

The VOTER DECEMBER 2025

Dear League Members,

As we let you know last week, league members from across the state will be joining with our partners for a rally in Tallahassee on Thursday 12/4 -- against partisan redistricting. Teresa will be on the Tampa bus which leaves at 7:30 AM. All are welcome! The deadline to sign up for a spot on the bus is today, 12/1 at 12PM. See details & sign-up below.



Also, we hope you will join us virtually at our Board meeting on December 3rd, virtually for our monthly member meeting on December 16th, and/or in person on January 10, 2026 for our annual holiday party. RSVP below! Scroll to the bottom or go to <https://hclwv.org/news-events/events-calendar/#!/calendar> for links to the virtual meetings.

Diana will be going to League Lobby Days on January 20-21 in Tallahassee. Please see details below, including how to register.

Also, please scroll through this newsletter for many other ways to take action for democracy, public education, repro rights, transportation, environment/climate and more. (If you were at our November member meeting, you're familiar with the Schools of Hope issue. We'll also be discussing in more detail at the Dec 16th meeting. If you help with the campaign below that's launching December 1st, you'll receive a full script on why it's dangerous to public schools and our students)..

Teresa Potter & Diana Pecha
Co-Presidents

Hop on the Bus!

Our League doesn't shy away when our democracy needs defending and right now, it surely does.

Rally Thursday, Dec. 4, in Tallahassee when the Legislative Congressional Redistricting Select Committee meets to discuss redrawing our congressional maps without new census data and in direct response to the President's call for gerrymandering nationwide before the 2026 elections. Activists from across the state and from many organizations will gather in Tallahassee to make sure lawmakers hear us: **No mid-decade power grabs! No partisan maps! Honor the 2010 Florida Fair Districts Amendments!**

Buses will head to Tallahassee from multiple locations across the state, including Tampa.

The plan is to connect organizers and community members, and to attempt to speak directly with legislators, urging them to protect voters—not politicians. We will also make our voices heard during the committee hearing, where decisions about redistricting may be on the table. The hearing will be in the Capitol building at Reed Hall (102 HOB).

- [Click here if you will join the group in Tallahassee.](#)
- [Click here for transportation options, including the bus from Tampa](#)

P.S. Whether or not you go to Tallahassee, please reach out to your FL House Representative and State Senator (if you have one) and object to this unprecedented attempt at mid-decade redistricting. The St. Pete LWV has a [helpful website](#) for constructing a message.



JANUARY 10, 2025 at 2 PM

Annual Holiday Party

NEW WORLD TAMPA

All League members and guests are invited to celebrate the new year at our Annual Post-Holiday Party! We are gathering 2-5 pm, Saturday, Jan. 10, 2025, at New World Brewery, 810 E. Skagway Ave., Tampa, near the intersection of Busch Blvd. and Nebraska Ave.

The League will provide finger food as well as Kevin Boxx desserts and one drink ticket per person. Additional food and drinks are also available for purchase. We will gather on an outdoor patio with picnic tables, which offers privacy while also allowing us to enjoy the rest of the facility.

There is no charge to attend, and we encourage you to bring guests and potential League members! Please RSVP below by January 7, 2026.

RSVP for Holiday Party!

Call in for our Kids: Repeal Schools of Hope Campaign December 1 Launch!

Join the Families for Strong Public Schools statewide campaign: Call-In for Our Kids: Repeal Schools of Hope campaign which begins *today*. From December 1-5 and December 8-12, we're flooding the Speaker of the Florida House with calls urging him to repeal the harmful Schools of Hope co-location and takeover law.

This action works *because* so many of us participate – parents, educators, students, faith leaders, and community members from every corner of Florida. Your 2-3 minute call truly matters. Legislators pay attention to volume. When hundreds of calls come in on Day 1, it sets the tone and shows that Florida families are serious about protecting our neighborhood public schools.

Choose any day between Dec 1-5 or Dec 8-12 to make your call OR call multiple times throughout the two weeks. Each call takes 2-3 minutes

➔ [Click here to RSVP](#) and you'll receive the call instructions and script

Confronting Constitutional Crises

Learn about [Unite and Rise 8.5](#), the national LWV's initiative to engage and mobilize 8.5 million voters to protect and preserve our democracy.

Protest in Person - League Lobby Days!

