

The VOTER MARCH 2026

Dear League Members and Friends,

March is Women's History Month, a time to honor the generations of women who fought to secure the right to vote and to protect the democratic principles that we continue to defend today. Their work did not end with the 19th Amendment; it lives on through us, our chapter, LWV-FL, and LWV-US. *This month, that work feels especially urgent.*



To support the State Senate District 14 (SD14) Special Election on March 24th (with early voting on March 14-21), we need volunteers at several upcoming GOTV tabling events. These opportunities will allow us to provide accurate, nonpartisan voter information and ensure every eligible voter can participate with confidence. Here is where we currently need support:

- Mar 7th - WEDU PBS Daniel Tiger Block Party (**3 additional volunteers needed**)
- Mar 13th - GOODWILL on Hillsborough Ave (**1 volunteer needed**)
- Mar 14th - Community Unity Day at Egypt Lake (**2 volunteers needed**)
- Mar 19th - GOODWILL on Hillsborough Ave (**1 volunteer needed**)

Thank you to those who have already signed up and those who helped last month! If you have a few hours to give, please visit [this link](#) to claim a time slot. Your presence matters! These conversations are often the difference between uncertainty and participation for a voter.

Engagement is not only about showing up; it is also about staying informed. LWV-FL has launched a book club, "Bringing Floridians Together." This is an opportunity for thoughtful discussion, connection and deeper understanding of the issues shaping our nation. We would love for you to join! The meetups are virtual. Here is the reading list and upcoming meeting dates:

- [The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion](#), by Jonathan Haidt (**May 29**)
- [I Never Thought of It That Way](#), by Monica Guzman (**August 28**)
- [The Soul of Civility: Timeless Principles to Heal Society and Ourselves](#), by Alexandra Hudson (**November 20**)

We also need your voice at the Federal level. The **SAVE Act** may come before the Senate for a vote this upcoming week or sometime this month (no exact date has been set). **This legislation raises serious concerns about voter access and potential barriers to registration.** We urge you to contact our Senators and tell them you oppose this bill.

There has also been discussion that **a draft executive order that could expand federal executive branch control over American elections is in review**, unlocking extraordinary Presidential power over voting and potentially affecting upcoming Midterm Elections. While details are still emerging, these developments underscore why vigilance is essential. We must remain informed, responsive and united in defending fair and accessible elections.

Looking ahead, a **No Kings rally** will take place on March 28th. LWV-US is joining as a national partner. There are multiple events planned for the Hillsborough/Pasco area (Tampa, Sun City, Brandon, Temple Terrace, Hudson, Trinity, Wesley Chapel). **If you are planning to attend and are interested in manning a table for one of these rallies, please reply to this email.**

This Women's History Month, let's remember that democracy is not inherited. It is sustained. It requires participation, attention and above all, courage. We need our members now more than every at events, in conversations, in community spaces and in

advocacy. Thank you for being a part of the League.

In League,
Teresa Potter & Diana Pecha
Co-Presidents

For Anti-Monarchists Only - No Kings Events

No Kings marches will be held in multiple locations and at different times in Hillsborough & Pasco County on Saturday, March 24. Go to <https://www.nokings.org/> for details. The Pasco events are being coordinated by www.pascoresists.org.



Saying Goodbye to Deb Kauffman



A FAREWELL OPEN HOUSE FOR DEB AND STEVE KAUFFMAN

Please join us Saturday, March 7, 2pm-5pm, at the home of Nancy Sardiñas Lambert in Trinity to say goodbye. They are relocating to Maryland to be near their daughter and her family, although they will return here often to visit their son and his family.

Deb served as president of our League in 2021-22, as well as serving several years as membership chair and VOTER editor. She and Steve were active in supporting the environment and climate change action group, and she participated in the voter protection committee.

The Sardiñas Lambert home is located at 1437 Winding Willow Drive, Trinity, 34655, in Heritage Springs, near Fox Hollow golf course. We encourage guests to bring a beverage of choice and a snack to share, but refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP [HERE](#).

