

The VOTER *OCTOBER 2025*

Co-Presidents' Corner:

Dear League Members,

October continues the important work of voter education. National Voter Education week is Oct 6-10, and we are excited to have tabling events at Lush Cosmetics at Tampa's International Plaza and Brandon's Town Center planned for Oct 4-5 and Oct 10-12. Please consider joining us to help engage voters!



Also this month, voters in Tampa District 5 will head to the polls for a special city election on October 28. In preparation for that, we have been holding voter registration and tabling events to encourage people to check their voter registration status, vote-by-mail status, and polling locations and hours, and to encourage those in District 5 to vote.

Make sure to scroll down to see details and RSVP for important October events, such as the Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation meeting on Oct 21 and the Tampa Bay Leagues Member Meeting that we're hosting with leagues from St. Petersburg, North Pinellas, and Manatee on Oct 23. Mark your calendars and RSVP to come out and meet our new LWV of Florida President and members of our fellow Tampa Bay leagues.

And as always, scroll to the bottom or go to <https://hclwv.org/news-events/events-calendar/#!calendar> for our monthly member meetings.

Protest Mid-Decade Redistricting Oct 4 Day of Action

As you know, the Florida Legislature is contemplating an unprecedented effort to redraw the state's Congressional maps in the middle of the decade with no new Census numbers to justify the effort.

That's why we are mobilizing into action on Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025. From 11 am to 4 pm, League members and volunteers have the opportunity to make calls from the comfort of their home to our neighbors across the state. The task is simple: To talk with our neighbors and let them know about the League of Women Voters of Florida's stance on

the mid-decade redistricting process.

Let our elected officials know on Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025 that redistricting mid-decade, without new Census data, ignores the will of the voters, undermines the State Constitution, and flies in the face of our democratic principles of fair voting.

Sign-up today to make calls by clicking here.

Yes, Your Vote is Your Voice, But Your Actual Voice is Very Powerful

The Florida 2026 legislative session begins Jan. 13, 2026 and the LWVFL will gather in Tallahassee on Jan. 19 for two days of lobbying! Join in!

During Lobby Days, we meet directly with lawmakers, share our priorities, and advocate for policies that reflect our mission and strengthen our democracy. It's our chance to be heard during the policy-making process at a time when citizens' voices are being silenced in this state and more broadly.

For a look at last year's Lobby Days, [click here](#).

More information will come from the LWVFL in the coming months about training, preparing, and lobbying on Jan. 20-21. HCLWV will attempt to coordinate carpools for those coming from Hillsborough and Pasco counties.

Lobby Days are exhilarating in many ways.

Protest Kings on Oct. 18

Oct. 18 is the next date for national No Kings protests. At this point, there are protests planned for Tampa, Trinity, Plant City, Sun City Center, Wesley Chapel, and Riverview, plus all over Pinellas County. Go to [this map](#) to find a protest at a place and time convenient for you.

Speak Truth to Power in Hillsborough

Would you like to speak directly to the 15 state lawmakers who represent Hillsborough County in the Florida Legislature? Here is your opportunity. Plan now to attend the

Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 10 am to 2 pm at the TPepin Hospitality Centre, 4121 N 50th St, Tampa, FL 33610.

Speakers typically have three minutes to make remarks towards the end of the meeting. If you wish to provide printed materials for the meeting, you must bring 15 copies to the Delegation Chair's District Office, Suite 210, 1101 Channelside Drive, Tampa, 33602, before the event.

The meeting is in-person only. **The deadline to sign up to speak is Saturday, Oct. 11,** although we encourage speakers to sign up early. Sign-up to speak [here](#).

Please email Teresa and Diana at president@hclwv.org if you can speak on behalf of the league at this meeting. We have talking points [here](#) on our opposition to mid-decade redistricting and other topics.

Speak Truth to Power in Pasco

The Pasco County Legislative Delegation consists of seven members of the Florida Legislature: Florida Senate (three Senators) and Florida House of Representatives (four Representatives) who represent all or parts of Pasco County.

