Gallery Exhibit: Invisible Immigrants: Spaniards in the US (1868-1945)
- Pizza and Trivia
- Archive Awareness Month events
- Tampa's 138th Birthday events

Click on logo above for more information.

The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow!

In June, the Tampa Bay Suns won their League's national championship, adding to Tampa Bay's list of successes.

It's not too late to buy tickets for the Sun's 2025-2026 season! Let's get out and support the first and only women's professional sports team in the area and the national champions! Click on the logo.



Café con Tampa is a 501(c)(3) organization that holds community forums to discuss important issues facing Tampa Bay. The weekly gatherings of neighborhood and community leaders take place on Fridays at 8 am at The Portico at 1001 N. Florida Ave., Tampa.

At the Friday gatherings, speakers talk for 5-10 minutes. The rest of the time is spent with Q&A and discussion of issues brought up by participants. Participants are welcome to make community announcements at the beginning of the program

To view the next event, visit [Upcoming Events](#). If you are interested in becoming a speaker, visit [Speaking at Café con Tampa](#).

Upcoming Member Meetings

July 7, 7-8pm, [City of Tampa Special Election Workshop](#).

July 15, 7-8 pm, [HCLWV Monthly Issues Meeting](#).

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

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