The Florida 2026 legislative session begins Jan. 13, 2026 and the LWVFL will gather in Tallahassee on Jan. 20 for two days of lobbying! Join in for 2026 League Lobby Days -- Jan 20-21.. LWVFL hotel rates are valid through Dec. 20, 2025. [Click here to register for Lobby Days](#).

LWVFL is holding a Lobby Days bootcamp to prepare volunteers for effective, persuasive advocacy. It will cover strategies for talking with legislators, from using (or skipping) scripts to staying nonpartisan, reaching across the aisle, making the most of a 15-minute meeting, and avoiding common pitfalls. The next bootcamp will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025 at noon and will feature a guest presenter. [Register here for Lobby Days Bootcamp](#).

Please contact president@hclwv.org if you are interested in being part of this effort. HCLWV will attempt to coordinate carpools for those joining Diana from Hillsborough and Pasco counties

Prevent Suicide

The Tampa Bay chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is organizing a walk on Dec. 6, in [Gadsden Park](#) in Tampa. Various organizations and many individuals will be participating, including Minority House Leader Fentrice Driskell, Tampa City Council Member Luis Viera, Florida Senate Candidate Brian Nathan, Florida House Candidate Luis Salazar, and Florida House Candidate Kyandra Darling.

To join the [Out of Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk](#) this Saturday, either register [here](#) or just show up. There is no charge to participate but you can commit to raising money, if you choose. Check-in starts at 7:30 am and the walk starts at 8:30. The walk is a one-mile loop and we can choose to walk one, two, or three miles. Put on your walking shoes and get out there!

Mourn Victims of Gun Violence

A Night to Remember

Candlelight Vigil for Lives Lost to Gun Violence
Music, Reflection, Hope

Sunday December 7, 2025 at 6 pm

RSVP: bit.ly/rsvp-12-5-tampa

University Area Park
14015 N. 22nd St
Tampa FL 33613

Hosted by Moms Demand Action, Sean's Love, Rise Up for Peace,
Kuntry Konnections, 813StoptheViolence, Safe & Sound Hillsborough

RSVP [here](#), not at the bit.ly link in the image above.

FL Senate District 14 Special Election March 24

Over 500,000 Hillsborough County voters were disenfranchised in the Florida Senate on Aug. 12, when our Senator, Jay Collins, was appointed Lieutenant Governor. And, thanks to the Governor's delay in calling for a special election, we will remain unrepresented through the upcoming Legislative session. (If that makes you mad, think about how the residents of the District of Columbia feel every day.) Nevertheless, we need to get the vote out for the March 24 special election. What to do?

- (1) Check what district you are in by looking at a [map of District 14](#), checking your own representatives at votehillsborough.gov, looking at your Voter Information Card, or calling the Hillsborough County SOE at 813-744-5900.
- (2) Make sure by Feb. 23, you are eligible to vote and, by March 12, request a vote-by-mail ballot at [Voter-Information-Lookup](#). Remind your friends and relatives to do the same. Participate in GOV

activities with us and/or other groups.

(3) Research the two candidates, Brian Nathan and Josie Tomkow.

(4) Vote by mail, during early voting (March 14-21), or on election day, March 24.

It is undemocratic that we will go seven months without representation. Use your rage to fuel your GOV actions.

Digital Democracy

Consider joining Digital Democracy organizers as they go in-depth about 16+ FL state bills. Attendees are encouraged to provide their vote and opinions on the various bills, along with their reasoning for their support or opposition. Join thousands of voters across the state and country submitting their votes on real bills and telling our legislators how we want them to be voting. Sessions will take place on Dec. 10 and 15 at 7 pm. Find out what bills will be discussed and register [here](#).

What We Can Do Now

What you can do TODAY

- Contact Florida Department of Education Commissioner Anastasios Kamoutsas at Commissioner@fldoe.org and voice your objection to the adoption of the Heritage Foundation's Phoenix Declaration.
- Sign the petition from change.org to keep vaccine mandates in Florida, <https://www.change.org/p/keep-...>
- Tell your FL Representative to vote yes on HB 6001 to defund unregulated anti-abortion pregnancy "care" centers and save the taxpayers \$29.5 million that could go for more legitimate purposes.
- Contact your FL Representative and Senator (if you have one) to vote against HB 289 and SB 164, respectively, which would give fertilized eggs and embryos the same rights as living people. If this bill passes, the partner, abuser, or rapist of someone who lost a pregnancy or accessed an abortion would have the right to sue who they believe was responsible.

