



The Voter

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



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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.

March Timely Topics

Felon Voter Restoration Forum

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast in collaboration with NAACP and National Congress of Black Women are sponsoring this forum.

When: Thursday, March 19th at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Cocoa Civic Center located at 430 Delannoy Avenue in Cocoa Village.

The public is invited.

Please plan to attend this important educational event.

To those league members in the persons of Jean Harris, Tina Kansas, Tony Dutton, Frank Clifford, Doreen Archer, I say thanks for your time and effort. To those who would like to join the committee, I say welcome!

Remember, this monumental task cannot be realized without the assistance of each of you.

Again, many thanks.

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Justice Committee
Alberta Wilson – Chair

The Justice Committee of the LWVSC recently accepted the challenge of spearheading the Constitutional Amendment Petition Campaign for our League. This undertaking is sponsored by Floridians for a Fair Democracy, Inc. The FFD is comprised of a coalition of organizations of which the League of Women Voters of Florida is a part.

As you are aware, this amendment once passed, restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence including parole, probation or both. This amendment would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor and Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis.

By March 30th a total of 68,314 signed petitions are needed for review of the language by the Supreme Court. If approved, a total of 683,149 would be needed for the amendment to appear on the ballot in 2016. A goal of 1,500 signed petitions has been set by the Justice Committee for the initial collection and approved by the Board of Directors. We recognize that unless everyone embraces this project and does their part, we will not be successful. Therefore, we encourage members to work diligently at getting petitions signed and forwarded to me or other members of the committee as expeditiously as possible. Anyone still needing petition forms should let us know and they will be made available with all due haste. For those needing additional forms, please feel free to make copies as you wish or you may contact me at 321-632-9852 or wilsonak444@gmail.com.

Remember, each person signing said petition must be a registered voter of Florida. All signed petitions must be submitted to me in a timely manner (before March 30th)

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President's Corner
Marilynn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

Dear Leaguers,

Our **Politicos on Parade 2015** was a great success and I want to thank all of you who attended. We thank all members who signed on to help Chairwoman Doreen Archer with the event and a special thank you to Doreen for all of her work.

Health Committee Co-Chairs Jo Shim and Connie Dobrin and their hardworking Health Care Committee co-sponsored with Brevard Health Alliance the "Affordable Care Act (ACA) Awareness Day" on January 21st at the Brevard Health Alliance facility in Melbourne. The event provided an opportunity for Brevard residents to gather information and have questions answered on the current status of the ACA and Health Care expansion in the state of Florida. Attendees were educated on the importance of extending Health Care to the working poor, those caught in the healthcare gap, earning too much money to be eligible for Medicaid and too little to be eligible for insurance through the ACA. The Health Care Committee will be reaching out with a PowerPoint presentation to educate the community. If you are affiliated with or know of an organization or small business that would be interested in having a presentation about Extending Health Care in Florida, please contact Jo Shim at 321-636-4493 or Connie Dobrin at 321-637-0884. We are calling upon our members to contact their State legislators urging them to "Close the Gap for a Healthier Florida" this legislative session to assure the health of Florida's citizens, businesses and economy. Florida needs a unique, flexible solution that will keep Florida's hard-earned dollars here by accepting \$51 billion in federal funds through the Affordable Care Act and extending health care coverage to Florida's low-income working poor.

Our 2015 Nominating Committee presented the slate of Officers, Directors and 2016 Nominating Committee to the Board at our February 3rd meeting. Our members in good standing will vote on the slate, our Committee's Proposed Program of Work, Position Statement changes and a proposal to raise our membership dues effective April of 2016 at our Annual Meeting to be held at the Tides Club on Patrick Air Force Base on April 11th. We thank our 2015 Nominating Committee including Chair Fran Baer, Joyce Calese, Annie Frame, Priscilla Griffith and Fern Patton for their due diligence.