The delegation will meet in public on Nov. 10, at 10 am at Pasco Hernando State College, 10230 Ridge Rd., NPR, 33654. **All speaker requests must be submitted prior to Nov. 3,** along with seven copies for the delegation to be delivered to Representative Holcomb at 2955 Landover Blvd., Spring Hill, 34608. According to the delegation chair, we can sign up to speak at the event but public comments are the last item on the agenda and our comments may end up limited to two minutes instead of three. Use the [Speaker Sign-up Form](#).

Please email Teresa and Diana at president@hclwv.org if you can speak on behalf of the league at this meeting. We have talking points on our opposition to mid-decade redistricting and other topics! You can find the talking points [here](#).

LUSH Voter Registration

League of Women Voters of the US is partnering with LUSH, a global cosmetics company, this year to get LUSH customers ready for local elections. The goal of this partnership is to help League chapters reach new voters (mall-goers, store employees) with information and tools to participate in upcoming local elections in your area, while simultaneously raising awareness and visibility of LWV.

Sign up to volunteer at International Plaza or Brandon Town Center during National

Voter Education Week, Oct. 4-5, 10-12. Click [here](#) for more information and to sign up.

If you are new to tabling, remember to become certified to register voters on behalf of the LWV. Review materials and take the open-book quiz [here](#). (It is easy & fast!)

Contact voterservices@hclwv.org with any questions.

**Tampa Bay Leagues Member Meeting: Meet
our new LWV-FL President!**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ALL-MEMBER MEETING FOR TAMPA BAY AREA LEAGUES

Get updates on the League's work at the state level from LWV of FL President Jessica Lowe-Minor, and learn about the important work that your local Tampa Bay area leagues are doing!



WITH LWV OF FL PRESIDENT
JESSICA LOWE-MINOR



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23RD

Doors open at 5:30

Program is from 6:00-7:30
Light refreshments will be provided. A
recording will be posted to YouTube
for those unable to attend.

Allendale UMC Sanctuary 3803 Haines
Rd. N. St. Petersburg FL 33703



RSVP Now for October 23 Member Meeting

Sign up to Register Voters!

Do you have a few hours to help staff our League table to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) for the Special Election in the City of Tampa. **Sign-up to help with VR at libraries through October 18.** Volunteers need to bring a table and chairs, in addition to league

materials. The league has everything you need, you will just need to coordinate pick-up before the event.

Tampa District 5 Special Election

The Tampa City Council District 5 Special Run-off Election will be held on Oct. 28. The two candidates who received the most votes in the General Election were Naya Young and Tom Scott and they will face each other in this run-off.

Mail-in ballots must be in the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections Office by 7 pm on Oct. 28. You must [request a Vote By Mail ballot](#) to receive one. Visit [this page](#) for more information about Vote-by-Mail.

Early voting will take place Oct. 23-26 at the following sites:

- C. Blythe Andrews Library
- Fred B. Karl County Center
- Robert L. Gilder Elections Service Center
- West Tampa Branch Library

On Election Day itself, all voters must vote in their own precincts. To find your precinct, click [here](#).

Voters with disabilities have more ways to vote than ever before. Check out [all of them here](#).

Rosé for Reproductive Rights

Planned Parenthood of Florida invites us to share a glass of wine and catch up on the fight for reproductive rights in Florida. To RSVP for the 6:00 event on Tuesday, Oct. 7, in Tampa, click [here](#).



For other Planned Parenthood events around the state, including Rosé for Reproductive rights in St. Pete in November, click [here](#). Mark your calendar for Planned Parenthood's

Tampa gala on Feb. 27, 2026.

Democratic Engagement



League Co-Presidents Diana Bishop-Pecha and Teresa Potter spoke at USF's Lunchtime Leadership Series in September, during Democratic Engagement week. They are pictured here with Kailyn Hurd, a student hoping to start a LWV student chapter at USF. The event was sponsored by the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement.

