



The Voter



The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast
www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Volume 37: No. 5

January 2018

Mission: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

meet+greet



“Celebrate the League”
Thursday, January 18th, 2018

The Board of The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast is hosting the 6th annual “Celebrate the League” event and inviting all members, friends and those that might be interested in joining to a **Wine and Hors d’oeuvres Party**.

When: Thursday, January 18th
Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Where: Melbourne Village Hall
535 Hammock Road
Melbourne Village, FL 32904

Reservations: RSVP Deadline: by Monday, January 15th
Reservations can be made on line at www.lwv-spacecoast.org
or to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 so we know how many will be attending.
There is no cost.



January Timely Topics with Dr. Desmond Blackburn
“Civics Education and Students’ Right to Protest”

When: Thursday, January 25th
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Where: Indian River Colony Club
1600 Old Glory Blvd. Melbourne, FL 32940
Cost: \$26 for Members and \$30 for Non Members
Menu: Entrée choices are: Chicken Cordon Bleu, Salmon with Dill Sauce or Chef Choice Vegetarian.
Meal includes salad, seasonal mixed vegetables and asparagus, rolls, beverage and cookies.

Reservation Deadline: Sunday, January 21st.
Reservations can be made on line at www.lwv-spacecoast.org
or members can call Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 or e-mail her at doreenarcher1@gmail.com and give her your menu choice.

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Diversity Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast will promote in all aspects of the League’s activities, a philosophy of inclusion that reflects the diverse composition and issues of the community.



President's Corner

Barbara Williams

Our Local League Website and a Strategy for Social Media

It's 2018 already! Wow, time moves and so has our technology, it can be hard to keep up with both. In 2017, we moved to a membership tool to track our data for us and to provide an interactive website for our members to retrieve and share information. With regard to social media, our local League already had a Facebook page and at least one other committee had a Facebook and a Twitter account and others were thinking they may also create their own social media accounts because across the organization it was not understood who and when information could be shared through these accounts.

In an attempt to improve our effectiveness and efficiencies with our internet presence, we will start a Website and Social Media Working Group to meet quarterly. The working group will be made up of any League members who want to participate. Our first quarterly meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 6th from 2 to 4pm at the Brevard Central Library in Cocoa. Since your President, yeah me, pushed our move to the website with lots of support from our editor, Lucia Watson, I will chair this first working group with Lucia continuing as my right hand. The second quarterly meeting is scheduled for April 28th at the same time and location. Since this meeting is after the annual meeting, we hope to have a tech savvy member step forward to be the chair for our Website and Social Media. This chair will coordinate updates, design, strategies, and lead the quarterly working groups. Administrative privilege decisions would remain with the President and Treasurer because of fiscal, individual privacy, and overall messaging content responsibility.

A lot of time and planning is required to maintain our website and social media so each quarterly meeting will need to focus on a core concept and accept feedback to be tracked for response as part of future quarterly plans or near term if it can be easily scheduled. Our first quarterly meeting focus will be on a social media strategy to move our local League to a single Facebook and Twitter account owned by our League, as opposed to individuals. We will encourage social media update privileges for all website administrators and coordinators. Our website has a share icon to allow updated pages, newly posted volunteer requests, events, and more to be easily shared to these social media sites and we should take advantage of it. We may also want to consider Instagram. Our committees will be encouraged to initiate Blogs on their website page,

another feature of our website and a feature geared towards discussions in specific areas of interest, such as our committees. If time allows, we need to discuss the use of Facebook streaming for events such as candidate forums and the posting of videos. If time does not allow this last topic, it will be a priority for the April quarterly planning session. Another topic for future sessions is the transition of our Voter newsletter to HTML format and the use of the website tools to generate the newsletter.

Even if you will not be joining us at our working group meeting, please provide your comments to me or to Lucia Watson so we can continue to improve and provide data to our members and the citizens of Brevard County in an efficient and effective manner.

Thanks

Thank you to the League members who worked on the fundraiser at **American Muscle Car Museum on November 15th**. The planning and implementation was led by Jo and Tim Riordan and Linda and Bruce Hogg along with some of our board members. \$2,850 was transferred to the LWVF Education Fund for this fundraiser.

