

The Voter

Issue: 2016-03

March 2016

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MARCH 2016 LWVCC LUNCHEON & GENERAL MEETING

Early Learning: Challenges, Issues and Actions for our Youngest Citizens

Studies show the positive impact on society of the provision of quality early learning. For example, research by the University of Chicago economist James J. Heckman, a Nobel laureate, points to a significant economic and social return on investment in high-quality preschool.

How are we doing with school readiness here in Collier County? Susan Block, the Executive Officer of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, can answer that question. The Coalition is responsible for the administration of School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs in four local counties. Come and find out what we can do to assure that all children have access to high quality early learning programs.

Where: Hilton Naples Hotel, 5111 Tamiami Trail North

When: Monday, March 14, 2016

Registration: 11:45 am, with lunch promptly at noon

Program: 12:30 pm

General Meeting: 1:30 - 2:15 pm

Cost for lunch: \$25.00 per person, reservation required

Program only: beginning at 12:30 pm. No charge or reservation needed.

Please note: No cash will be accepted at the door.

To make lunch reservations, please [click here](#) or call 239-263-4656 and leave a message by Thursday, March 10, before noon.

If you have any questions about the event, contact [Tina Palmese](#).

Audiovisual and other expenses associated with our 2015-16 General Meetings are underwritten by a generous donation from

The Walker Group at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

MARCH AT A GLANCE

Education Committee

Tuesday, March 1
10:30 am to noon
North Collier
Government Center
2235 Orange Blossom
Drive

Voter Services

Wednesday March 2
10 -11:30 am
North Collier
Government Center
2235 Orange Blossom
Drive

Observer Corp

Tuesday March 2
and
Tuesday March 9
9 am
Board of County
Commission
Chambers, Collier
County
3299 Tamiami Trail E
3rd Floor

Government Committee

Monday, March 7
10:30 am to noon
Seasons at Naples Cay
81 Seagate Dr.

Social Policy Committee

Wednesday March 9
9:30 am
Senior Friendship
Health Center
2365 Stanford Court
Unit 701



Political Winds Are Blowing

Charlotte Nycklemoe, President

The political winds are blowing! Since the early days of our republic trends show that the pendulum swings from left to right and back again before inching its way toward the middle. The pendulum moves slowly! I actually saw it move an iota or two this past week at the League Legislative Summit; as opined from the lips of 11 state legislators, Secretary of State, Ken Delzner, Agricultural Commissioner Adam Putnam and Senator Bill Nelson who spoke eloquently with gratitude and optimism of the future of Florida and the U.S. because of the final passage of Fair Districts.

Whether I stand in the rotunda of the Capitol building of Florida or the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol, I am consistently overcome with awe because here is where history, past and present, is made and you and I play a part in making this history. Standing in the gallery of the House of Representatives along with nearly 100 other Leaguers while receiving a standing ovation is a sight to behold! I wish that each of you could have been at the summit to receive the commendations you so richly deserve.

Let's continue making history! Attend the candidate forums! Submit your questions! We are the ones who put the candidates in office! Wear the proud label of an informed voter.

For a closer look at the LWV history making process please review LWVF positions on key bills in the second half of session at [The Florida Voter](#).

Please watch for forthcoming details on the Open Government Forum by the Lee County LWV on March 12 @ 1:00 pm.

I encourage you to review the [Impact on Issues 2014-2016](#) booklet. This booklet is designed to help League leaders use LWVUS public policy

Feel free to contact me with any questions, [Charlotte Nycklemoe](#). Check out our website at: www.lwvcolliercounty.org and don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Lunch with Leaders

Please join us for lunch with Dr. Kamela Patton, Superintendent of Collier County Public Schools. Bring your questions and your brown bag lunch for what is sure to be an informative conversation.

First come, first serve for this members only event! Space is limited, so reserve now.

When: Friday, March 11, from noon to 1:30 pm

Where: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Building
5775 Osceola Trail
Naples 34109

RSVP: [Becky Newell](#) or phone 239-290-2260

Environmental Affairs Committee

Thursday, March 10
9:30 to 11 am

Season's at Naples Cay

81 Seagate Dr.

Lunch with Leaders

Friday, March 11
noon to 1:30 pm

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Building

Building

5775 Osceola Trail

Luncheon and General Meeting

Monday, March 14
11:45 am

Hilton Naples
5111 Tamiami Trail N.

Government Committee

Monday, March 21
10:30 am to noon

Seasons at Naples Cay
81 Seagate Dr.

Justice Committee

Monday, March 21
10:30 am

Clive Daniel Home
Community Room
2777 Tamiami Tr
N



Education Committee

Mary Lou Boll, Chair

In examining the current purpose statement of the Education Committee with an eye to update it, we have determined that a real focus needs to be on the quality and accessibility of early childhood education for all children in Collier County.

