

## *The VOTER*      *JUNE 2025*

### ***Co-Presidents' Corner:***

Hello, members and friends of the Hillsborough and Pasco Counties LWV!

As your new co-president for the 2025-2026 year, I'm both honored and excited to step into this leadership role alongside Teresa Potter. I'd like to share a bit about myself, why I'm here - and why I believe so deeply in the mission of the League of Women Voters.



I'm passionate about serving the communities I live in. I've worked in volunteer capacities with organizations such as Dress for Success, Cooking Matters, No Kid Hungry and Susan G. Komen's Race for the Cure. In recent years, I've focused my efforts on initiatives that address food insecurity, from food banks to serving as a chef educator in under-resourced neighborhoods.

I come to this position as a retired Air Force Officer, with 27 years of service. I grew up as part of a Marine Corps family and spent a significant portion of my childhood living abroad which allowed me to observe the United States from the vantage point of living outside of it. I witnessed our nation as one of freedom and opportunity, with rights that served as a blueprint for democratic governance and constitutional protections. I'm passionate about protecting rights that were hard-won and fought for, and I believe there's no greater calling than strengthening democracy at the community level.

I'd like to thank the League members from across Florida that I joined during Lobby Days 2025 in Tallahassee. That experience affirmed my belief in the power of grassroots advocacy and the importance of showing up. I also want to thank Teresa Potter for her partnership as co-president, and for encouraging me to join the league and step into leadership. I'm so excited to have 'found my people' here in the Tampa Bay area.

Looking ahead, I'm especially eager to focus on two areas: deepening our community outreach and advancing our legislative priorities. I look forward to responding to LWV calls to action at the state and national levels, and representing our chapter's voice in those broader efforts. The strength of any organization lies in its members, so I appreciate your dedication, knowledge and willingness to act!

I hope you'll join me in getting involved this year. We need one another - in meetings, in advocacy, at voter registration events, and everywhere our shared values take us. The work of the LWV continues in force from its birth in the final months before the

ratification of the 19th Amendment until now! I'm grateful to be in this work, boots-on-ground, with all of you!

*Diana Bishop-Pecha*

## Our New Leadership!



*Elected leaders in attendance after the election: [L-R] Betsy Braden, Secretary; Teresa Potter, Co-President; Emily Hinsdale, Director; Sally Wilson, Director; Laurie Winkles, Vice-President; Johanne Castagan, Treasurer; Tim Burke, Nominating Committee; Diana Bishop-Pecha, Co-President; Norin Dollard, Nominating Committee Chair; Ida Williams Campbell, Director; Cheryl Umberger, Director. Not present: Ami Marie Grainger-Welch, Director; Christina Conti, Director; Angela Birdsong, Nominating Committee.*

Our Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, May 17, at the Seminole Heights Public Library, with 45 members and four guests in attendance.

We have an exciting group of both new and long-time leaders for the coming year who will guide us in our program activities and toward our goals.

Check out the [HCLWV website](#) for our 2025-26 programs and contact our action group and committee chairs to get involved!

## Membership Expiring? No Problem!

Have you received an email notifying you of your membership expiration? Don't worry! All that means is, it is time to RENEW!

You may have heard that the renewal process has changed. It has. The League of Women Voters US (our national expression) has taken over the task of membership tracking, including accepting dues for new or renewing members. There are some differences from when you joined or renewed last time:

- You will renew by going to the national website, specifically [here](#).
- League membership dues are now on a "pay what you can" basis. Dues are on a sliding scale, with a recommended rate of \$75 per person. You may renew at as low as \$20.
- There are no longer "Student" memberships (which used to be free).
- There are no longer "Household" memberships, however you can add more than one person to your renewal by following the instructions for that option
- There are no longer our local "Sponsorship" level memberships (Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catts), which allowed our local members to donate the difference in cost between regular membership and the amount paid for the sponsorship to the Hillsborough/Pasco league. If you would like to make a donation directly to our league, there is an opportunity to do so during the join/renewal process.

If you require assistance, or have any questions about this new process, please contact our Membership Chair, Ida Campbell, at [membership@hclwv.org](mailto:membership@hclwv.org).

## 2025 State Convention Coming Up June 6-7

Attending events sponsored by the Florida League of Women Voters is a terrific way to deepen your understanding of League activities and priorities, engage in organizational capacity building, and get to know fellow League members.