Welcome to our New Members

Sherry & Matthew Jensen



International Relations

Joyce Calese – Chair

January Meeting for International Relations will be **Tuesday, January 9th at the Suntree Library** from 1 pm to 3 pm. Please note that our location is changed only for January. Satellite Beach Library is closed for HVAC Renovations.

The new 2018 Great Decisions Books will be delivered to those who pre-ordered. Thank you to Margee Smith for handling the orders.

Martha Bradshaw will be presenting our First Topic at the January meeting. It is **South Africa's Fragile Democracy**.

The other 7 topics in the 2018 Great Decisions book are: Russia's Foreign Policy, U.S. Global Engagement and the Military, Media and Foreign Policy, Global Health: Progress and Challenges, China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation, and Turkey: A Partner in Crisis.



Health Care Committee
Diane Conaway and Susan Webb
Co-Chairs

**ARE WE USING CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE AS A
 POLITICAL BARGAINING TOOL?**

by Maria Mogollon Seemer

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) expired on September 30th and left 9 million children nationwide in limbo regarding continued health insurance coverage. According to the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation there are more than 2.4 million children or 41% of all children in Florida enrolled in KidCare, the state program that runs CHIP.

State governments, are continuing to cover children with money left over from earlier appropriations and with emergency infusions from the federal government. But 11 states are expected to run out of federal funds by the end of December and 20 states and the District of Columbia will get to that point in the first three months of next year (including Florida), according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

CHIP, was created in 1997 to cover lower-income families who could not get Medicaid. It helped lower the uninsured rate for children from 14% to about 5% currently. Most children enrolled in CHIP are from families with incomes below twice the poverty level, or \$49,200 for a family of four.

Florida administers CHIP differently from other states, as it includes Medicaid for children. By state law, Florida KidCare has four parts: Medicaid for Children, MediKids for children ages 1 to 5, Healthy Kids for children ages 5 to 19, and the Children's Medical Services (CMS) Network for children with special health care needs. Florida's 2017 CHIP allotment is \$686.6 million, the fourth largest in the country behind California, New York and Texas.

54% of all federal funds received by Florida are for Medicaid (all ages), which also covers pregnant women and funds half of all Florida births. Children constitute the largest group of Medicaid beneficiaries, accounting for 60 percent of Medicaid enrollees in Florida, or about 2.2 million children, 51 % of these children being under 6 years old.

So, what now? As of this writing this is the situation:

- On September 18, 2017, Senators Orrin Hatch and Ron Wyden introduced the Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act in the Senate. The senators did not determine how they would pay for the bill's \$8.2 billion in offsets.

- The House also passed a bill on November 3rd to expand CHIP for five years over the objections of Democrats. It is now in the Senate.
- The House bill would extend CHIP for five years and was combined with a separate bill that extends funding for community health centers (which serve one of every 12 Americans) for two years. It also provides \$1 billion over two years to help bolster Medicaid in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The question of how to pay for these measures, a cost of roughly \$23 billion, has not been answered.
- House Republicans want to take money from a fund created by the Affordable Care Act that pays for a wide range of public health efforts, like preventing diabetes, vaccinating children, reducing the use of tobacco and fighting the opioid epidemic.
- Another provision of the House bill would require older Americans with income of more than \$500,000 a year to pay higher Medicare premiums.
- The House bill also proposes to shorten the grace period for consumers who fail to pay their share of premiums for health insurance purchased through a marketplace established under the Affordable Care Act. Several hundred thousand people could lose coverage as a result, and the government could "save money" because it would no longer subsidize their insurance, the Congressional Budget Office says.
- Both the House and Senate measures would extend federal CHIP funding for five years and both Republicans and Democrats are in agreement on the proper federal CHIP funding level. In other words, the parties are aligned on the **policy**, but not how to pay for it.
- Agencies may be forced to cease enrollment and freeze coverage — and therefore access to care — for children already enrolled.
- Additionally, the ACA included a provision for a 23 percentage-point increase in the share of CHIP paid for by the federal government. For Florida, the enhanced CHIP match rate brings the federal share to 96.25 % in FFY 2018. Without the 23 percentage-point increase, the federal government would only pay 73.25 % of the operating costs in Florida. How do we fund the rest?