Mark your calendar for March 19th when our Justice Committee will host a Timely Topics presentation with a panel discussion on the **Restoration of Voting Rights for Felons**, who have served their time

and fulfilled all their obligations. Details of this event are found on **Page 1 of this Voter.**

There may still be time for members to sign up for **Capitol Impact Days in Tallahassee on March 10-12th.** To date we have four members who plan on attending. Details and registration information can be found on the League of Women Voters of Florida's website, www.thefloridavoter.org. Information about **LWVF State Convention**, which will be held on May 15 through May 16, in Del Ray Beach, Florida can be found on the same website. Please let me know (321-773-8490) if you are interested. We have funds to help offset costs.

Our 2015-2016 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE is underway. Our membership year begins April 1, 2015 and ends March 31, 2016. Keep a look out for your renewal form that will be mailed to you and remember only members in good standing can vote at our Annual Meeting.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

In League,

Marilynn



Recycle Award Program in Brevard Schools
Marcia Booth - Chair

This year's Recycling Award has nine participants: six elementary schools, one middle school, and two Jr./Sr. high schools. Schools will have until April 30, 2015 to submit their entry and that can be an essay, story, comic strip, drawing, Power Point, film, song or poster done by their students.

Students are required to take a tour - either of their own school recycling program (K through 3rd grade) or the county's landfill (4th grade and up) - and then produce a reflection piece telling what they and their school can do to help minimize the use of landfill and maximize the recycling rate in the county.

The goal of the award is to expose students to the current process and have them put on their thinking caps to find ways to improve the current system or find solutions to issues they detect in the process.

We can't wait to see what the entries will be this year. Good luck to all applicants!

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.



Children's Committee

Maria Mogollon-Seemer – Chair

Florida Proposes Expanded Child Care by

Sue Legg (We thank Sue Legg for giving us permission to reprint this article from her blog at LWV Education Issues blog:) <http://lwveducation.com>

Imagine a billion dollars for little children. . This is the amount proposed in Governor Scott's new budget. If passed by the legislature, school readiness programs will get larger and better.

The Senate Education Committee has passed out a bill on how to improve how day care centers are run.

The [Early Learning Coalition reports](#) that the Voluntary Pre Kindergarten (VPK) program for four year olds could receive a \$46 per child increase to the base allocation. The VPK programs prepare 224,000 children for kindergarten readiness skills. Thirty million dollars also would be designated to reduce the waiting lists for the program. Teacher scholarships and training would be supported . In our visits to day care centers this month, we learned directly from center directors about the urgency for better access to training for child development. Preschool teachers' days are long and their wages are low. They have new, high standards to meet and most must train on their own time.

Other proposals include:

- Funding to expand in home programs and to identify and help children from birth to age 8 at risk for developmental and behavioral problems would get a boost.
- A program designed to incentivize childcare providers to improve programs is also in the budget. This program appears to be the pilot program sponsored by Representative Fresen in 2014 to provide performance measures for child care centers.

[SPB 7006 AN ACT RELATED TO EARLY LEARNING \(Proposed\)](#)

Senate Bill SPB 7006 was passed by the Senate Education Committee last week. This bill is similar to the one sponsored by Representative Marlene O'Toole last year. The bill died on the last day of the 2014 session. The new bill includes requirements related to:

- staff background checks
- prohibiting transfer to ownership of closed centers to relatives
- compliance with minimal state standards
- abbreviated inspection visits
- staff training requirements
- facilities standards for regulated but not licensed providers

- citations for violations
- online training course
- safety and upgraded health first aid training
- performance measures in English and Spanish for English Language Learners

Beginning January 2017, staff for private preK providers must have a high school diploma and be 18 years old or older.



Finance

Doreen Archer – Chair

“Politicos on Parade”

Thank you to all our members who came to or donated to our "Politicos on Parade" fashion show. The new venue was great, our models had a good time and financially it was a success.

