

**Calendar  
September**

September 5 – Labor Day  
September 12 – Florida Redistricting Coalition tour in Bartow, 6:30 p.m.  
September 16 – Bartow's Friday Fest, 6 p.m.,  
September 17 – Constitution Day  
September 23 – Board Meeting  
September 24 – Lakeland Drive Electric Day  
September 25 – Rosh Hashanah

**October**

October 10 – Indigenous Peoples' Day  
October 28 – Board Meeting  
October 31 – Halloween

For Closing the Gap dates, see listing

**LWV Polk 2022-2023  
Board of Directors**

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\*Terms end in 2024, all others end in 2023.

Need to contact the LWV Polk Board?  
Click on a name to send an email.

# Florida Redistricting Coalition Coming to Polk County

## Event September 12 in Bartow will mobilize minority voters

The Florida Redistricting Coalition—made up of Black Voters Matter, Equal Ground, Florida Rising, and League of Women Voters—is on a statewide tour educating voters about the redistricting process in the state of Florida and providing updates about pending litigation that challenges the existing Congressional maps approved by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis.

**On Monday, September 12 from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m., the tour will stop at the African American Heritage Museum at 585 East Summerlin Street, Bartow, FL 33830.**

Participants will also have the opportunity to learn more about existing maps and the importance of judicial races. To learn more text "FairDistricts" to 52886 or visit the event listing [here](#).

# Closing the Gap Resumes

## Schedule set through early November features guest speakers and LWV Polk Committee Chairs

Every Wednesday at noon, you're invited to join LWV Polk for Closing the Gap, hosted on Zoom by Speakers Bureau chair Trudy Corry Rankin.

**September 14:** Rich Earth Institute Recycling Movement, Julia Cavicchi

**September 21:** POLK Forever, Marion Ryan and Karen Freedman

**September 28:** Education Collaboration with the NAACP and Polk Vision Literary Team, Lindsey Persohn

**October 5:** Florida Voices for Health, Scott Darius

**October 12:** Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, Erick Brakken

**October 19:** LWV Polk Positions—Schools, Nancy Simmons

**October 26:** LWV Polk Positions—Firearms, Andy Crossfield

**November 2:** LWV Polk Positions—Natural Resources, Karen Freedman

**November 9:** LWV Polk Positions—Healthcare, Paula Mims

For the Zoom meeting invitation, contact: [SpeakersBureau@lwvpolk.org](mailto:SpeakersBureau@lwvpolk.org)

## Committees and Action Areas

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

[Bobbie Boatwright Harris](#)  
[Katy Pace Byrd](#)

EDUCATION  
Open

GUN SAFETY  
[Andy Crossfield](#)

HEALTHCARE  
[Paula Mims](#)

IMMIGRATION  
Open

JUVENILE JUSTICE  
[Andy Crossfield](#)

LIBRARIES  
[Lillian Blessing](#)

MEDIA  
[Jerry Weeks](#)

MEMBERSHIP  
Open

NATURAL RESOURCES  
Climate Action:  
[Karen Freedman](#)  
Plastics:  
[Sharon Masters](#)

NEWSLETTER  
[Ashley Laurretta](#)

NOMINATING (2023)  
[Sue Schultz](#)

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND JUSTICE  
[Eileen Swiler](#)  
[Jo Shim](#)

SPEAKERS BUREAU  
[Trudy Rankin](#)

VOTER OUTREACH AND EDUCATION  
[Linda Donaldson](#)

VOTER REGISTRATION  
[Linda Donaldson](#)  
Returning Citizens Voter Registration Subcommittee:  
[Andy Crossfield](#)

Need to contact an LWV Polk Committee Chair? Click on a name to send an email.

# LWV Polk DEI Group Visits L.B. Brown House

## Tour kicks off fall activities of the book group



From L to R: Paula Mims, Katy Pace Byrd, Karen Freedman, Nancy Futch, Stuart Swiler, Bobbie Boatwright Harris, Jim Byrd, Eileen Swiler, Gloria Washington, Clifton Lewis (Not pictured: Mary Acevedo, Sue Thrower, Ed Thrower)

Eleven members of the DEI book discussion group visited the Historic Lawrence B. Brown House in Bartow on September 1st. Some members of the group read Mr. Brown's biography in advance of the visit (***From Slavery to Community Builder*** by Charles Walker, Cantor Brown, Jr. and Clifton Lewis), but all were treated to a dynamic presentation of Brown's life, how he came to live in late 19th century Bartow, and his remarkable impact on his community.