The LWVFL Biennial State Convention will take place in Orlando on June 6 and 7, 2025. The convention provides an opportunity to participate in the LWVFL Convention Plenary and vote on:

- LWVFL's Program
- Budget
- Board of Directors and Nominating Committee
- Submitted bylaws amendments
- and more.

Other activities include a reception and dinner on Saturday night and a variety of breakfast sessions and workshops hosted by members and supporters at all levels. There will also be opportunities to network with fellow League members, participate in training sessions, and hear from dynamic speakers.

Registration and details for the State Convention: [lwvfl.org](http://lwvfl.org)

HCLWV will provide financial support to members attending this event. The amount of support will depend on the number of folks traveling as part of our delegation. Our chapter can have up to 13 voting members attend and we have 3 confirmed so far. Please let us know you are attending at [president@hclwv.org](mailto:president@hclwv.org). Funding is also available from the LWVFL -- check [here](#).

## League Leaders to present at convention



**Teresa Potter**



**Norín Dollard, Ph.D.**

Two of our League members, Teresa Potter, Co-President, and Norín Dollard, Ph.D., who is also Senior Policy Analyst/KIDS COUNT Director, Florida Policy Institute, will present a workshop at the LWV Florida State Convention in June: **Advocate Like a Pro: Florida Public School Funding Demystified.**

Education is the bedrock of democracy and is currently under threat at the local, state, and federal level. Many of the largest margins of victory in the 2024 elections were the approval of new or renewed property tax referendums to supplement inadequate state funding of public schools. Those overwhelming majorities are a clear indication that the education of Florida's children is a top priority among voters, and that state funding is not adequate.

This workshop will explain current Florida education funding, the league's education platform, and how to advocate to increase funding for public schools. We will also cover potential impacts of proposed state and federal cuts.

## Equal Ground Legislative Debrief Tour

The **Equal Ground Legislative Debrief Tour**, a multi-city effort to bring legislative transparency and political education directly to communities of color across Florida, is coming to Tampa on **Saturday, June 7th at 3:00 PM EDT** for an event hosted by Equal Ground in partnership with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Gamma Theta Omega

chapter. This important conversation 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, they'll unpack the legislative trends that are shaping Florida's future and provide tools to help you stay informed and engaged.

During this session, you can expect:

- A comprehensive overview of major bills and policy changes
- Insightful discussion on political trends and their long-term impact
- Space for live Q&A and community reflection
- Tools and resources for continued civic engagement

RSVP today [here](#) to reserve your spot. Once you register, you'll receive a confirmation email with additional event details.

## Volunteer for Juneteenth in Pasco County!



Our League is participating in the 5th Annual East Pasco Juneteenth Community Celebration from 11 am - 2 pm on Saturday, June 21. This free event gives us a chance to share current information on voting, elections and citizens' amendments with the community, as well as helping people register to vote.

Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19th, is an American holiday marking the end of slavery in the United States. Recognized as a federal holiday in 2021, Juneteenth continues to be a day of unity and reflection across the country.

Because the event lasts just 3 hours, we are scheduling one block with four volunteers, but you are welcome to sign up for a shorter time frame; just let us know in the comments. We'd love to see you there!

Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0945ABA62BA1F9CE9-57142472-east>

## Monitoring the County

The Hillsborough County Charter Review Board is meeting again. They meet at 6 pm on the second Tuesday at the County Center in downtown Tampa and the next meeting is June 10. The basic website is <https://hcfl.gov/councils/charter-review-board>.

If you would like to volunteer to attend and observe the meetings, contact [president@hclwv.org](mailto:president@hclwv.org). It wouldn't be a huge time burden, but would be helpful for our board to see what the charter review board members advocate for, in the likely event we want to take positions.

## Moving Forward with Petition Collections

**House Bill 1205** passed the Florida Senate and House and was signed into law by Governor DeSantis on May 2. This law will significantly affect the process for proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution via citizen initiatives going forward. While the overall law became effective on May 2, significant portions of the law do not become effective until July 1.