Cybersecurity Defense Workshop Voter Information Table - October 18

Beulah Baptist Institutional Church (1006 W. Cypress Street, Tampa). is hosting a Cybersecurity Defense Workshop on **October 18, 2025 at 11:00 AM**. This event will bring together professionals, businesses, educators and the general public for a day of learning, networking and innovation. Our members and the public are invited to attend. Our league has also been invited to provide a voter information table. This event is located in District 5 and is another opportunity to get out the vote for the October election. [Please sign up here if you can help.](#)

Castor Commits to Civility

In a show of political unity and stewardship in September, more than 40 Republican, Democratic and Independent U.S. mayors including Tampa Mayor Jane Castor, signed a [declaration](#) to de-escalate our politics and reject violence and dehumanizing rhetoric. Calling it the *Oklahoma City Declaration*, the mayors signed the agreement at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum, the site of the deadliest act of domestic political violence in living memory, as members of the U.S. Conference of Mayors gathered in the city for their annual fall leadership meeting. The mayor of Hallandale Beach was the only other Floridian among the initial signatories.

Democracy in Your Hands

The League of Women Voters of the United States has been offering an ongoing Democracy in Your Hands training series. The last session is on Oct. 22, 2:30 pm on Building Coalitions to Amplify Action. Register [here](#).

Mixed Polling Results

The 2025 edition of the [Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey](#) finds that:

- 70% of Americans can name all three branches of government, up from 65% in 2024.
- Asked what specific rights are guaranteed by the First Amendment, nearly 4 in 5 (79%) respondents say freedom of speech. Less than half of Americans mention each of the other four rights: the next most-often cited, freedom of religion, is named by 48%.
- Trust in the U.S. Supreme Court continues to deteriorate, with nearly 6 in 10 people (59%) voicing little or no trust that the nation's highest court is operating in their best interests. Four in 10 of U.S. adults (41%) have at least a moderate amount of trust that the Supreme Court is operating in their best interests - down from 44%, when the question was asked 10 months earlier.
 - There is a nearly 60-point gap between the two major parties on trust in the Supreme Court - 75% of Republicans have at least a moderate amount of trust, but only 18% of Democrats and 38% of independents do.
 - There's strong bipartisan support for several reforms to the Supreme Court, with over 80% favoring prohibiting justices from participating in cases in which they have "personal or financial interests."

Speaking of the 1st Amendment

Don't fall flat on your face if you are polled about the First Amendment. Here it is: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*

Banned Book of the Month *by Izzy Miletic, Forbidden Florida Reads*

The Hate U Give, By Angie Thomas, 2017; awarded the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Young Adult Fiction and adapted into an [award-winning movie](#).

BANNED in Charlotte, Collier, Hernando, Indian River, Martin, Nassau, Seminole and St. Johns public schools

The Hate U Give is Angie Thomas' debut young adult novel. Thomas was inspired by the 2009 [murder of Oscar Grant](#), a 22-year-old profiled by police officers responding to reports of a fight on a train in Oakland, California. Reportedly, Grant was not among those fighting but was detained alongside several other black men. Grant was pinned down and fatally shot in the back. The police officer who shot Grant, Johannes Mehserle, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter - not murder.

Influenced by Grant's killing and other instances of police brutality, Thomas's story follows 16-year-old Starr Carter, a black girl attending a predominantly white, private high school. One night, Starr and her black friend Kahlil are driving and stopped by police. Kahlil is ordered out of the car, shot in the back, and killed. The news reports Kahlil as a gang banger and drug dealer. Starr struggles to find her place in the resulting protests and riots.

The novel reflects the experience of black students in the age of police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement. Starr avoids being stereotyped by her white classmates by [code switching](#). At school, Starr's own best friend and boyfriend defend Kahlil's murder. Starr represents all black students forced to toe the line.

Florida's HB 1069 provided an easy excuse to ban *The Hate U Give* and censor its racial commentary. Portions of HB 1069 were [struck down](#) by a U.S. District Court August 2025. Collier County Public Schools [banned](#) the book for its allusions to sex, including talk of an affair between two adults, teens engaging in heavy petting and talk about sex and condom, a teen girl on birth control, a discussion of teen pregnancy, and the assumption that a married couple is having sex when they go to their bedroom and turn the television up loud. Plus, a woman is revealed to be a sex worker.

"What's the point of having a voice if you're gonna be silent in those moments you shouldn't be?" - Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give*

Medicaid Expansion Petition

Florida currently has the third highest number of uninsured people in the U.S. and cuts from the federal government could leave 20% of Floridians without insurance. Expanding Medicaid would save our state money and create new jobs while also giving more than 3.7 million Floridians access to affordable health care. For years, advocates have worked to make this a reality, but, unfortunately, the barriers put in place by our legislature earlier this year to the citizen-led amendment process have made this work even more challenging.