Judi Palay, an active committee member, states: "*Due to the serious nature of the preschool children in CC not having adequate opportunities to create readiness for kindergarten, we have and are focused on how to create better and more programming for them. It is something we wish to see our local chapter get involved in and hopefully to have our state LWV play an important role in the near future.*"

Our speaker for the March membership meeting, will give us guidance in finding those action steps that will make a difference. In addition, Sue Legg, President of the Alachua County League of Women Voters and the author of the LWVFL blog on education issues, has suggested a study to us that we'll consider at our next committee meeting.

When: Tuesday, March 1, 10:30 am

Where: Community Room of the North Collier Government Center
2235 Orange Blossom Drive

RSVP: [Mary Lou Boll](#)



Environmental Affairs Committee

Susan Calkins, Chair

If you were one of the many League members who contacted Senate Appropriations Committee members regarding the *fracking bill (SB 318)* please know your voices were heard. The committee voted against the bill, 10-8. *However*, the bill is being brought back to the committee for reconsideration; it's now the last item on Tuesday's March 1 agenda. We need to keep the pressure on our legislators, especially the members of the Appropriations Committee, please [click here](#). Let them know we want more protection legislation, full disclosure of all chemicals used in the process, no use of our potable water supply, and no state preemption. We have lands in Collier and nearby Hendry counties already permitted for oil and gas exploration, so this is an issue of consequence for us. Remember, the League of Women Voters of Florida opposes fracking in Florida and supports the right of local communities to ban or otherwise control this potentially dangerous technique.

The League is committed to addressing climate change, and this means we begin to leave gas and oil in the ground and develop alternative, renewable energy like solar. Expanding solar power in our state has been a high priority for the LWVF. This will be a focus for discussion at our next meeting as we decide how best to proceed now that the Solar Choice Amendment will not be on the 2016 ballot. We will also, in addition to updates on some of the county issues we have been following (water and growth management issues in the county, drilling in Big Cypress), be deciding upon our direction(s)/activities for the 2016-17 season.

Please join us for the Environmental Affairs Committee meeting and don't forget that you can keep up with a variety of environmental issues online; sign up for [Eco-Voice](#) and [Florida Conservation Coalition](#).

When: Thursday, March 10, 9:30 - 11 am

Where: Seasons at Naples Cay
81 Seagate Dr.

RSVP: For access to the gate, contact [Susan Calkins](#).



Government Committee

Sandy Parker, Chair

This month, the Government Committee will meet on Monday, March 7, and on Monday, March 21, both days from 10:30 am - noon at The Seasons at Naples Cay. (Note location change for March 7 meeting!)

On March 7, we will learn about and discuss bills before the Florida Legislature related to immigration-reform and gun-owner rights. In addition, members will report briefly on bills they are following related to other issues. On March 21, the Legislative Session will have ended, and we will recap and discuss the Session as a whole.

Future meetings will focus on Collier County government issues on April 4 and May 9 from 10:30 AM - noon at Clive Daniel Home.

Our meetings provide great opportunities to learn what's happening in Tallahassee from fellow League members. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

When: Monday, March 7, 10:30 am to noon
Monday, March 21, 10:30 am to noon

Where: Seasons at Naples Cay
81 Seagate Dr

RSVP: [Sandy Parker](#)



Justice Committee

Linda Flores, Chair

It takes a village!

Cotrina Hood - Youth Haven; Lisa Church - Champions for Learning; Sergeant Tom Wedlock - Collier County Sheriff's Department and Judge Mary Evans - 20th Judicial Circuit Court... What do all these folks have in common? They are the cadre of educators/speakers the Justice Committee has engaged over the past several months.

Come join us as we debrief, share our findings and find a way forward to making a difference in our community!

A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.
Opra Winfrey

When: Monday, March 21, 10:30 am to 12 pm

Where: Clive Daniel Home
2777 Tamiami Trail North

RSVP: [Linda Flores](#) or Mobile: 239-239-5160



Membership Committee

Jan Eustis, Chair

A warm welcome to all new members:

Pamela Collins, Suffragist - individual
Joy White, Suffragist - individual

Josephine DeVincenzi and Mary "Jann" Scanlon, Susan B. Anthony - family

Save the date: A new member coffee will be held on April 5, 9:30 to 11:00 am. If you are a new member, or have been a member for a while and want to become more active, plan on joining us. More information will be forthcoming. I look forward to seeing you there!

Be sure to stop by at the Membership Table, adjacent to the luncheon sign in, to get information on Committees and opportunities for involvement! Name tags are available through the membership table as well.