Legislating E-bikes: Safety or Punishment? *by Emily Hinsdale*

E-bike and e-scooter use has increased rapidly in the past few years; so have reports of e-mobility related injuries. Both the Florida State Legislature and the Tampa City Council are currently considering changing laws around e-bike usage. While some proposed legislation offers valuable safety measures, some veers toward targeting specific racial and age groups.

Florida HB 243/SB 382 proposes e-bike regulations that, among other rules, prohibit e-bike use without a driver's license, prohibit e-bikes that can go over 28mph, require education courses, require e-bike users to yield on shared pathways, and prohibit cell phone use while riding. Most importantly, this bill would add "e-bikes/scooters" as a reporting option on police crash reports, a key step to being able to identify factual vs. anecdotal areas of concern around e-mobility.

Tampa City Council is considering a proposed ordinance regulating e-bike usage on the Riverwalk and Bayshore Blvd, specifically. This ordinance was proposed and created by the Tampa Police Department. It calls for a speed limit, identifies a fine system, outlaws "wheelies" and other tricks, and prohibits group riding, among other items.

The state legislation provides some reasonable guidelines for safe e-bike usage, emphasizing education and awareness over punishment. Where Tampa's ordinance runs into problems is that TPD has been publicly clear that its focus here is on rowdy teen boys riding in disruptive groups on the Riverwalk. Laws targeting a specific group are generally considered unconstitutional in the United States. This law would raise additional concerns: Are family groups prohibited from riding together? Are group rides, such as the one led twice monthly by Councilmember Lynn Hurtak, in violation? How will speed limits be enforced? Do the police intend to engage in high speed chases on the Riverwalk to catch offenders?

Tampa City Council moved this ordinance with few changes through the first reading and will consider it again at the second reading December 18th. They should examine this ordinance in much greater detail to understand its potential consequences.

It is important to note that so far in 2025, there have been over 95 vehicle-related deaths on Tampa roads and zero deaths specifically caused by e-bikes. Neither the state legislature, local city councils, nor local police departments have proposed legal changes to address vehicle fatalities this year. While reducing speed limits, using speed control cameras, installing additional intersection stops, and mandating wider sidewalks and protected bike lanes are all proven tools available to Florida leaders, our regulating bodies have largely side-stepped these options.

If our region ever wants to move off "Most Dangerous Roads" national lists, our leaders need to focus on enacting meaningful car and truck laws, not punitive bike laws.

Use Your Outdoor Voice



Looking for ways to make a difference? Phone calls are the best way to make your voice heard. Here are two tools that make it easy to contact your representatives.

1) Several LWVSPA and community members find the **5 Calls app** helpful for contacting their senators and representatives in congress on issues like reproductive rights, voting rights, and education. Download it here to give it a try: [Android](#) / [iOS](#)

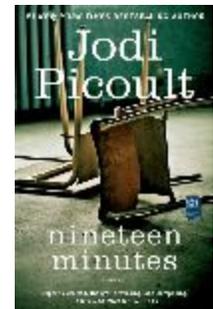
2) Our partner organization, Common Cause, has an easy tool to find the phone numbers for your representatives at every level of government: <https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/>



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

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult was published in 2007 and awarded the ALA's *Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners Award*.

BANNED in Charlotte, Clay, Collier, Escambia, Hamilton, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Jackson, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Nassau, Okaloosa, Orange, Polk, Santa Rosa, Seminole, St. Lucie, St. Johns, Union, Volusia and Walton Counties.



Nineteen Minutes is the amount of time it takes for Peter Houghton to commit a mass shooting at his New Hampshire high school in Picoult's widely banned novel.

In January 2022, a citizen of St. Lucie County, Dale Galiano, submitted objections to 17 books found in St. Lucie Public School libraries, including *Nineteen Minutes*. He said the book about school shootings was not suited to student comprehension: "There are things in there that the mind is not prepared for, they haven't lived enough of a life to figure it out." The St. Lucie Board of Education voted in favor of the book's removal, stating that "Although they felt it was an important piece of literature, they felt it was an adult book."

Only one month after *Nineteen Minutes*' publication in March 2007, 32 people were murdered on the Virginia Tech campus in the most deadly school shooting in modern U.S. history. Since then, instances of school shootings have spiked, peaking in 2023 with 351 tragedies in one year. On April 17, 2025, I myself survived a school shooting while walking to Florida State University's Student Union.