This week, sadly, **Florida Decides Healthcare** announced that the Medicaid Expansion amendment petition effort will now focus on the 2028 ballot instead of 2026.

Gun Safety

Every hour in America, a child is shot. On Oct. 6, Tampa's ThinkTank Theatre joins 48 communities nationwide for Enough!, six urgent new plays by teen writers confronting gun violence. Glazer JCC, Tampa, at 7:15 (doors open at 6:45). For more information and to buy tickets go to [enough2021!](#)

by Betsy Braden, Chair, Gun Safety Committee

Florida has now joined 47 other states in allowing open carry of firearms, thanks to an appeals court decision and an edict from the state attorney general to law enforcement. A September 10 appeals court ruling ruled the Florida law banning open carry from 1987 was unconstitutional. The appeals court cited US Supreme Court rulings on 2nd amendment issues such as Bruen. The Bruen decision ([New York State Rifle & Pistol Assn. v. Bruen](#)) is a 2022 Supreme Court ruling that significantly expanded the Second Amendment right to bear arms, holding that the Constitution protects the right to carry a loaded handgun in public for self-defense.

According to Everytown, every day 125 people in the United States are killed by firearms. Gun violence is the number one cause of death for children in the US. There have been 376 mass shootings in the United States in 2025. There have been 6908 mass shootings since January 1, 2013. A gun is stolen out of a car in the US every nine minutes. Law enforcement opposes this new open carry ruling, but don't object due to the threat of losing their jobs.

Open carry leads to more senseless gun violence and death. Reach out to your state representatives and let them know how you feel about open carry. Also speak to small business owners about this and see how they will keep their customers safe.

To see where open carry is or isn't permitted in Florida, click [here](#).

Reproductive Rights

Floridians for Reproductive Freedom sends out a weekly list of upcoming events and links to articles related to reproductive rights. FRF also includes job listings at the bottom. Go to [Florida Progress](#) to sign up for the newsletter.



SIERRA CLUB

Mark your calendar for the Suncoast Sierra Club's new quarterly event, "Conserve & Connect." The inaugural gathering will take place Oct. 22, 6-8 pm, at Thrive in downtown St. Pete. Learn about the endangered Rice Whale and the Sierra Club's efforts to protect it. There are only 50 Rice Whales in existence! BYO bottle, place setting, and cup. Snacks will be available. Information and RSVP [here](#).

If you live in Pasco County and want more information about your local chapter, go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/suncoast>.

If you live in Hillsborough County, go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay>.



Florida Humanities honors the career of its first ever inductee into the Florida Humanities Hall of Fame, Gary R. Mormino, on Oct. 18, at the Tampa Bay History Center. A champion of the humanities for nearly five decades, Mormino has spent his career trying to tell the true story of Florida. He's written six books whose topics span from Florida immigration to 21st-century state politics. But, above all, Mormino has been a passionate educator, inspiring and influencing thousands of students. More information is available [here](#).

Sips and Stories

Kitchen Table Literary Arts, a Tampa Bay writing community dedicated to nurturing the literary art of Black women and women of color, is sponsoring Sips and Stories Oct. 9 and 23, at Southern Brewery in Tampa, 6:30-8:30 both evenings. Meet for drinks and read your stories! (And enjoy the tacos from Rene's Mexican Kitchen food truck, across the street.) More info [here](#).

Tiger Bay

Join the non-partisan Tiger Bay Club the third Friday of each month for discussions of current events. On Friday, October 17, the two final candidates for Tampa District 5 will be on stage.

The doors at the Cuban Club in Ybor City open at 11:30. Lunch will be served at 11:40 am and the hour-long program begins at 12 pm.

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



The Performing Arts

Award-winning choreographer Paula Nuñez unveils *La Séptima: A Gatsby Affair in Ybor*, a breathtaking journey through Ybor City's rich history. This groundbreaking production masterfully blends the elegance of dance with the power of opera, live music, and cutting-edge technology. [New Tampa Performing Arts Center](#), Oct. 3-4.