The success was due to all those League members who contributed their time and effort to the work of producing an event. It would not have happened without them. Interestingly, this was accomplished without a single, formal "committee" meeting.

Thank you to :

Jan Bancroft, Rob Bobay, Joyce Calese, Marilyn Collins, Connie Dobrin, Barbara Dutton, Pam Kendrick, Debra Mischley, Maria Mogollon-Seemer, Brigitte Sinton, Jonnie Swann, and Lucia Watson. Connie Hogerty prepared the pretty floral centerpieces.

Tony Dutton was there to register voters, and Alberta Wilson was getting petitions signed for **Floridians for a Fair Democracy**.

Mayor of Palm Bay, William Capote, was a great Master of Ceremonies, and would like to be invited again.

The models were: the two new County Commissioners, Jim Barfield and Curt Smith, the new Port Commissioner , Wayne Justice, two new members of the Melbourne City Council, Debbie Thomas and Teresa Lopez, and re-elected member of the Titusville City Council, Rita Pritchett.

Pianist JoAnn Tutt gave us some beautiful music, and the representatives from Frankly My Dear and Men's Wearhouse did a good job of describing the clothes.

Thank you to all.

Doreen Archer



Voter Service
Tony Dutton – Chair

Floridians for a Fair Democracy

All across Florida this year League of Women Voters chapters, including our own Space Coast League, are working to gather petitions of Florida voters to place a new proposed amendment to the Florida Constitution on the November 2016 ballot. Under the umbrella of a coalition, "Floridians for a Fair Democracy, Inc.", of which Pamela Goodman, the 1st Vice President of the Florida League, is a Vice Chair, we are working to change Florida's unfair and counter-productive rules for restitution of voting rights of persons convicted of felonies.

Our Space Coast League's efforts are being organized by our Justice Committee, led by Board member, Alberta Wilson. But because this project deals directly with the right of our citizens to vote, it is also a key Voter Service issue. Hence, our entire Space Coast League is working on securing enough valid signed petitions and will be doing so for the rest of 2015.

Two of the 50 United States (Maine and Vermont) do not restrict the voting rights of any of their citizens who might be convicted of committing a felony – Do I remember correctly that they fought a war in protest of taxation without representation? Another 38 states and the District of Columbia suspend voting rights of such persons, but restore such rights automatically upon completion of all terms of their sentences and any subsequent parole or probation. The 10 remaining states require ex-felons to apply to have their voting rights restored, but Florida is the most restrictive of that final group.

Here former felons must wait five or seven years after completing their sentences, depending on the severity of the offences of which they were convicted, before even applying for restoration of voting rights. And any such person may have to wait a number of years thereafter before even receiving a hearing on her or his application.

Under the proposed amendment, any disqualification of voting rights in Florida arising from a felony conviction shall terminate upon completion of all terms of sentence, including parole or probation. The proposed amendment will not, however, apply to any person who has been convicted of murder or of a felony sexual offence. Such persons will continue, after the amendment is adopted, to be subject to the present disqualifications from voting.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that restoring a person's right to vote gives her or him a better opportunity for redemption and to be a full member of the community. It also greatly improves such person's

employment opportunities, making her or him more likely to be self-sustaining. By helping people to become responsible citizens, we create safer communities and save taxpayers money by keeping people from returning to prison.

For the proposed amendment to be placed on the 2016 ballot, valid petitions must be submitted, by February 2016, from 8% of the Floridians who voted in the last U.S. Presidential election – 683,149. Before that, the Florida Supreme Court must review the form of the proposed amendment and determine that it meets all applicable legal requirements. The Court will do that after 10% or the required number, 68,314 valid petitions from across Florida, have been signed and submitted. Our coalition hopes to have that initial number of petitions by the end of this March. To help us get there, we will be urging all of our Space Coast League members and friends to help by asking our families, friends, neighbors and associates to sign petitions. More information will be forthcoming. Thanks for your help.