There is a staffed security gate for the community; we highly recommend RSVP'ing so we can add your name to the guest list and send you exact instructions. DO NOT USE GPS to navigate to the home, as you will be directed to a back gate that is exit-only. Once you RSVP, we'll send you exact directions to follow.

We look forward to seeing you there!

SAVE America Here and There

Bills aimed at thwarting voter participation have been introduced in the U.S. Senate and in both houses of the Florida legislature. These bills threaten to disenfranchise not only voters who were born at home during Jim Crow and never received birth certificates but also women (and, increasingly, men) who changed their names because of marriages as well as subsequent divorces and remarriages, but also people who have lost important documents in natural disasters. There's also concern that military voters might move just before elections and not have time to present the necessary documents in time to

register.

The Save American Act passed the U.S. House in 2025 and has been introduced into the Senate. To read more about this and to sign a petition opposing it, if you haven't already, go to the [LWV.org site](https://www.lwv.org).

Florida HB 991 passed a few days ago. SB 1334 is set for a vote soon. There are major differences between the two versions, including who would be excluded from voting and when the new law would take effect, but there is no reason to be optimistic. The LWVFL has been sending out emails about phone-banking and other ways to get our voices heard. Please read these and take action.

We are the League of Women Voters. We need to speak up for voting and voters. After a similar law was passed in Kansas in 2013, according to the *Tampa Bay Times*, about 30,000 voters were pulled from the rolls.

Pasco Elections

Four municipalities in Pasco County have elections coming up on **Tuesday, April 14, 2026**. **March 16** is the last day for eligible voters to register to vote or make changes in their voter registration. Voting will take place from 7 am to 7 pm on Election Day, **April 14**, in each municipality.

In **New Port Richey**, voters will determine the mayor of their city. Four candidates have qualified: Chopper Davis, Marlowe L. Jones, Daisy Thomas, and Kelly M. Timmons.

In **Port Richey**, there are two candidates running for the office of mayor: John Eric Hoover and Linda Rodriguez. Christine Sullivan, candidate for Port Richey Councilperson, is unopposed.

In **Dade City**, two people are running for City Commissioner Group 2: Michael S. Stout and Steven Van Gorden. Scott Black, candidate for City Commissioner Group 1, is unopposed.

In **St. Leo**, there are two candidates for Town Commissioner, Seat 5: Tory N. England and William E. Hamilton. Unopposed candidates for Town Commissioner in St. Leo include Donna H. Dewitt, Seat 1, and Apollo J. Rodriguez, Seat 3.

There will be no election in San Antonio, as all candidates are unopposed. This includes three candidates for three City Commission seats: Caitlin A. Bolender, Blaze A. Drinkwine, and John T. Vogel II. There is also no election in Zephyrhills.

More information on these elections can be obtained through the Pasco County Supervisor of Elections office, at www.pascovotes.gov or 800-851-8754.

LAST-MINUTE IMPORTANT PASCO NEWS!

We plan to table at Earth Day at Crews Lake Park on April 25.

The event runs from 9 am to 1 pm, and has always been well-attended.

Please go [HERE](#) to learn more and sign up to volunteer.

Plant City Votes

Plant City is holding municipal elections on **April 7**. The deadline to register to vote is **March 9**. Early voting is **April 3-4**. If there is a runoff, it will be on May 26. The deadline to register will be April 27 and early voting will be May 22-23.

Check your voter registration and mail-in-ballot status at VoteHillsborough.gov. See a sample ballot [here](#).

Florida State Senator District 14, Again

This is the last time you will read here about the March 24 special election for FL SD 14. If you live in this Hillsborough County district and you haven't registered to vote, it's too late. You may request a vote-by-mail ballot until **March 12** at [Voter-Information-Lookup](#). Early voting is **March 14-21**.

Remind your friends and relatives to do the same. Participate in Get out the Vote (GOTV) activities with us and/or other groups.

Think of this special election as a dry run for the August primaries.

