



# VOTER

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

January 2008  
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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.*

## This Issue

- Quote of Day
- Marsha Faux
- Pictures
- Redistricting
- Website
- Constitutional Amendment
- Membership News
- Calendar

## Thursday Topics:

# Ms Marsha Faux Polk County Property Appraiser

January 10, 2008, 5:30 pm

At

**Bartow Library  
2150 S. Broadway Ave.  
Bartow, FL**

**Back with LWV Polk by Popular Demand!**

***Are you ready to vote on January 29? Get the latest information before you have to vote on the proposed Constitutional Amendment!***

Marsha Faux was a hit at our Fall Membership meeting. Fortunately for us, she has agreed to come back and give us an update on the proposed change to the State Constitution which will be on the ballot at the Presidential Preference Primary election on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Don't attend ***unless*** you're interested in:

- Increasing the homestead exemption.
- Transferring the Save Our Homes benefits to a new home.
- The effects on schools and local government services.
- Possible impact on other taxes.
- A fair and equitable tax system.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**When will politicians realize that George Orwell's '1984' was a warning, not an instruction manual?**

Derek Clark,  
member of the  
European parliament

## Pictures from Immigration Consensus Meeting On November 13, 2007

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS POLK COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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[www.lwvpolk.org](http://www.lwvpolk.org)



Bob Sears & Ruby Stinson



Gathering around the food!



Pete & John Wesley, Ruth  
Weitzenkorn. Paula Mimms



Ruby, Barbara Stampfls,  
Ann Books, Pete

**HELP US GET FAIR REDISTRICTING on the BALLOT!**

LWVF is a member of the coalition working on redistricting petitions in Florida to establish fair rules before the next redistricting is scheduled in 2011.

Go to the following website and download the TWO petitions, sign and send in!

[www.fairdistrictsflorida.org/](http://www.fairdistrictsflorida.org/)

**GET YOUR VOTER IN COLOR  
ON THE WEB AT LWVPOLK.ORG,  
OR THRU EMAIL: CONTACT  
WEBMASTER@LWVPOLK.ORG**

# **On the Ballot on Tuesday, January 29th**

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION**

### **AMENDMENT # 1 – PROPERTY TAXES**

**Ballot Summary:** This revision, placed on the ballot by the Florida Legislature at a special session in October, proposes changes to the State Constitution relating to property taxation. With respect to homestead property, this revision:

- (1) Increases the homestead exemption except for school district taxes and
- (2) Allows homestead property owners to transfer up to \$500,000 of their Save-Our-Homes benefits to their next homestead. With respect to non-homestead property, this revision
- (3) Provides a \$25,000 exemption for tangible personal property and
- (4) Limits assessment increases for specified non-homestead real property except for school district taxes.

The League of Women Voters of Florida has offered the following Pros and Cons:

#### **PRO:**

- Adds a new \$25,000 homestead exemption applicable only to county property taxes (not school taxes).
- Allows homestead property owners to apply up to \$500,000 in existing Save Our Homes tax savings to a new homestead.
- Provides businesses with a new \$25,000 tax exemption on tangible personal property.
- Limits county property tax assessment increases on non-homestead real property to 10% per year (this is not applicable to school taxes).
- May help stimulate sales of real property by allowing homestead property owners to transfer Save Our Homes tax savings to a new homestead.

#### **CON:**

- Cities and counties will lose \$9.6 billion in tax money over the next 5 years.
- Public schools will lose \$2.8 billion in tax money over the next 5 years.
- Making Save Our Homes portable extends the present inequality in property tax assessments between homestead owners and owners of non-homestead property.
- The tax breaks will apply to all homeowners, even those who can afford to pay.
- Counties may raise developer impact fees or other taxes or fees to pay for cuts in property taxes.
- May be unconstitutional because it treats long-time homestead owners differently from new arrivals to Florida.
- Changes state property taxes while the constitutionally mandated Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission is still working on its once in twenty years study of the taxation system.

The League of Women Voters of Florida has voted to OPPOSE this amendment based on the principle that our state fiscal structure should be both equitable in its distribution of the tax responsibility and responsive to public needs. Specifically, we believe that Florida's tax system should be:

1. Equitable and based on ability to pay;
2. Designed to provide adequate revenue to meet our needs;
3. Adaptable to fluctuating economic conditions;
4. Efficiently administered to ensure compliance; and
5. Consistent with economic, environmental, social and other public policy goals.

Overall, this amendment does not meet these criteria. Additionally, the Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Committee is already meeting and is due to make their recommendation to the Florida Legislature in March 2008.



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

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\*\*\* **VOTE: Presidential Primary & Constitutional Amendment - January 29** \*\*\*



### Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Membership Committee News

#### Welcome to new members:

**Bethellen Reinert**  
6715 Nells Way  
Lakeland, FL, 33813  
(863) 712-3531

**Jenna Stuart**  
6643 Trail Drive  
Lakeland, FL 33813  
(863) 648-4683

Take a moment and give them a welcome.

#### Other Member News:

On October 9, 2007, Mrs. Marjorie Hatten passed away. Mrs. Hatten was born April 1, 1916. She had been a loyal league member since 1992. Our thoughts are with her family.

Ms. Irma B. Miller has relocated to a nursing home in Detroit, MI.

### Calendar

Tuesday, January 1: New Year's Day

Thursday, January 10, 5:30 pm: Thursday Topics  
**Marsha Faux**, Polk Co Property Appraiser  
Bartow Library

Mon - Sun, January 14-27: Early Voting

Friday, January 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Tuesday, January 22, noon  
**LWV Polk County BOARD Meeting**  
United Way Offices, Highland City.  
(bag lunch)

Tuesday, January 29: Election Day -  
• Presidential Preference Primary  
• Proposed Constitutional Amendment

**Get out and VOTE!!**