(continued on Page 4 in second column)



Education

Linda Scales and Fran Baer Co-chairs

Background on Charter Schools

by Doreen Archer

Since 1647, when the General Council of the Massachusetts Bay Colony decreed that every town of fifty families should have an elementary school to ensure that Puritan children learn to read the Bible, free public schools have been a mainstay of communities, but now it seems that charter schools, the new kids on the block, are trying to usurp that position.

The idea of a school of choice was introduced in 1974 by Ray Budde, a professor at the University of Massachusetts, and was embraced by Albert Shanker. The first charter schools were started in New York city by Shanker and the American Federation of Teachers in 1988. Minnesota in 1991 and California in 1992 proceeded to pass charter school laws. In those early days, one school was opened in Miami, but it failed.

Originally, these innovative schools were started by educators, and run by teachers, to serve students who were struggling in the public schools. From this beginning, civic leaders and parents started schools for children whose home language was not English or for children with physical challenges. In many cases, unfortunately, the idea of innovative reform or specialized program has since gone by the wayside.

Charter schools, which are funded by the same sources as public schools, are free from many rules and regulations governing public schools, although accountability has improved through the years. In Florida, local school boards had some control over the charter schools, but that has changed, and the State Legislature has overall jurisdiction.

Virtually any one can submit an application to open and operate a charter school, with no tuition charge for the students. Of the thousands of charter schools open now, some, 67%, are independent, single site and non-profit, and others, 20%, are run by non-profit organizations that have more than one school. The other 13% belong to and are run by for profit companies.

In Florida, the Jeb Bush Foundation played a big part in the establishment of charter schools and the current Governor is very supportive, as is the federal Secretary of Education, whose husband owns schools, as do some members of Congress.

To quote Stan Karp (an editor of *Rethinking Schools*) charters can provide a "reform" cover for dismantling the public school system and an investment opportunity for those who see education as a business, rather than a fundamental institution of democratic civic life.



Health Article continued from Page 3

- Children receiving CHIP-funded Medicaid would continue to receive Medicaid since it is a permanent federal funding authorization as opposed to CHIP that must be periodically renewed, but Florida would receive the regular Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) of 61.79 percent instead of the higher CHIP match rate.
- For children who could enroll in a Marketplace plan, the annual out-of-pocket costs for a child would increase by an estimated \$349 to \$418 as compared to CHIP, forcing more families to decide between basic needs and health insurance coverage.
- Estimates suggest that Florida would lose between \$495 and \$560 million in federal funding annually, if CHIP funding is decreased from current level.

Certainly, a lot to think about, and there is no arguing that Congress must address many hard decisions prior to the end of the year. But should CHIP be one of them? Everyone knew that the appropriation would expire, so why the lack of action? Or are we losing site of this because we are so focused on the ACA-repeal-and-or-replace controversy? Are we using children as a bargaining "CHIP"? Hopefully not....



Chair - Recycling Marcia Booth - Chair Recycling Awards

Packets about this year's award cycle were sent out to principals on December 4, 2017 and so far two schools - Surfside Elementary and Pinewood Elementary - have applied.

We will be accepting application forms until **January 8, 2018**. All Brevard schools are invited to participate. For more information, visit the [Recycling Awards](#) page (link:

https://lwvsc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=992157&module_id=276342) on the League's website.

Members who would like to volunteer to judge submissions are welcome to sign up through the Volunteer Opportunities option on the League's website. Judging will take place in April 2018 at Brevard Public Schools. Questions? Please, contact Marcia Booth (Marcia@RecycleBrevard.org), Recycling Awards Program Coordinator.



Natural Resources Chair – Susan Little

Everglades 70th Anniversary

by Maureen Rupe

According to a December 7th Palm Beach Post article by Eliot Kleinburg, it was 70 years ago this past December that President Harry Truman dedicated the Everglades National Park. The Everglades National Park is 1.5 million acres covering 2300 miles, and only Yellowstone is larger covering 9,250 square miles.