Nineteen Minutes was the most banned book of the '23-'24 school year. In Florida, this is attributed to its depiction of rape - not its depiction of gun violence.

A single page depicting date rape violated HB 1069, a Florida statute that ordered the removal of any book that “depicts or describes sexual conduct” from Florida public school shelves. Many Florida school boards censored *Nineteen Minutes*' discussion of school shootings, citing HB 1069. In '24-'25, Jodi Picoult, the author of *Nineteen Minutes*, served as a plaintiff in the lawsuit that struck down significant portions of HB 1069.

In response to the mass ban of *Nineteen Minutes*, Picoult stated, “hundreds of kids have told me that reading *Nineteen Minutes* stopped them from committing a school shooting, or showed them they were not alone in feeling isolated. My book, and the ten thousand others that have been pulled off school library shelves this year, give kids a tool to deal with an increasingly divided and difficult world. These book banners aren't helping children. They are harming them.”

Pasco Hazardous Waste Collection



If you have old household cleaners under your sink, pesticides in your garage, or a broken VCR on a shelf and you live in Pasco County, the county encourages you to dispose of it all at a mobile collection event on Sat., Dec. 6, from 8 am to 1 pm. Drop your items off at the West Pasco Government Center in New Port Richey.

For a full list of items you can drop off during the collection event, click on mypas.co/hazardouswaste.



This event is free with the following exceptions:

- \$3 to dispose of propane tanks;
- \$5 to dispose of televisions, computer monitors, computer towers, and laptops.
- \$10 for televisions larger than 36".

N.B. This event is not for commercial businesses.



Learn the colonial and civil rights history of St. Augustine with Florida Humanities, March 6-8. Click on the logo above.



Interested in protesting the bear hunt? Watching USF football while encouraging recycling? Kayaking and meeting new friends? Influencing policy? Know a student who might want an internship? Eliminating Publix's plastic bags? Check out your local Sierra Club.

If you live in Pasco County and want more information about your local chapter, go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/suncoast>. The annual holiday party is Dec. 7.

If you live in Hillsborough County, go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay>. The annual holiday party is Dec. 10.

Stocking Stuffers

LWV swag makes great holiday gifts and the HCLWV gets some money from each purchase.



Buy your mugs and tote bags at [zazzle.com](https://www.zazzle.com).



Planned Parenthood of Florida

Ybor City Condom Crawl!

Friday, December 12th at 6pm

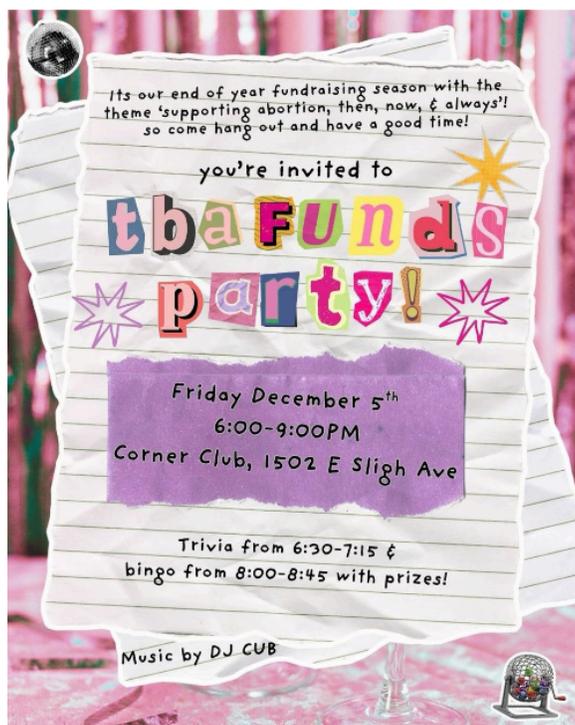
We will be crawling through Ybor city as Condom Elves raising awareness about the Tampa Planned Parenthood Health Center and handing out condoms to promote safe sex! We will meet for food and refreshments as well as training and reminders before we all carpool to Ybor City!

JOIN US

Mark your calendar for Planned Parenthood's [Tampa gala](#) on Feb. 27, 2026. Tickets start at \$250 and sponsorships at \$500.

Our Bodies, Our Fundraising

As of mid-November, the Tampa Bay Abortion Fund had paid \$740,000 for abortion care and practical support this year. Over 2,000 people were able to access abortion services despite local impediments. Attend TBAF's final 2025 fundraiser, "Supporting Abortion: Then, Now, and Always", at [Corner Club](#), Tampa, Friday, Dec. 5, 6-9 pm. Enjoy the food and drinks available for purchase while participating in activities and vying for raffle prizes. [RSVP here](#).



