Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

From the President

As we head into July and remain physically disconnected, I am pleased that we remain socially connected. This past weekend nine of your officers and board members have attended the National Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States. This was supposed to be a grand celebration in Washington, DC for the League’s 100th anniversary. But alas, we Zoomed in from our homes. But it was a technical marvel to connect nearly 2,500 League members from around the country as we listened to inspiring speakers, debated League programs, and voted on issues.

An Ad Hoc Committee has been hard at work developing the candidate questions that will be included on the Vote411.org website. All candidate responses will be included so voters can learn about local candidates and their platforms. This platform also links to the state and national Vote411.org databases so all election information is just a click away.

The Local Government Committee has some very exciting news about the Candidate Forums for this election season. Our League is partnering with the Tallahassee Democrat newspaper to conduct the forums via Facebook Live since in-person forums are not feasible this year. Watch for more information about this dynamic partnership.

Finally, I sent a letter to the City and County Commissions on behalf of the Board to urge commissioners to allow public testimony at commission meetings during the Covid-19 crisis. I reminded them that the Sunshine Law provides the public the inalienable right to be present and to be heard at all deliberations wherein decisions affecting the public are being made. Democracy dies in silence.

Sally Butzin, President LWVT

Meet the Board (cont.)

We continue to introduce our Board members and this week we present Dr. Liz Holifield who has been a member of the Board for several years. She is the host of a weekly radio program called 411 Teen, which she has created with teen input for a teenage audience.
and adults who interact regularly with teens. Guests provide insights into topics that concern adolescents. Her programs are interesting and enlightening. Tune in to 88.9 WFSU-FM Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Sabrina Hartley is chair of our gun safety action group and would welcome a few more people to help her keep this issue in the forefront of our local collective consciousness where it will receive the attention it deserves. Sabrina is also a member of a group nicknamed "The Diversity Divas." Their mission is to advance the LWVUS national policy of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Liz Holifield**

Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy. I believe the fight for voting rights is critical. We must protect our freedom to vote. Obstacles to voting and registration are rampant across the United States. Historically, people of color, women and young folks have been denied voting rights across the nation. States have passed voter suppression laws that target marginalized communities. The Florida legislature passed Senate Bill 7066, in 2019, requiring people with felony convictions to satisfy all their financial obligations—an unconstitutional poll tax.

The League of Women Voters advocates policies that make it easier to vote. LWV has been at the forefront of major voter rights initiatives. LWV fights to protect the rights of voters and expand access for those who have been left out of our democratic process. I support the aggressive advocacy and educational efforts of LWV. Unfortunately, in 2020, the struggle continues for fair voting rights for all.

"And so, we shall have to do more than register and more than vote; we shall have to create leaders who embody virtues we can respect, who have moral and ethical principles we can applaud with enthusiasm."

---Martin Luther King.

**Sabrina Hartley**

This is my 4th year on the board. It's an honor to be part of such passion, commitment, brains, and talent in an organization that supports and defends every U.S. citizen equally. I served 23 years as a Florida legislative analyst before launching a second career as a financial advisor. I've served the League in assorted areas including lobby corps, speaker's bureau, voter registration, event planning, and acting as a general rabble-rousing board member.

The League’s mission is to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. Has there ever been a more important time in history for an organization such as ours? Each day of 2020 we witness our world and way of life changing. The Fall 2020 general election is right around the corner. I look forward to engaging in every way possible and hope that you will as well. The League of Women Voters makes a difference,
and it certainly feels like there has never been a more important time.

Congratulations, Jessica!

Jessica Lowe-Minor, New Vice-President of LWV!

Our very own Jessica Lowe-Minor was just elected Vice-President of the League of Women Voters of the United States!!! Congratulations, Jessica!!!

From Jessica: "Thank you so much. It's just wonderful to represent such an amazing organization, and I'm really humbled to know that my fellow LWVT members were on the line in support! Please let them all know that I appreciate them and am looking forward to seeing them in person again as soon as it's safe to do so!"

"And She Could Be Next"

Our next LWVT sponsored program is presented by POV, a PBS series which features independent nonfiction films. POV is the longest-running showcase (30 seasons) on television for independent documentary films.

This story is in two parts. Part I will air on Monday, June 29, at 9:00 p.m. (also at 1:00 a.m. on June 30) on WFSU. Part II will be shown the next night, June 30, at 9:00 p.m. (and again at 1:00 a.m. on July 1).

The film is titled "And She Could Be Next" and tells the story of a defiant movement of women of color, transforming politics from the ground up by fighting for a truly reflective democracy. In a polarized America, where the dual forces of white supremacy and patriarchy threaten to further erode our democracy, women of color are claiming power by running for political office. This film, made by a team of women filmmakers of color, asks whether democracy itself can be preserved—and made stronger—by those most marginalized.

Watch a two-minute trailer here: And She Could Be Next

Update on the 2020 Census

When the corona virus pandemic hit in March, the Government had just sent out the first round of letters asking households to fill out their Census forms. Many of you went on your computer and completed the form online using your magic Census ID. A phone number was provided for people who wished to use that method and the initial contact was to be followed by other reminders that included the option to complete the process using a paper form. Households who still did not respond were supposed to get a phone call or a visit from a Census worker.