**Clifton Lewis**, curator of the L. B. Brown House (which is on the National Register of Historic Places) spearheaded the restoration of the house as part of the activities of the Neighborhood Improvement Corporation of Bartow, Inc., of which Mr. Lewis is the founding president. In addition to Lewis' wonderful accounts of Brown's life and accomplishments, **Ms. Gloria Washington** gave a delightful presentation on some of the daily activities of the house's residents in their time, including early "technology" for washing clothes. To plan your trip to this treasure of Polk County, visit [LBBrown.com](http://LBBrown.com).

The tour kicks off the fall activities of the DEI book discussion group which will focus on an essay-by-essay reading of ***The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story***, Nikole Hannah-Jones, ed. **If you are interested in the schedule of discussions, please contact Katy Pace Byrd at [byrdkp@gmail.com](mailto:byrdkp@gmail.com).**

**Welcome**  
New Members

Ben Graffam  
Emily Mayhuasca

## Action Alley

# Polk County School District Applies for Electric School Buses

**EPA Clean School Bus Program recipients will be announced in October**

Congratulations to LWV Polk Climate Action Committee, led by Karen Freedman, who successfully encouraged the Polk County School District to submit an application for completely free electric school buses from the [EPA Clean School Bus Rebate Program](#). The Polk County School District is considered a priority district (consideration includes poverty level and number of rural communities), and as such, is eligible for the most generous grants (covering the full purchase price of \$375,000 per bus, plus \$20,000 for the charging station for each bus). Recipients will be announced in October.

# LWV Polk Healthcare Committee Makes Huge Strides for Moms with Monitors

**The program provides free blood pressure cuffs to at-risk pregnant population**

Congratulations to the LWV Polk Healthcare Committee, led by Paula Mims, on participating in the Department of Health's Equity Task Force, which has adopted Moms with Monitors as its primary project. The Department of Health has received the blood pressure cuffs that have been funded by the program and will begin distributing them shortly to pregnant women at risk of pre-term births, maternal death, and infant mortality or severe developmental outcomes. Along with the monitors, patients will receive health and nutrition materials, and voter registration information.

# Climate Action Committee Encourages Focus on Environmental Justice

**Community engagement and grants will help local and underserved communities**

Karen Freedman, head of the Climate Action Committee, is talking with Lakeland NAACP President Terry Coney about focusing on energy efficiency and equity. She notes that several LWV Polk priorities fit with the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy grant proposal that Dory Larsen of the Southern Alliance to Clean Energy is currently working on. There are also additional funds that will become available through the newly passed federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This legislation will lower energy costs and advance environmental justice through reducing pollution, making clean energy more accessible and affordable, and expanding green spaces for disadvantaged communities.

## From Our Members

Constitution Day is Saturday, September 17, to commemorate the day the Constitution was signed 235 years ago. **On Friday, September 16, LWV Polk members will be at [Bartow's Friday Fest](#) at 100 East Main Street in Bartow from 6 p.m.-9 p.m., educating the public and handing out Constitution pamphlets.**

For the federal holiday, new LWV Polk member **Ben Graffam** created the following quiz. Think you know your Constitution? Take some time with the following questions to see just how your knowledge matches up with the actual document.

- How is the Constitution different from the Declaration of Independence in purpose and ideology?
- How does the original Constitution present and defend the rights of Native Americans?
- What is meant by the phrase “an originalist position” regarding the Constitution?
- What did Thomas Jefferson mean by calling the Constitution a “living document?”
- Who were the people specifically left out of the equality championed in the Constitution?
- How did the Founding Fathers want the Constitution to be interpreted?
- How does the original Constitution present and defend the rights of female Americans?
- Why is the process of amendments so important to the nature and history of the Constitution?
- How does the original Constitution present and defend the rights of Black and Brown Americans?
- Considering that the Constitution was designed to be amended—and has been amended 27 times—how should we regard an originalist position of the Constitution?
- How is equality defined and created in the United States?

## The Classifieds



**The Voter Registration committee is looking for volunteers to help register voters at various events.** It requires taking and passing the LWVFL Quiz with a perfect 180/180 score (info is provided and the test can be retaken as many times as needed). Those certified to register voters will also receive updates via the Voter Services email list and Zoom meetings.  
Contact: Linda Donaldson, [lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com](mailto:lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com)



**The Climate Action committee is looking for volunteers for Lakeland Drive Electric Day EV show at Munn Park on September 24 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.** Multiple shifts are available.  
Contact: Karen Freedman, [kefreedman@hotmail.com](mailto:kefreedman@hotmail.com)