Share the League with a friend! The best way to expand our membership is to bring somebody to our next General Meeting!

Feel free to contact me at [Jan Eustis](#) or 239-872-5709.



Observer Corps

Ray Kalich, Chair

Let's kick-off our attending and observing of meetings held by our Collier County Board of Commissioners (BCC).

Our goal is to promote government transparency and inform the League of the challenges faced, governance style, and decisions made by our county government. As LWVCC representatives, we will observe portions of the BCC's public meetings, note what happens, and report back to the Government Committee. Our presence will let elected and appointed officials know that the League is interested in what and how decisions are made, and ensure that the process embraces and protects voters rights.

Below are dates of two upcoming meetings:

- March 1, Tuesday - Starts at 9:00 am, BCC will review, solicit comments, and set guidance on affordable housing for Naples' workforce
- March 8, Tuesday - Starts at 9:00 am, BCC will hold a regular open public meeting

Both meetings take place at the Board of County Commission Chambers, Collier County Government Center, Your presence at one or both meetings would help to move the Observer Corps forward. I will arrive early and wait to greet you at the entrance to the center. At that time, I will introduce myself, answer your questions, and provide additional information. [Click here](#) to access the BCC's calendar and agenda/materials for each meeting.

Please let me know which of the two meetings you can attend and/or let me know of your future interest.

When: Tuesday March 2 and Tuesday March 9

Where: Collier County Government Center
3299 Tamiami Trail, East, 3rd Floor

RSVP: [Ray Kalich](#) or 216-410-2697



Social Policy Committee

Ann Campbell, Chair

A Field Trip to Learn About a New Health Care Partnership

On Wednesday, March 9, we will have a field trip to the Senior Friendship Health Clinic at its new location on Airport Road near the Government Center. We will meet there at 9:30 am and have a tour and discussion with Allie Harrison, Executive Director. Allie, who is a LWVCC member, met with our committee last year about plans to partner with the Healthcare Network of

Southwest Florida. Now that the partnership is in effect we will learn how they are blending primary care with specialty services offered by volunteer physicians and dentists. Talk about going outside the box!

Please reserve your place by Monday, March 7. All LWVCC members are invited and guests are welcome.

When: Wednesday, March 9, at 9:30 am

Where: Senior Friendship Health Center
2365 Stanford Court, Unit 701

RSVP: [Ann Campbell](#) by Monday, March 7.



Voter Services

Joyce Fletcher, Chair



Please vote in the Presidential Preference Primary (if you are registered to a political party) and the City of Naples Mayoral and Council elections (if you live in the City).

There is also a straw poll item on the ballot related to consolidation of fire and emergency services.

You may vote by mail-in ballot, early voting at one of 8 precincts between March 5 - 12, or in your assigned precinct on election day.

The schedule as of now is:

April 7: Florida House Districts 80 and 103 and Senate District 23

April 13: Collier County District 3

May 3: Collier County District 5

May 18: School Board Districts 2 and 4

September 27 and 29: Fire District Commissioners

October 4: Constitutional Amendments and Referendums

Partnering organizations in addition to LWVCC are Collier Citizens Council, Great Naples Chamber of Commerce, Greater Naples Leadership, Collier County President's Council, Greater Naples Better Government Committee, Naples Press Club, Pelican Bay Property Owners Assn, East Naples Civic Assn, Golden Gate Area Civic Assn, Golden Gate Estates Area Civic Assn.

Please join us for our next meeting.

When: Wednesday, March 2, 10-11:30 am

Where: North Collier Government Center
2235 Orange Blossom Drive

RSVP: [Joyce Fletcher](#)



Book Club

Marcia Maloni, Chair

Book for March is *Soldier Girls* by Helen Thorpe.

When: Thursday, March 3, 2016

RSVP: For time and place to [Marcia Maloni](#)

News from the State League

Charlotte Nycklemoe

This bill is bad for women, bad for children, and bad for Florida. The Sunshine State has a national reputation of being fair to families. Let's keep it that way. Any change should be a reasoned change and not one that favors one gender over another without any detailed research for why this is necessary.

February 4, 2016

Members, The Florida Senate
Members, The Florida House of Representative

Dear Members,

I am writing on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVF) to express our grave concern and vigorous opposition to the Alimony Bill (SB 668/HB 455/SB 250) before you today.

We believe this bill is a recipe for disaster with the potential to harm women and children and force many of Florida's young to grow up in poverty. It would reduce the importance of our justice system's use of considered opinion, critical when making decisions that will have a lasting impact on families. And remarkably, there has been no economic impact analysis of this bill, which we fear will have grave consequences for Florida.