**League members are justly concerned with how the League will proceed with collecting any petitions, in particular, the “Right to Clean Water” and “Medicaid Expansion” petitions.**

First, it is important to understand that the League is not the sponsor of either of these proposed amendments. Therefore, we should look to each of the sponsors for guidance about their own petition. Each petition sponsor has issued different guidance as to how they want their volunteers to proceed for now. As such, the League will follow the guidance of these individual organizations for the gathering of their organization's petitions up to July 1, 2025, when additional prohibitions and penalties will become effective. We will issue further guidance as that effective date approaches.

**Florida Right to Clean Water** is the sponsor organization of the Right to Clean Water petition. They have issued the following guidance which we will adopt:

- Please note we are currently suspending collection operations due to the new law signed in on Friday, May 2nd, that places (we believe an unconstitutional level of) burdens on you and this citizens' initiative.
- Please turn in any signed petition ASAP to your county captain, regional coordinator, or our main address: FL RTCW, 13300 S. Cleveland Ave, Ste 56, Fort Myers, FL 33907 and hold off for now in collecting more signatures until we've been able to provide you with the guidance based on these new legal requirements.
- If you have any questions, please email [admin@floridarighttocleanwater.org](mailto:admin@floridarighttocleanwater.org).

**Florida Decides Healthcare** is the sponsor organization of the Medicaid Expansion petition. Their guidance is essentially the opposite. Petition gathering will continue with two changes, in order to comply with the law:

- First, do not use pre-filled petitions or fill in any portion of the petition. The voter must complete the entire form themselves.
- Second, petitions must now be turned in within 24 hours of collection to a **hub** or mailed to: Florida Decides Healthcare, c/o Cynthia Caldwell, 12869 Boney Road,

Jacksonville, FL 3226. NOTE: This is not the address on the petition form.

- Any completed, signed petitions that you currently possess should be immediately turned into a hub or mailed to the address indicated above, sorted by county with a **cover sheet**. Use this **form** to request pre-paid postage, if needed, to return completed petitions (postage request question is next to last question on form).
- If you have any questions, please email [anachristina@floridadecideshealthcare.org](mailto:anachristina@floridadecideshealthcare.org).

**There will be major changes in petition collection procedures starting on July 1, these will include modifications in the petition form itself and requirements for petition collectors. Stay tuned as implementation of this law unfolds!**

## Defending Democracy in Florida

On May 13, the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL) and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) filed a motion to intervene in a federal lawsuit to challenge Florida's House Bill 1205, which erects major barriers to participating in the state's ballot initiative process. LWVFL and LULAC, represented by Democracy Defenders Fund, argue that HB 1205 is unconstitutional because it violates the organizations' and petition collectors' and circulators' First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendment rights to free speech, due process, and assembly – threatening the future of direct democracy in the state.

"The right to pursue citizen-led ballot initiatives is enshrined in the Florida state constitution," said Debbie Chandler, co-president of the League of Women Voters of Florida. "This new law doesn't just make it harder to utilize this constitutionally protected process, it makes it virtually impossible. It's a shameful and illegal attack on Florida's voters by legislators who are unwilling to listen to the voters."

"The passage of HB 1205 is just the latest egregious attack on direct democracy that the League of Women Voters has been tracking across the country," said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the US. "In a healthy democracy, voters can see widely supported ideas enacted into law; instead, we see politicians try to silence voters, entrench their own political power, and undermine direct democracy. The League is proud to stand with our Florida chapter in fighting back against this antidemocratic law in court."

Among its provisions, HB 1205 would:

- Shorten the time-frame within which sponsors must return signed petitions to Supervisors of Elections from 30 days to 10 days
- Require petition circulators to re-register with the state and to be both US citizens and Florida residents
- Subject those who make a mistake to severe criminal penalties or fines

- Require voters to include their ID number (driver's license, ID card, or SSN) when signing a petition

## Nonprofit VOTE focus: Voter ID requirements & name changes

Nonprofit Vote is sharing information each month to promote Voter Engagement, and this month's focus is on voter ID requirements and name changes.

Between ongoing advocacy efforts against [the SAVE Act](#) and the recent REAL ID deadline, it's been an eventful several weeks around the topic of how voter ID issues can impact ballot access. On page 15 of the [Voter Engagement Guide](#), you'll find a rundown of best practices around voter ID questions, as well as common questions and concerns that nonprofits are likely to run into.

