



VOTER

A monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Polk County, P.O. Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802

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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.

Redistricting Update

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By the 2012 primary elections, we will have brand new congressional, state senate and state legislative district lines all throughout Florida.

Under the Florida Constitution, the Legislature is given the task of drawing these district lines in compliance with federal and state law.

The Legislature is holding a series of public hearings including the following one in Polk County.

What: **Public Hearing on Redistricting**

Date: **Monday, July 25**

Place: **Polk State College, Main Auditorium,
3425 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland**

Time: **2:00 - 5:00 pm**

If you are unable to attend, you may still submit remarks by:

- email to mydistrictbuilder@myfloridahouse.gov
- Facebook at www.facebook.com/MyDistrictBuilder
- Twitter at twitter.com/FLRedistricting

See the Florida Redistricting website at

www.floridaredistricting.org

Quote of the Day

"No apportionment plan or district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent..."

*Sections 20 & 21,
Florida Constitution*





Natural Resources

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The LWV Polk County's Natural and Environmental resources Co-Chairs, **Joan Verret** and **Beverly Sidenstick**, participated on May 17 in the community listening session of the Natural Resources Advisory Committee of the University of Florida Polk County IFAS Extension Office in Bartow.

The session was a facilitated listening and brain storming session to provide community input into the planning of extension services for the next decade.

Topics included growth management, Natural resources, agriculture and insect pests. The targeted groups are elected officials, youth, agencies and community associations.

Citizens from throughout the county and all of Florida benefit from the educational extension services.

For a community impact survey, please go to




www.solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/hot_topics/main_page/community_input_survey.html

For the Polk County site, please go to

www.solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/polk_county.html

Donations & Contributions

Susan B Anthony Membership

-  Beverly Sidenstick
-  Barbara Stampfl
-  Helen Yates

Other Member Donations

-  Sue Schultz
-  Ann Weeks

Contributions Made

The League of Women Voters of Polk County made a contribution in memory of member **Lisa Parks'** daughter Lauren Edward Behr to the MD Anderson Cancer Center of Houston, Texas for osteosarcoma research.



Contributions Note:

Remember donations to the Education Fund are available to LWV Polk only if "for Polk Education Fund" is listed on the check. These donations are tax deductible. Other contributions and dues are not deductible for IRS purposes. All donations to the Local League are greatly appreciated.

President's Message:



The new officers, board and interested members participated in a Leadership and League Basics Workshop presented by our new Co-President, **Paula Mims**, at the May Board meeting in preparation for the upcoming league year. Paula held our attention as she demonstrated the many “HATS” of responsibility and knowledge of an informed and effective League Board.

Nationally, the League has been involved in voting and redistricting efforts across our nation. The LWV Florida leads the way for us in advocacy for Fair Districts and Voter Education for the State. Locally, we held a series of educational forums and programs.



It's been a busy year for the League. As many of you know, the LWVF will suspend Voter Registration Activities because of the new law passed by the legislature (HB 1355). We will continue to meet our responsibility to educate voters on the issues. Our first meeting this fall will be with the Elections Office to learn about community education activities offered through their office.

Our “Guide to Elected Officials” is available at the Polk County Libraries. Thank You to **Barbara Stampfl** and **Judy Walker** for making this information easily available to the public. The guide is produced with educational funds donated by State Farm.

The Fair Districts amendments passed ... now the work of fairly implementing the districts begins. On July 25, the traveling Legislative Redistricting Hearing will be held at Polk State College (p. 1). We encourage all of our members to attend and show support for the process. If you would like to speak, the State League has some suggestions. Let the Board know of your interest.



Don't forget to participate in the Monthly Florida On-the-Line Call on issues of importance to our members. They are quite informative and well done.

I like the motto I am seeing for the League: **Nationally Respected - Locally Engaged**. The League is a tiered organization of advocacy and citizen education. It is supported by locally collected dues. Each Member has an opportunity for involvement with areas that interest them and at the level of participation that they desire. We value each of our members and their participation!



Our new Co-President, **Paula Mims**, has challenged the Board and all of us, that when asked who and what our organization does, we need to be ready to reply with our mission statement:

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.

In League,
Mary Jo, Co-President

Annual Meeting Pictures



Attendees at the Lakeland Yacht and Country Club on April 13

Welcome New Members !