International Relations

Joyce Calese

The International Relations Committee will be meeting at the Satellite Beach Library on March 10 and March 24th from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The topics are: **Sectarianism in the Middle East** led by Ruth Almeida and **India Changes Course** led by Jane Wilson. We look forward to having you join us.

~Welcome to our New Members~

Susan Evander

Carol Cole

Jennifer Gee

Amicitia Maloon-Gibson

Suzanne Steidl

Cynthia K. Williams

Please add new members to your membership book. Addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of new members will be sent to you by e-mail. If you have friends who belong to League of Women Voters of the Space Coast who do not receive e-mail, it would be helpful if you could contact them and give them addresses and phone numbers of new members to add to their membership books. We discontinued printing this information in our *Voters* because of privacy concerns since our *Voters* are distributed to libraries and other community locations. They are found on line at our web site, www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Program of Work for 2015–2016

Information to be voted upon at
Annual Meeting on April 11, 2015

Health Care Program

1. Monitor and support implementation of the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (ACA) to include:
 - a) Health insurance access and enrollment via the ACA marketplace at www.healthcare.gov
 - b) Assistance with the ACA insurance enrollment process through access to Certified Application Counselors (CACs) and Navigators in Brevard
 - c) Health care expansion/coverage gap (Medicaid expansion) legislation through participation in the LWVF “Closing the Gap Campaign” grant
 - d) Impact on Medicare services and supplemental insurance
- 2) Continue to monitor application of and changes in the Florida Medicaid program.
- 3) Monitor funding and implementation of children’s insurance programs including:
 - a) Efforts to provide basic health care for all children in Brevard county
 - b) Outreach to increase enrollment in the Kidcare program for eligible children
- 4) Monitor and advocate for the following major health issues in Brevard county:
 - a) Mental Health
 - b) HIV/AIDS
 - c) Women’s Health Issues

Justice Program

1. Continue to work on getting LWVSC members involved in the Felon Restoration of Voting Rights Campaign.
2. Work to meet or exceed the LWVSC goal of 1,500 signed petitions by deadline.
3. Monitor progress of Felon Restoration of Voting Rights Petitions Campaign.
4. Ensure that petitions are collected and mailed to Clearwater, Florida in a timely manner.
5. Continue attending the Brevard County Felon Re-entry Coalition Meetings representing the LWVSC.

6. Host reception featuring/acknowledging Brevard’s Legislative Delegation. This should be a project of the entire LWVSC.
7. Monitor juvenile justice in Brevard County. Continue participating in Brevard County Schools Superintendent Advisory Committee.

Local Government Program

A one year study of the office of a non-partisan inspector general in local governments (county and municipal).

This study will include:

- a. qualifications and method of selection
- b. duties of office
- c. legal status of office
- d. limitations of office
- e. independence of office
- f. current examples and their effectiveness
- g. staffing of the office
- h. salary, etc.

Natural Resources

1. Monitor and act on the protection of the Indian River Lagoon System, all surface waters and the St. Johns River, to include:
 - a. Monitor the Wetlands Guidelines implementation by the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard.
 - b. Monitor the Fertilizer Ordinance implementation of the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard.
 - c. Monitor the BMAP (Basin Management Action Plan) program as set forth by the FDEP (Florida Department of Environmental Protection).
 - d. Provide information to the public regarding these action items.
2. Educate and encourage recycling by all Brevard County residents and businesses.
 - a. Review Brevard’s municipalities’ progress toward the recycling targets as defined in their collection contracts.
 - b. Study the return policies of local stores and laws pertaining to donation of returned items including examination of the costs incurred by business to handle items no longer allowed to be sold and formulation of best practices guidelines to facilitate more donations and less waste. *(continued on Page 6)*

(continued from Page 5)