## LGBTQ+ Sex Ed Series



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Rainbow Room Summer Series w/Planned Parenthood  
Every week, June 1st - August 24th, Sundays at 4:00 pm EST

A virtual LGBTQ+ Centered Sex Education Series

[Click here to register](#)

## Public Meeting on Pasco County's Stormwater Master Plan

Only two weeks to go! Get ready as [#PascoCounty](#) Public Works would like to share our Stormwater Master Plan. The plan shows stormwater areas of concern and how we plan to address flooding.

Attend one of our two public meetings in June.

- June 3, 2025, from 6-8 p.m. at the West Pasco Government Center Boardroom.
- June 10, 2025, from 6-8 p.m. at the Historic Pasco County Courthouse Boardroom.

Your feedback is important. For more information about the project, visit [mypasco.net/swmp](http://mypasco.net/swmp).

## Sulphur Springs Museum June Events

**Sulphur Springs**  
MUSEUM AND HERITAGE CENTER. PRESENTS

**NOW - JUNE 21**

**JOURNEY TO FREEDOM**  
AN EXHIBITION ON EMANCIPATION

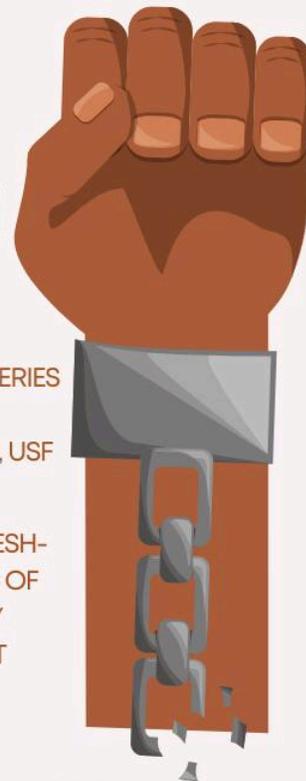
**SUN. JUNE 15, 2PM**  
**JUNETEENTH, PRIDE,  
FREEDOM AND LOVE**

SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES  
PRESENTATION BY  
DR. DAVID PONTON, USF

**SAT. JUNE 21, 1-3PM**  
**JUNETEENTH  
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## Celebrate World Ocean Day

Dive into a wave of fun and learning at World Ocean Day events.

**Saturday, June 7 9-11 AM**, Gandy Bridge: Team up with Tampa Bay Waterkeeper and Suncoast Sierra Club for a **paddle-powered cleanup adventure**. Rent a kayak from Urban Kai or bring your own and help us sweep away the nasties from our waterways!

Or, meet us at the **Clearwater Aquarium on Saturday, June 7, from 10 am to 2 pm**. Admission to the event is completely **FREE**, and you'll also receive a **fantastic 20% discount for your visit to the Aquarium** afterward. Check out the cool exhibitors hanging out in the 4th-floor ballroom.

Let's make a splash for the ocean!

## Durney Key Restoration

The Florida Suncoast Sierra Club is providing a grant and helping to recruit volunteers for the Durney Key restoration. Join an educational seminar by UF/IFAS Extension Florida Sea Grant Pasco County about the project, led by the Energy and Marine Center. The seminar takes place from 5-6 pm on Tuesday, June 24, in the Magnolia Room of the New Port Richey library.

The project involves surveying invasive species, assessing oyster beds, monitoring water quality, removing litter, and replacing invasive plants with natives. Goals include enhancing oyster habitats, reducing erosion, improving ecosystem health, and creating a safe public space. Learn about the project, sponsors, and volunteering opportunities.

## Tiger Bay

Join the non-partisan Tiger Bay Club the third Friday of each month for non-partisan discussions of current events. On Friday, June 20, the topic will be "State of the State" with guest Wilton Simpson, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture.

Commissioner Simpson has served as the Florida commissioner of agriculture since 2023. From 2012 to 2022, he served as a member of the Florida Senate, representing areas

around Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco Counties and was elected Senate President for the 2020-2022 legislature.

Click on the Tiger below to register.



## Who Needs Single-Use Grocery Bags?

Plastic debris can choke and entangle wildlife as well as leach harmful chemicals into our water. As one of the largest users of plastic bags, please sign the Sierra Club's [petition](#) that specifically asks Publix to cease using disposable plastic bags and also add your own comments on Senate Bill 1822 and House Bill 565 which they are supporting. Your petition and remarks will go directly to Publix.