Linda Haskins
2605 E Lake Hartridge Dr
Winter Haven, FL 33881
299-1052 (h) 307-9789 (w)

Larry Rankin **[Welcome Back]**
2656 Handley Blvd
Lakeland, FL 33803
685-2513

Helen Yates **[National Member]**
780 Lake Clark Ct
Lakeland, FL 33813
701-2023

Christine Hoffman
5057 Rock Glen Turn
Mulberry, FL 33860

Florida Election Law HB1355 (Excerpts from PEW Summary Report)

Following the disastrous 2000 election and the implementation of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, elections supervisors in the state of Florida have been faced with a host of election administration rules and regulation changes every election cycle and 2012 appears like it will be no different.

“As a Supervisor of Elections in Florida, I had secretly hoped that there would be little to no legislation introduced this year that would have a major impact on elections and election administration,” said Linda Harrington, [Lee County supervisor of elections](#). “I don’t think any of us anticipated the enormity of these legislative changes to the Election Code.”

Although the bill was highly partisan in nature, [David Stafford, supervisor of elections for Escambia County](#) did point out that it did include some provisions put forward by the Division of Elections and supervisors of elections. Still, Stafford and many members of the [Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections](#) were opposed to the legislation as a whole. “I appeared before the legislature several times on behalf of our state association during consideration of a variety of election law changes,” said Stafford. “We spoke out against specific provisions, several of which unfortunately were included in the final bill. Among those were: changes to early voting, forcing certain voters who change their address on election day to vote provisionally, enhanced powers granted to the appointed Secretary of State over the independently-elected supervisors of elections, changes to how constitutional amendments may appear on the ballot, and new and enhanced reporting requirements, to name a few.”

Provisional Ballots

One of the biggest concerns facing many elections supervisors is the increased number of provisional ballots this legislation will create. The legislation will require voters who have moved from one county to another within Florida to use a provisional ballot instead of a regular ballot if they want to update their name and address at the polling place. “This is a procedural change that will affect instructions given to poll workers, which means that the instructional manuals will have to be redone,” said Harrington, “Each provisional ballot must be verified for eligibility of the voter manually.” Because of that, staff may have to work overtime to complete the verification process in a timely manner. Increasing the usage of provisional ballots will increase costs.

Early Voting

Elections supervisors are concerned about the impact the decreased time and flexibility of time will have on voters. Under the legislation, early voting will begin 10 days prior to each federal and state election and will last for eight days. Supervisors have the option of offering it for six to 12 hours per day. “I can see issues and confusion if the county to my north and the county to my south offer different hours than Sarasota,” said [Kathy Dent, supervisor of elections for Sarasota County](#).

Dent said that the greatest impact will be on the general elections, noting that in 2008 and 2010 her county had lines for early voting even with two full weeks of time. In Lee County, Harrington said 66,000 residents voted early in 2008 with long lines at all five of the early voting sites.

Dent and Harrington said that keeping their offices open to accommodate more people in fewer hours will put a strain on their budgets for additional personnel costs, overtime and fees for facilities and equipment.

Third-Party Registrations

The bill would require third-party groups such as the League of Women Voters, that sign up new voters to register with the state, file regular reports and turn-in completed voter registration forms within 48 hours or face fines of \$50 for each late form. The [Florida League of Women Voters](#) has said that it will cease registering voters.

“It’s because of the red-tape and the punitive restrictions that have been put in place,” Deidre Macnab, president of the FLWV said in a statement. “That, very candidly, we felt were designed not to control it as much as to suppress voter registration and to entrap groups and individuals.”

Primaries

The legislation creates a committee of 10 people to select the date of the presidential preference primary for 2012. “The primary could be anywhere from Jan. 3 to March 6” Dent said. “This creates issues for the 67 supervisors in planning.” Despite all the hurdles presented by the new legislation, elections supervisors seemed confident that some way they will make it all work.

by M. Mindy Moretti, www.pewcenteronthestates.org



The League of Women Voters of Polk County **VOTER**

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www.lwvpolk.org

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*** Polk Redistricting Meeting July 25 ***



Annual Dues Increase

At the Annual Membership Meeting, the membership voted to raise our LWV Polk dues to \$60 annually.

This amount includes League membership in all levels - Local - \$15, State \$15 - National - \$30. Over the years, the State and National dues have increased without any increase going to the LWV Polk.

The ten dollar increase (from \$5 to \$15 a year) in dues that Polk LWV receives will go for its education and advocacy programs.

We always appreciate the additional donations that many of you make to our local league.



Calendar

Monday, July 25, 2:00 - 5:00 pm
Redistricting Hearing
Polk State College (see p. 1)

Wednesday, August 10, (tentative):
LWV Polk County BOARD Meeting
Check www.lwvpolk.org for time & place

Fall Event with Supervisor of Elections Office
In Bartow
Check www.lwvpolk.org for time & place