Here's what's happening now:
The national self-report response rate is 60.9 percent. Florida’s response rate is 58.4 percent and Leon County’s response rate is slightly lower at 58 percent. The deadline for self-responding to the Census online, by phone or by mailing in a form has been extended until October 31, 2020. Field workers are to start home visits in mid-August. The lowest response rate is around FSU, to be expected since the students are absent. The response rate for zip code 32304 is between 27 and 38 percent, so if you know anyone living in this zip code you might encourage them to complete the Census. A Leon County/City of Tallahassee Complete Count Committee was appointed and began meeting. Staff of the committee had to start working from home when the pandemic hit and most of their outreach was happening digitally. You can access hard copy promotional materials by searching the internet for Leon County Complete Count Committee and contacting the staff. They have many YouTube, Facebook and Twitter posts that they may be willing to share with you if you would like to promote participation in the Census.

Kathy Winn

Leon County Requires Face Masks

Face Coverings Required in Public

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect the public health of our community, Leon County approved an emergency ordinance requiring face coverings scheduled to begin Thursday, June 25 at 12:01 a.m. As confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to rise locally and statewide, the ordinance states that an individual in a business establishment in Leon County must wear a face covering while in that business establishment.

More information about the ordinance, how it is to apply, and exceptions, can be found here on the Leon County website.

Distribution of Free Cloth Face Coverings at County Libraries.
Starting Wednesday, June 24, Leon County will make thousands of free face coverings available for pickup at all County library locations during regular hours. Individuals may request one covering and may also pick up one covering for each immediate family member. Library locations can be found here.

All County branch libraries are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. The County main library is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

For additional information on COVID-19, the Florida Department of Health has activated a 24/7 COVID-19 call center at (866) 779-6121. Leon County residents can also call the County Health Department at (850) 404-6300, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Also, the best resource for Florida-specific COVID-19 information remains the following FDOH website: www.FLHealth.gov/COVID-19.

Significant updates can always be found updated real-time at www.LeonCountyFL.gov/ei. The County Emergency Information Portal has the most up-to-date and timely critical
information right from the Emergency Operations Center.

For more information contact Mathieu Cavell, Community and Media Relations, at CMR@LeonCountyFL.gov or (850) 606-5300.

Village Square

Village Square Equality in Life Town Halls

The Village Square, with partners Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida, and SachsMedia Group, will host a series of Zoom Town Hall presentations focused on "Equality in Life." Community leaders will share their perspectives on critical and relevant issues. The three events are:

Equality in Life: Justice and Law Enforcement; Tuesday, June 30, 7--8:30 p.m.

Equality in Life: Business and Growth; Tuesday, July 7, 7--8:30 p.m.

Equality in Life: Government, Schools, and the Future; Tuesday, July 21, 7:00--8:30 p.m.

To register for any of the three Zoom calls, go online to The Village Square at thl.villagesquare.us for more information.

From the Tallahassee Democrat, submitted by Linda Davis

Voter Services

Important Messages from Voter Services

ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ELECTION INFORMATION: VOTE411.org
The League is registering and updating voters and providing election information online at VOTE411.org. Your vote is more important than ever before! So make sure your registration is up to date. Spread the word!

UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS
Have you moved since you last voted? You can update your address online through VOTE411.org which provides one-stop shopping for election information. You also can update your address on the website of your County Supervisor of Elections or by calling their office. Go to https://dos.elections.myflorida.com/supervisors/ to find contact information for your Supervisor of Elections.

Since 2006, the League's @VOTE411 has helped register voters online and answer election questions. Visit VOTE411.org/Florida today to register, see ballots and get up-to-date voter information!

STUCK AT HOME?
Go to Vote411.org to Register to Vote or Update your registration. You can also find your polling place, learn about candidates, and more. Your vote is more important than ever before!
WANT UP-TO-DATE ELECTION INFORMATION?
For information about registering to vote, updating one’s registration, vote-by-mail, and more go to: https://www.lwvfl.org/register-voters/
Go to Vote411.org to Register to Vote or Update your registration. You can also find your polling place, learn about candidates, and more.

Voter Services

Make sure your voice is heard in November!

Visit LWVFL.org/Vote for more info!

New Members

Rosie Keween
Patti Logan
Karen Randolph

SBA Members

Thanks to all who have renewed, and a special thank-you to those (listed below) who recently renewed at the Susan B. Anthony level:

Betsy Miller
What's Happening this Week

29 Monday. 10:00 a.m. Special CRA Board Meeting. Virtual Meeting.

29 Monday. 10:00 a.m. Re-Open Leon Schools Task Force Final Sessions for Considerations and Summary Meeting via Zoom.

30 Tuesday. 1:30 p.m. City of Tallahassee and the Int’l. Assoc. of Firefighters Negotiations Session. Virtual Meeting.

30 Tuesday. 3:00 p.m. Special School Board Workshop - Re-Open Leon Task Force Final Presentation. Virtual Meeting.

Or contact us at lwvtallahassee@gmail.com
850-309-3005

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