Call to Action: Vigil for Immigrant Justice



The Pinellas/Hillsborough Interfaith Coalition, LWVSPA, and allies host a weekly peaceful Freedom Vigil to stand in solidarity with immigrant families and demand an end to the detention and deportation of our nonviolent, law-abiding immigrant community neighbors, siblings, and friends. These vigils shine a light on the erosion of due process and the rise of authoritarian overreach. Participants pray for family reunification and justice for all immigrants and affirm that justice, compassion, and the rule of law must apply to everyone—regardless of immigration status.

Details:

Sundays 4-5 pm, by the Pinellas County Courthouse, [14250 49th Street N](#) (corner of 144 Ave N & 49th St N), Clearwater, FL 33762

[RSVP for Vigil](#)

Immigrant Hotline



HOTLINE FOR LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

IMMIGRANT SAFETY

Florida Rapid Response Alliance for Immigrant Safety & Empowerment (RAISE)

Statewide, including St. Petersburg & Pinellas County

Hotline: 888-600-5762

888-600-5762

• What they do:

- Receive reports of ICE activity
- Verify sightings (to avoid misinformation)
- Dispatch trained observers when possible
- Connect people to free or low-cost immigration attorneys
- Help locate detained family members
- Provide "Know Your Rights" and family safety planning
- Languages: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese

RAISE is a network of advocates, volunteers, community partners, civil rights attorneys, and immigration law experts that have compiled crucial resources to support our immigrant communities throughout Florida.

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL



Meet Deana Turnipseed, Communications Chair

I am excited to be your Communications Chair. I have a background in operations, sales, and training, and have simultaneously managed international and domestic teams. I am recently retired and a Lupus warrior. My husband (Wes), dog (Daisy Mae), and I love to travel. I also crochet and listen to historical fiction books when ever I can.



I have been a fan of the LWV since I was a young person learning about Suffragettes and the struggle for our right to vote as women. I have long used

the LWV information on bills and candidate questionnaires to inform my voting decisions. I have always been passionate about everyone's right and access to voting. I look forward to keeping you and HCLWV fans in the loop on all the happenings so you can be in the know on all the ways you can help keep our democracy alive and well. I firmly believe that democracy is a team sport, not a spectator sport.

Lobbying in Tallahassee by Deana Turnipseed, Communications Chair

This year's LWV Lobby Days at the Florida State Capitol in January were an amazing and uplifting experience. Before Lobby Days, we had three remote Boot Camps on logistics and preparation, including requesting appointments with representatives or their aides. Day 1 in Tally, the Florida LWV reviewed the voting rights bills the League had prioritized for this session. We also role-played advocacy for or against bills. That evening, we were hosted by the Tallahassee LWV at their Celebration Dinner. Our speakers were our Florida LWV President, Jessica Lowe-Minor, and Mary Ellen Klas currently with Bloomberg. Day 2, we went to the Capitol for scheduled appointments and dropped off materials at all of the Senators' and Representatives' offices on the League's stance on the voter bills. We had lunch at the old Capitol in the Senate

Chamber (so cool) and we were able to attend Committee Hearings as well.

During the committee meeting on HB461/SB 564 (allowing students to get community service credit for assisting poll workers during elections), the League was recognized by the Ranking Member for our attendance as well as our advocacy that led to the support of the bill. This was an amazing experience for me as I was able to stand in front of the committee and advocate for the bill. I was not expecting to ever have that opportunity and it was powerful and positive.

I'd like to share with you some remarks from Mary Ellen Klas of Bloomberg from her address to us on night 1, paraphrased with her permission.

"We must question power and hold accountable legislators currently in office and those running for office. We need to ask our legislators why they are abdicating their roles and allowing illegal and immoral acts to go unchecked. Speak up about morally objective behavior with friends and family. If they have a gut feeling something is wrong, they are not alone. Keep doing what we are doing **and do more**. We are the duct tape and bailing wire keeping democracy alive. The only answer to fear is hope. We are the resistance—a refusal to let fear keep you from saying what must be said. Democracy is a resolve that must be practiced. We still hold power and if do not use it we will lose it."