- c. Advocate for more ample, affordable and easy to understand and follow recycling programs for residents, businesses and public places.
- 3. Provide timely information to the public regarding alternative energies and the public policies that guide the implementation of alternative energy, both for the electrical grid and for personal conveyance.
- 4. Monitor, act and provide information to the public regarding offshore and onshore drilling and exploration issues in Florida, including hydraulic and acid fracking and seismic testing off-shore of Florida.
- 5. Monitor growth actions and policies of Brevard County and surrounding regions as they affect Brevard County and provide timely information to the public about such actions and policies.
- 6. Monitor, act and provide timely information to the public to ensure the full and fair implementation of the Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment.
- 7. Monitor and provide timely information to the public upon any proposals of the Canaveral Port Authority to construct a freight rail extension to the Port or to develop the Port into a major commercial freight site.
- 8. Review and revise, as appropriate, the "Natural Resources Position Statement" that appears in the 2014-2015 LWVSC Membership Book.

Education Positions and Program Positions

The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast supports the education positions of LWVUS and LWVFL to advocate for adequacy, equity and sustainability for our nation’s public schools and early childhood education. Specifically in the areas of:

- 1. Adequacy
 - 1.1 Class size
 - 1.2 Budget control (Federal, State, Local)
 - 1.3 Higher Education
- 2. Equity
 - 2.1 Promotion, retention, suspension policies
 - 2.2 Parent Involvement
 - 2.3 Parent Education
- 3. Sustainability
 - 3.1 Administrative to teacher ratios

- 3.2 School based management
- 3.3 Testing frequency
- 3.4 Text books and technology
- 3.5 Curriculum guidelines
- 3.6 Vocational Programs
- 3.7 Security
- 3.8 Teacher recruitment and retention
- 4. Support voluntary affordable early childhood education program for 1st 5 years of life.

Program

- 1. Monitor and report the results of Brevard County’s Public Schools status and student achievement results.
- 2. Monitor and report the implementation of Florida Standards in the Brevard County School District.
- 3. Support the homeless and underprivileged children attending Brevard County Public Schools.
- 4. Monitor and report on the status of early childhood education efforts in Brevard County.
- 5. Research, monitor and report on the adequacy of technology needs and advances in Brevard County Public Schools.
- 6. Conduct a follow up to the 2013 study on charter schools in Brevard County.
- 7. Promote civics and citizen education for all high school students in Brevard Public Schools.

**Report of Nominating Committee
Slate of Officers and Elected Directors for
2015 Annual Meeting**

Co-Presidents: Fran Baer & Priscilla Griffith 2015-2017
1st Vice President: Anthony Dutton 2015-2017
2nd Vice President: Marilynn Collins 2015-2016
Secretary: Doreen Archer 2015-2017

Elected Directors:
Marcia Booth 2015-2017
Audrey Grayson 2015-2017
Lucia Watson 2015-2017

Nominating Committee for 2016

Annie Frame - Chair
Debra Mischley
Ruth Schechter

These three elected members will serve with two members appointed from the Board of Directors after the 2015 Annual Meeting.

Respectively Submitted:
 Fran Baer, Joyce Calese, Annie Frame, Priscilla Griffith and Fern Patton

Thank you to Audrey Grayson for the photos of our models, Co-President, & Master of Ceremonies for "Politicos on Parade 2015"



President Marilyn Collins



Wayne Justice



Debbie Thomas



Curt Smith

Co-



Rita Pritchett



Jim Barfield



Teresa Lopez



Master of Ceremonies
Palm Bay Mayor William Capote

~March Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

- Wednesday, March 4 - Board Meeting at Suntree Library at 10:15 a.m. (big room)
- Tuesday, March 10 - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Ruth Almeida will lead the discussion on Sectarianism in the Middle East.
- Thursday, March 19 - Felon Voter Restoration Forum at Cocoa Civic Center in Cocoa Village at 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 24 - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Jane Wilson will lead the discussion on India Changes Course.
Children's Committee - Date not known when Voter was published
Health Committee - 3rd Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at Suntree Library but verify date with Jo Shim or Connie Dobrin - Health Committee Chairs

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