Tail of the Bell is a battle of perception, power, and performance – where memory is malleable, and everyone has a version of the truth. If you love gripping storytelling, crackling dialogue, and theatre that keeps you thinking long after the curtain falls, this is the show for you. [At Studio@620](#), Oct. 3-5.

In *Alice by Heart*, in the rubble of the London Blitz of World War II, Alice Spencer's budding teen life is turned upside down, and she and her dear friend Alfred are forced to take shelter in an underground tube station. When the ailing Alfred is quarantined, Alice encourages him to escape with her into their cherished book and journey down the rabbit hole to Wonderland. [At USF](#), Oct. 2-5.

Oct. 11 Virtual Event on Redistricting



In recognition of **National Voter Registraton Day**, League volunteers staffed tables at HCC Brandon, USF Tampa, and three PHSC campuses, in New Port Richey, Dade City, and Wesley Chapel.

World Car Free Day Tampa

Tampa celebrated its 3rd annual World Car Free Day celebration on September 20. This event, created and coordinated by community advocacy group Walk Bike Tampa, is an opportunity to explore and engage with our city from a different perspective: walking, biking, scooting, or using transit. Walk Bike Tampa and partner organizations are shifting Tampa's culture from old-fashioned car-dependency to a forward-thinking, forward-looking connected modern city.





The Plastic Arts



"963 Hz: The Interstitial Moment between Image and Sound" by Chris Leventis, on view through October 26, 2025, at [FMoPA](#), explores the Central Florida swamps, weaving together photography and field recordings to create a multidimensional experience that invites viewers to sense the unseen and hear the unheard.



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

Also at the [St. Pete MFA](#), but through Feb. 1, 2026, the exhibition, *Creative Freedom: Women as Decorative Arts Entrepreneurs and Connoisseurs, c. 1900-1940*, celebrates the dawn of the modern woman through the stunning objects she created. As the call for suffrage led to the landmark Nineteenth Amendment, women began to break free from convention. They didn't just demand a vote; they claimed their place as cultural leaders.

OLLI



USF

OLLI courses beginning in Oct. include:

Conflict Resolution
Dancin' Dames of Hollywood
A History of China
African American Military History
Current Constitutional Issues
History of the Everglades
Holocaust Studies
NATO, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
Ten Foods that Define Florida
The Dreyfus Affair
The Greatest Generation Goes to War
Putin, Trump, and Xi
Great Decisions in Foreign Policy
Talkin' Politics
The Impact of COVID-19

And lots of tech and lifestyle courses. Click on the bull to sign up.



Planning Under Pressure: Understanding the Impacts of Senate Bill 180

Join 1000 Friends of Florida on Oct. 15, 12-1:30, for a free webinar examining how Senate Bill 180 is reshaping land-use planning across Florida. Passed during the 2025 Legislative Session, this sweeping law limits local governments' ability to amend comprehensive plans and adopt new planning regulations. Featuring legal experts Susan Trevarthen and Richard Grosso, the webinar will explore the law's constitutional vulnerabilities, practical impacts on local governance, and what communities can do to navigate the uncertainty and defend their adopted plans. Register [here](#).

To learn what else is happening regarding SB 180, click [here](#).



Going on at TBHC this month:

- Gallery Exhibit: Invisible Immigrants: Spaniards in the US (1868-1945)
- Tours of the Cigar City exhibit
- Two book discussions
- A Night at the Museum Halloween Party (Oct. 19)
- and more!

Click on logo above for more information and to learn about the Nov. 14 TBHC gala.



Oct. 3, the speaker at Café con Tampa will be USF Director of the Center for Sustainable Democracy Joshua Scacco, speaking on "What Does 21st Century Democracy Look Like? Leadership, Technology, And Community Contributions to Democratic Sustainability."

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. Doors open at 7:30 am.

To learn about future speakers, visit [Upcoming Events](#). If you are interested in becoming a speaker, visit [Speaking at Café con Tampa](#).

News You Can Use (to stay out of jail)

Here's a [partial list](#) of laws that come into effect in Florida today, Oct. 1.

Upcoming Member Meetings

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 6 pm, [HCLWV Board Meeting](#)

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 7-8 pm, [HCLWV Monthly Issues Meeting](#)

Thursday, Oct. 23, 6:00, [LWVFL Quadripartite Meeting](#), in St. Pete

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](#).