Be polite, but firm. Praise what they are doing right. Critique and ask for change on what they are doing that harms the environment.

## Beyond Baseball Sessions



## **BEYOND BASEBALL:**

### **New perspectives and possibilities for St. Pete's 86 most contemplated acres**

Now that the deal between the Tampa Bay Rays and the city of St. Petersburg has fallen through, we are presented with a new opportunity – one that invites all of us to reimagine the future of this important space together. What are the possibilities for place-making? How do we, as a community, make the most of this opportunity in a way that honors the past and positions us for future-focused growth? What should this space include? Who should it serve? How do we ensure equity, accessibility and sustainability, not only in its development but in the way it functions as a new anchor in our city's landscape?

Join the Tampa Bay Times for a dynamic community conversation featuring a panel of diverse voices and perspectives. We'll hear from place-making experts, longtime residents, local leaders and more as we explore what's next for this vital part of St. Petersburg's future.

**Tuesday, June 3 - Free Admission and Parking**

**5-6 pm Living Showcase; 6-7:30 pm - Panel Discussion**

**At Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg's Center for Health Equity, 2333 34th St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33711.**

Tickets [here](#)

**Florida Talks:**

**Oh, Florida! How America's Weirdest State Influences the Rest of the Country**  
10-11 am Saturday, June 6 at Spring Hill Branch Library, 9220 Spring Hill Drive,  
Spring Hill.

Some people regard Florida as nothing but the Punchline State because so many weird things happen here. Craig Pittman argues that it is also the greatest state with the greatest impact on other states. In this presentation based on his hilarious and thought-provoking New York Times bestselling book *Oh Florida!*, Mr. Pittman explains how what he calls The Most Interesting State got to be the way it is.

Craig Pittman is a native Floridian. Born in Pensacola, he graduated from Troy State University in Alabama, where his muckraking work for the student paper prompted an agitated dean to label him “the most destructive force on campus.” After 31 years at the *Tampa Bay Times*, he now writes a weekly column on environmental issues for the Florida Phoenix and co-hosts the podcast “Welcome to Florida”. He has written six non-fiction books about Florida and lives in St. Petersburg.

Registration is suggested but not required to attend.

Register at <https://hernandocounty.librarycalendar.com/event/florida-talks-oh-florida-how-americas-weirdest-state-influences-rest-country-spring-hill>



## 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) at the Tampa Museum of Art through August 10. 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.

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*Green Book of Tampa Bay Legacy Unveiled* opened May 31 at [Studio@620](#) and highlights the creativity and cultural impact of local Black artists. Through June 30.



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

- Climate Change 101 - Thursdays, June 12-19, 11M - 12:30 pm
- Energy Real Issues - Tuesdays, July 8-22, 1-3 pm
- Presidents in Crises - Tuesdays, July 22-29, 1-3 pm
- Case Studies in Democracy - Thursdays, July 24-Aug 21, 1-2:30 pm



Going on at TBHC this month:

- June 14 Ybor City Walking Tour
- June 19 Online Book Discussion: "If You See Them: Young, Unhoused and Alone in America"
- June 21 Downtown Tampa Walking Tour
- Gallery Exhibit: Invisible Immigrants: Spaniards in the US (1868-1945)

Click on logo above for more information.



## Save our Manatees!

The Tampa Bay Sierra Club is hosting an online session on the status of manatees in Florida. Their speaker will be Beth Brady.

Beth is the Director of Science for the Save the Manatee Club.. This club was founded in 1981 by Jimmy Buffett and Governor Bob Graham. Beth will be discussing the biology of manatees, the threats they face, and research efforts to aid in conservation. The session will be held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Online: [Google Meet](#) (6:45 to share, 7:00 for program)

# The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow

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. Click on the logo.



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## *Upcoming Member Meetings*

June 4, 9-10 am, Monthly Issues Update Meeting. [Details](#)

June 6, 7, 8, State League of Women Voters Convention, Orlando. [Details](#)

June 14, FLAG DAY

June 19, JUNETEENTH/FREEDOM DAY

June 21, 11am-2pm, East Pasco Juneteenth Community Celebration

June 25-29, League of Women Voters US National Council, Leesburg, VA. [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](#).

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**EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.**

**League of Women Voters of Hillsborough and Pasco Counties**

**813-461-5365 | [hclwv.org](http://hclwv.org)**



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