Reasons the League opposes the bill:

It would radically change and impose rigid presumptions for child custody:

Currently the statute enables judges, after reviewing broad statutory criteria, to consider the best interests of the child. The Senate proposed bills set either a "presumption" of 50/50 time sharing or seek to establish equal time sharing as the presumptive public policy of the State of Florida. Child studies have shown that shuttling infants and children back and forth can have long term negative mental and physical health consequences.

Presumption means the court will follow this arrangement in most situations unless circumstances are extraordinary. We believe that rigid formulas like this are destructive to families and careful research must be done before establishing the country's first precedent in this area. One size does not fit all when it comes to families and divorce.

Make significant changes in alimony: Roughly 97% of those who receive alimony are women. U.S. Census data shows that when divorce occurs, women's incomes decline and men's increase. Currently alimony is set based on the relative financial

circumstances of the individuals. Under current law, judges most often order the income to be shared for some period of time. It is a need and ability to pay standard.

These new bills will instead presume only modest needs for women. It contains presumptive alimony guidelines which will result in lower alimony amounts unless the marriage is very long term. It also calls for downward modification of payments if a spouse's income increases by 10 % (even if the increase is merely a cost of living increase). This trigger will have a much more marked impact on the low wage earner, in the majority of cases, the woman. For example, at a minimum wage of roughly \$8, only an 80 cents increase would be necessary to compel a return to court where the alimony recipient will not have the resources to fight a decrease in alimony.

Only after a 25-year marriage is there an equal sharing of income, and this is at high range of the calculation in the bill.

Makes downward modification of alimony automatic without regard to payees needs upon payors: Currently alimony arrangements are modified when one party requests a new hearing based on life changes that are "substantial, material, involuntary, and permanent." The other basis of a modification of alimony occurs at retirement.

In contrast, under the proposed laws when the payor actually retires at 65, a modification is automatic, regardless of what the recipient needs or what the payor can pay. It allows alimony to be eliminated completely. Today, when a retirement occurs, the parties go back to court and a fair payment is agreed upon. The proposed bill also allows the imposition of attorney's fees against the recipient of alimony if they oppose the modification request "unreasonably," regardless of their financial circumstances. The bill would also allow the court to abate alimony payments while the action is pending even before the case has been finally decided.

There has been no economic analysis of any of these bills: Our committee of retired family and circuit court judges and divorce lawyers make the point that there has been no economic analysis on the impact this bill will have on women and social welfare services.

To summarize, this bill is bad for women, bad for children, and bad for Florida. The Sunshine State has a national reputation of being fair to families. Let's keep it that way. Any change should be a reasoned change and not one that favors one gender over another without any detailed research for why this is necessary.

Thank you for your courage on so many issues this session and for your leadership on behalf of the people of our state.

Regards,

Pamela Goodman

President

For more information about the League of Women Voters of Florida, [click here](#).

News from the National League

Ann Campbell

Last month the National League:

- Announced 2016 Legislative Priorities set by the LWVUS Board. Establishing a focus for our national advocacy is a critical responsibility of the LWVUS Board as it is for every League Board. In setting priorities, the Board considers a number of factors, the most important of which is focusing League effort where it can have the greatest impact. For 2016, the LWVUS legislative priorities are ranked in two tiers. The first tier priority is Representative Democracy, which

includes voting rights and election administration, money in politics, redistricting reform and work on a constitutional convention, as described above. The second tier is Climate Change. And we continue to watch action on several issues including immigration, health care, reproductive rights and environmental protection.

- Reported that the League has two new issue positions based on consensus reached by the 246 local and state Leagues and ILOs who participated in the Constitutional Amendment Process study. We now have a position outlining considerations for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals and a position calling for safeguards that must be in place to govern the constitutional convention process of proposing amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
- Joined with the Alabama, Georgia and Kansas Leagues, to file suit in federal district court to stop the recent illegal action by the Executive Director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that allows these states to restrict voter registration. The Executive Director, Brian Newby, recently unilaterally approved requests from Alabama, Georgia and Kansas to require documentary proof of citizenship when an applicant uses the federal mail voter registration application form. The Help America Vote Act of 2002 requires the full commission itself to vote on any changes, but Mr. Newby ignored that obligation
- Sent a letter to the U.S. Senate in support of Senator Udall's Empower Act, S. 1176, legislation to repair the presidential public financing system. Members of the LWVUS Lobby Corps will be visiting with select Senate offices regarding this legislation.

For more information [click here](#).

About Us

The League of Women Voters of Collier County, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our goal is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

Visit our website at www.lwvcolliercounty.org for our current list of officers, directors and off-board members, our Program, Diversity Policy, Nonpartisan Policy, By-laws, Minutes, and more.