The bottom line is to keep educating voters, encouraging people to vote, and holding our legislators accountable by calling them with our stances on issues. Each singular action we take makes a big difference and encourages those around us to do so as well.

League Lobby Days was well organized and well run. I met many amazing people from around Florida and grew by learning and doing. I am excited for League Lobby Days in 2027 (2nd week in March) and I hope you will join me.



Stephanie Sembler, Shannon Tierney, Sarah Peacock, and Barbara Pierce of LWVSPA and Deana Turnipseed of HCLWV with Allison Kuhn, Legislative Aide to Representative Susan Valdés

Honors for Our Liana



Congratulations to our own Liana Fernandez Fox, HCLWV President 1991-1992, one of three women being being inducted into Hillsborough County's Women's Hall of Fame.

The new inductees will be honored on March 11. Tickets to the event are available [here](#).

Tracking Legislation - Updated!

We are already coming up to the official March 13 closing date of the 2026 Florida legislative session and much is happening or has happened.

Various organizations track bills. A good general blog on legislation is in [Seeking Rents](#) and another is [Tropic Press](#).

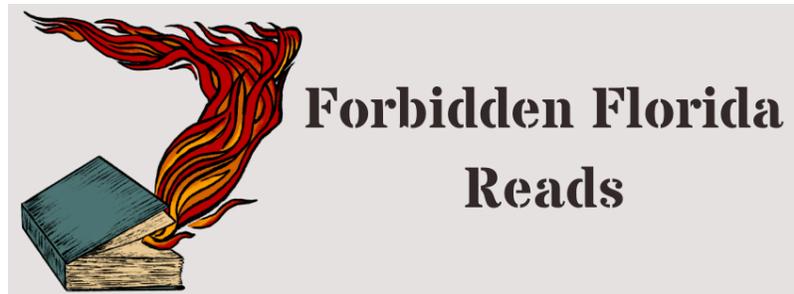
If you are concerned about development and growth, you can follow bills by using the [1000 Friends of Florida tracker](#). Education? Try the [Florida Education Association's tracker](#). Women's health? Look at [NOW's tracker](#).

Of course, the Florida [Senate](#) and [House](#) offer ways to track bills, as well.

Summer Camps and Internships

Among the institutions and organizations offering summer camps are the Humane Society, the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Pete, the Tampa Museum of Art, American Stage, and the Tampa Theatre.

In addition, the City of Tampa offers a variety of [internship programs](#) that provide meaningful skills that help turn jobs into careers. [Rising Explorers](#), for students ages 16-19, focuses on exposure, early workplace learning, mentorship, and building foundational skills. [Emerging Professionals](#), for college students, focuses on skill application, advanced career readiness, and transition to professional employment while featuring public sector careers as an option of choice. Learn more and apply today at tampa.gov/jobs.



by *Izzy Miletic*

The Color Purple by Alice Walker was published in 1982. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983.

BANNED in Clay, Collier, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lee, Martin, Orange, Union and Volusia County public schools.

The Color Purple is a series of letters from Celie to God and her estranged sister, Nettie. The daughter of 1930s Georgia sharecroppers, Celie endures abuse, racism, and sexism. Through her letters, she slowly claims a future for herself.

To school boards across Florida, *The Color Purple* is obscene. It was widely banned in 2023 for its depictions of sexual abuse, violence, and lesbianism. The Florida law that enabled these bans, HB 1069, was later struck down in a U.S. District Court.

For Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* is about ancestry. Walker's grandmother was murdered by a man who wanted to be her lover. She says, "A lot of the things in *The Color Purple* happened to people in my family long before I was born."

Walker believes this ancestral connection is why the novel still resonates with readers. Walker said, “It is fresh enough so that they can feel that visceral connection of ancestors. The distance between generations disappears, and I love that.”