Tiger Bay

Buy your tickets now for Tiger Bay's Lifetime Achievement Awards honoring Pam Iorio and Rick Lott on Dec. 12. Tiger Bay honors one Democrat and one Republican each year.

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



The Performing Arts

The [Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative](#) has partnered with The Florida Orchestra to offer free vouchers for library customer sto see a select concert at a variety of venues for their 2025-26 season. The ticket vouchers are limited to two per person and will be on a first come first serve basis. For more information, visit your [local library](#).



The Plastic Arts



At the [Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center](#), artist Kai Tomalin invites us to experience ***Love Letters to Tampa Bay***, a heartfelt exploration of estuaries as sacred spaces where land, water, and life converge. Through myth, memory, and vibrant papier-mâché sculptures, Kai celebrates the estuary not only as a cradle for wildlife but as a spiritual and cultural lifeline for our region. Through Dec. 24.

[USF Graphicstudio](#) presents ***Impressions: 35 Years of Women in Print***, an exhibition celebrating the legacy of women artists who have collaborated with Graphicstudio over the decades. Showcasing the work of ten influential artists from the studio's history, the exhibition highlights the diversity and innovation these women bring to the field of contemporary art. Through March 2.

At the [St. Pete MFA](#), 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. Through Feb. 1, 2026.

The [Green Book of Tampa Bay](#) exhibits the works of resident artists at Art Noire Gallery in the Ybor City Kress Building. Dec. 9-Feb. 3.

On display at [Wild Space Gallery](#) are two concurrent exhibitions. ***You Are Here*** takes viewers on a journey across the 18-million-acre connected landscape, from the Everglades to the Alabama/Georgia state lines, through photography, maps and informational panels. Photographers include Laurie Meehan

Elmer, Alex Freeze, fStop Foundation (William Freund), Paul Marcellini, David Moynahan, Tessa Skiles, Mac Stone, and Carlton Ward Jr.

Jeff Ripple: *Enduring Light* presents Florida landscape paintings inspired by 19th century American artists. Ripple's works are derived from on-site plein air studies, sketches, and photographs. His paintings focus on Florida's ever-changing panoramas of sky, light, and water, and achieve a kind of poetic realism that invites contemplation of our country's historical relationship to its natural environment.

Both exhibits run through Jan. 8.



OLLI offers so much in so many locations and on-line.

- Travel to Bok Tower with OLLI on Dec. 9!
- Join the new special interest group (SIG) on aging!
- Take a tech class!
- Take a liberal arts course!
- Paddle on Dec. 4!
- Attend a Friday lecture!
- Take a walking tour!
- Attend the OLLI Winter 2026 Open House on Jan. 7, to learn about all offerings!

Click on the bull for more information.



What does it look like when roads are designed for people, not just cars? Join 1000 Friends of Florida on Dec. 10 for "Rethinking Roads: A Complete Streets Approach to Safer Communities", a free webinar exploring how transportation planning can make Florida's communities safer, healthier, and more connected.

Click the logo for information.



Going on at TBHC this month:

- Gallery Exhibit: The Lure of Florida Fishing;
- Tours of the Cigar City exhibit;
- Tours of Chinsegut Hill;
- Walking tours;
- Book discussion: *Passing*;
- Conversation about Florida's motion picture industry;
- Book discussion about the same;
- History as a Joke?
- and more!

Click on logo above for more information.



The Dec. 5 topic at Café con "Everybody's Estuary: How People Rallied to Save Tampa Bay." Evan Bennett, FAU History Professor is the speaker.

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](#).

Libraries

Do you know about all the programs and events that take place in Hillsborough County libraries every day? [Do your research](#).

Read Books Now

Join Florida NOW for it's end-of-year Anti-Racism Learning Book Club, on Dec. 15. Participants will reflect on the books read in 2025 and look ahead to the 2026 reading list. Register by email to vp@flnow.org.

Upcoming Member Meetings

Wednesday, Dec. 3, 6 pm, [HCLWV Board Meeting](#)

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7-8 pm, [HCLWV Monthly Issues Meeting](#)

Saturday, Jan. 10, 2-5 pm, annual [HCLWV Post-Holiday Party](#)

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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