It all started by a martyr, Guy M. Bradley who was trying to protect Egrets that were being hunted close to extinction for their feathers. He was murdered in 1905, which is said to spark the movement to protect the Everglades. The article stated “It is home to dozens of species, from the ever-tormenting mosquito to the rare Florida panther - wood storks and spoonbills, bald eagles and osprey, snails and kites, crocodiles and alligators, sea turtles and manatees, black bears, snook and sea trout, redfish and tarpon.”

Unfortunately, the article had a downside. It stated the Everglades was even bigger covering 2700 square miles, but Florida drained the northern part creating the Everglades agricultural area where we now have sugar and vegetable crops. Besides a dike around Lake Okeechobee, and I-75 and the Tamiami Trail blocking water flow, and south Florida draining off water, farm land has been blamed for water quantity and quality issues.

There’s talk of building up that dike, but also talk of restoring water movement south of Lake Okeechobee, which would restore, protect, and preserve the Everglades. That is an on-going issue.

Reference:

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/lifestyles/environment/everglades-70th-anniversary-the-story-the-park-beginning/yHOk9JOU6r7HiJNNyHdU2L/>



Board Bytes

- **CRC (Constitution Revision Commission) update as of December 1, 2017**. The Commission has considered all of the 2,012 citizen proposals and referred to committee each of those that had the support of at least 10 of the 37 Commissioners. They have agreed to review and vote on the 103 proposed amendments. They are expected to hold public hearings, from time to time, where interested parties may express their opinions. If a proposal receives the

affirmative vote of at least 22 of the 37 Commissioners, it will be filed with the Florida Secretary of State by May 10, 2018 for placement on the November 6th ballot.

- Voter Services Committee Susan Webb and Diane Conaway are working to coordinate future candidate forums and election related meetings. The Primary Date is August 28, 2018. For a list of persons who have already announced their candidacy for various positions, follow this link: <https://www.votebrevard.com/Candidates/2018-Candidates>
- Members are encouraged to attend our **Local League Website and a Strategy for Social Media** meeting on Saturday, January 6th at Cocoa Beach Library. The meeting is from 2 pm to 4 pm. We look forward to input from our members and expertise from members who would like to be involved in this on going project.
- Susan Little, Natural Resources Chair reported that Ocean Reef Beach Festival was a success. Susan also reported that The new head of the South Florida Water Management District, Ernie Marks has brought with him ten years of experience of working on Everglades restoration. With that, he is proactively pursuing the construction of the reservoir approved last summer by the state Legislature and Gov. Scott. The district board has signed an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers that will guide the planning of the reservoir and help the Corps seek federal funding for its half of the financing. Several public meetings have been held and more are scheduled. The board has started contacting landowners that may be interested in selling land for the reservoir. If built this will help reduce discharges from Lake Okeechobee which have polluted the Indian River Lagoon in the past.
- The Health Care Committee continues to follow developing news about ACA coverage and its administration as well as attempts to modify/replace the current program.
- Advocacy and Action League Legislative Summit 2018 is February 6th and 7th in Tallahassee .



Changes for Legislative Priorities

The LWVF State Board met in early December and reviewed the State Priorities and made some changes to the earlier list of priorities. These changes conform with the current state and national positions in **Study and Action and Impact on Issues**.

The major change was the deletion of automatic voter registration that was replaced with support of the **National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC)**.

A small change was also made in the **Education** priority that includes supporting curriculum and instructional materials.

2018 Legislative Priorities

1. Government – Election Law

- Oppose any legislation that might discourage or prevent voting, or result in any action that may disqualify eligible voters.
- Establish threshold criteria for write-in candidates that mirror current requirements for announced candidates. The presence of a write-in candidate as the only opponent should not close the primary.
- Support the election of the President and Vice President by direct popular vote via the National Popular Voter Compact.
- Support statewide use of an Open Primary election system that allows for the broadest possible voter participation.
- Support retention of a 1968 Constitutional Amendment to ensure home rule for counties and municipalities, and oppose any legislation inconsistent with League of Women Voter positions

2. Education

- Support adequate funding for school facilities and operations for the 2018-19 school years to meet the needs of Florida's schools. Support curriculum and instructional materials developed by educational experts to serve as guides and resources for local districts.
- Support a statewide assessment and accountability system that provides the same data at appropriate intervals to measure student progress for all schools that receive public funds, directly or indirectly.
- Support higher standards for early childhood education, for both staff and programs.