The novel does resonate. In 1983, *The Color Purple* made Walker the first Black woman to win a Pulitzer Prize. In 1985, the novel was adapted into a film directed by Stephen Spielberg and nominated for 11 Academy Awards. A Broadway musical adaptation premiered in 2005 and was recently reimaged as a movie in 2023.

In a 1983 NPR interview, Walker was asked about negative reactions to *The Color Purple*'s content. She responded, “One of the reasons I wanted to have strong, beautiful, wonderful women loving each other is because I think that people can deal with that. I have no fear whatsoever. I think that the people who are uptight and bigoted and afraid in their own lives will have difficulty.”



“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” – Alice Walker



A new 501(c) 3 organization, Magnified Voices exists to uplift communities, remove barriers, and stand with our neighbors wherever support is needed. Our mission is to amplify the voices that are too often overlooked and to make sure families have access to resources, information, and dignity. Our action is simple and consistent. We show up, we listen, and we work alongside our community to create lasting change.

Magnified Voices knocks on doors to find out what resources are needed and to provide election information. It organizes events to help teens find their voices and it supports food kitchens and blanket drives. Magnified Voices speaks at School Board meetings against book-banning.

Take a look at the [Magnified Voices website](#).

Save Terra Ceia Bay from Ships

If you haven't signed the petition to keep Terra Ceia Bay free of cruise ships and full of seagrass beds, wetlands, and critical wildlife habitat, please do so [here](#).

Evidence Destroyed, No Questions Ask

As tax season looms and the risk of identity theft intensifies, Hillsborough County residents are urged to take advantage of a free and secure solution. ShredFest 2026 offers document shredding and electronic device disposal to safeguard residents against identity theft. [ShredFest 2026](#) will be held on Saturday, March 7, from 8-11 at Veterans Memorial Park. Click [here](#) for details.

Tiger Bay

The panel at the March 20 Tiger Bay luncheon will be made up of 2026 Hillsborough County School Board Candidates. If you are concerned about education, click on the

Tiger below for more information and to register.



Click [here](#) to read 1000 Friends of Florida's eight-page report on how data centers will impact Florida.

1000 Friends of Florida's legislative wrap-up will be on zoom on March 25. Register [here](#).



Meet Audrey Chapuis, the new President and CEO of TBHC, on March 18. Click [here](#) to reserve a seat at her town hall.



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](#). Speakers are usually not announced until early in the week. If you are interested in becoming a speaker, visit [Speaking at Café con Tampa](#).

Free Tax Help

UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough offers helpful webinars for residents as they prepare to file their federal tax returns. Learn more [here](#).

Courageous Women in New Tampa



Women of Resistance is a powerful theatrical production that brings to life the true stories of courageous women who stood up to oppression during World War II. Through a dynamic blend of storytelling, music, dance, and visual art, the performance honors their bravery while inspiring audiences to reflect on the importance of moral courage and civic responsibility today. *Women of Resistance* reminds us that choosing what is right—especially in challenging times—can change the course of history.

Wednesday and Thursday March 25 and 26, 8 pm
New Tampa Performing Arts Center, 8550 Hunters Village Rd. Tampa 33647

For more information go to www.womenofresistance.org.

Everyone is After Your Money

It seems as if every email message these days is really just a request for money. This newsletter isn't and has never been. However, if you wish to make a donation to the HCLWV above the cost of your membership dues that stay with the local league, you may make a donation [here](#). Your donation will be used mostly for supplies for voter education events.

Donations to the Florida League work to protect and defend our democracy at the state level where we try to ensure our elections are fair and accessible, protect our environment, advocate for common sense gun laws, and more. Donations to the Florida League can be made [here](#).

Likewise, donations can be made to the League of Women Voters of the United States, which addresses issues at the national level. Current donations are going to fight the SAVE America act. Donate [here](#).

Donations to these 501(4)c organizations are not tax-deductible.

Tuesday, March 4, 6-7 pm, [HCLWV Board Meeting](#)

Saturday, March 7, 2-5, [Farewell Open House for the Kauffmans](#)

Wednesday, March 17, 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
813-461-5365 | hclwv.org



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