3. Natural Resources

- Support full funding of the Florida Forever land acquisition program and proper implementation of the Water and Legacy Conservation Amendment adopted in 2014.
- Support the ban of advanced well stimulation treatments (fracking) including but not limited to hydraulic fracturing and matrix acidizing.
- Support legislation that would promote the use of solar power by measures such as: requiring installation of roof-top solar on all new construction, promoting support of partnerships and co-ops in support of the 2016 Solar Amendment 4.
- Support legislation to address climate change through energy conservation and greater use of renewable energy sources, and to promote compliance with the goals of the Paris Climate Accord.

4. Gun Safety

- Support a ban of all semiautomatic assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines.
- Support comprehensive universal background checks.
- Oppose any legislation that would expand the right to carry a concealed weapon, to carry a weapon on a school or college campus and to have open carry in the state of Florida.
- Support retrieval of firearms from anyone with restraining or protective orders and/or convictions regarding stalking or domestic violence against them.

5. Health Care

- Oppose any legislative action that would negatively impact Medicaid funding or reduce access to health care for Florida residents.
- Support expansion of health care access and affordable coverage for low income, uninsured and under insured Floridians.
- Support funding of critical health care services such as KidCare, free clinics, mental health services, substance abuse and family planning services.
- Support a woman's right to privacy regarding reproductive rights.

Photos from League Holiday Luncheon



Barbara Dutton & Maureen Rupe



Rhonda Rhoads & Molly Tasker



Audrey Grayson & Mary Margaret Page



Connie & Mike Dobrin



Gloria & Michael Parra



Connie Hogerty & Marilza Novaes Card

January Calendar - ~Members are welcome at all meetings~

Wednesday , January 3rd

Board Meeting at Suntree Library at 10:00 a.m.

Saturday , January 6th

Website and Social Media 1st Quarterly Meeting. All members are encouraged to attend.

Tuesday, January 9th

International Relations Meeting at Suntree Library from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please note change of location for the January Meeting. Satellite Beach Library is closed for a month. Martha Bradshaw will lead the discussion on South Africa's Fragile Democracy.

Tuesday, January 9th

Local Government Committee Meeting at Suntree Library from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday, January 11th

Education Committee Meeting at Suntree Library (small room) at 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 18th

Celebrate the League in Melbourne Village 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Monday, January 22nd

Health Committee Meeting in Cocoa at 6 p.m. Address for meeting is 840 N. Cocoa Blvd. Suite H Cocoa, FL 32922

Thursday, January 25th

Timely Topics with speaker, Dr. Desmond Blackburn at Indian River Colony Club 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

(As additional dates of Committee Meetings are known they will be posted on the calendar on the website.)

Voter: Monthly publication (except June, July, August)

Issue Date: January 2018

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast - P.O. Box 360823, Melbourne, FL 32936-0823

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Men Are Welcome to Join LWV!

PLEASE CHECK YOUR INTERESTS

- Education
- Fund Raising/Finance
- Health Issues
- Hospitality/Events
- International Relations Study Group
- Justice
- Legislative Action
- Local Government/Observer Corps
- Membership
- Natural Resources
- Publicity & Public Relations
- Recycling
- Social Media/Facebook
- Speaker's Bureau
- Telephone Committee
- Voter Service
- The Voter (monthly newsletter)
- Website
- Women's Issues

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete the information below and return
with your check made payable to
League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

Mail to: LWV Space Coast
6629 Canal Road
Melbourne Village, FL 32904

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone _____

New Member _____ Returning Member _____

ANNUAL DUES

- \$60.00 for Individual Membership
- \$85.00 for Household Membership
- \$25.00 for Student Membership